

Texas hospital leaders are taking action on behalf of their industry like never before. Together, united as an industry, hospital CEOs are working collectively to counter negative – and incorrect – assertions about the industry and highlight the lifesaving work of their facilities.

THA offers the following guidance to ensure hospital CEOs can “check the box” on the critical steps needed to improve overall perception and move hospitals – and their patients – forward with meaningful engagement.



## QUARTER ONE (deadline: March 31)

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### Attend a THA Meeting

Throughout the year, THA hosts several online and in-person meetings that give member hospital executives the opportunity to network with other industry leaders. Keep an eye on THA’s event calendar [here](#) for a full list of upcoming events. If you are a member of a board, council or committee, ensure that you attend all related meetings.

### Personally Follow THA Social Channels

Having a large following of engaged users helps improve THA’s online reach. Make sure you’re following THA on whichever platforms you’re most active on. You can follow THA on **LinkedIn, X (formerly Twitter), Facebook** and **Instagram**.

### Ensure Hospital Follows THA Social Channels

Once you’ve followed THA from your personal accounts, ensure that your hospital’s Communications team follows THA from your hospital’s social media accounts. THA makes a concerted effort to tag hospitals across all social media platforms when mentioned in a piece of content. Encourage your communications team to amplify those posts.

### Register to Attend Conference

Every year, THA convenes member hospital leaders at its annual conference. During a session year, the conference is in Austin and rotates amongst Texas’ prominent cities in the interim session year. With 200+ member attendees each year, THA’s conference is a great opportunity to network with colleagues in the industry and gain health care policy insights as they unfold.

THA will host its 2024 conference at the Hyatt Regency Dallas from Feb. 15-16. [Register here](#).



### Give to HOSPAC

Joining other Texas hospital leaders in giving to HOSPAC is the best way to elect hospital-friendly lawmakers who help hospitals and the patients they serve. HOSPAC is THA's bipartisan political action committee that represents the interests of all Texas hospitals. Giving to HOSPAC could not be easier. Visit [www.hospac.org](http://www.hospac.org), enter the HOSPAC password and click the red "Contribute" button. Choose a dollar amount and click "Donate Now." If you encounter any issues or need password assistance for this page, contact Wendy Thomas, director, public policy & HOSPAC, at [wthomas@tha.org](mailto:wthomas@tha.org).



### Reply to/Amplify THA Social Posts

After following THA's social media accounts, take some time each month to either comment or share a THA post. This is especially valuable on LinkedIn and Twitter. Doing so helps maximize the post reach and performance, meaning more people like you will see THA's content. Contact Amy Rios, senior director of marketing, at [arios@tha.org](mailto:arios@tha.org) if you have questions or need assistance.



### Instruct Hospital Comms Team to Amplify

Occasionally, a request might come from THA's communications team to amplify an advocacy-related piece of social media content. Ensure your hospital's communications point of contact receives these requests by joining our THA communications mailing list. Email Julia Mann, communications manager, at [jmann@tha.org](mailto:jmann@tha.org) to get added to this list.

## QUARTER TWO (deadline: June 30)

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### Join a Local Chamber, Business or Interest Group

Hospitals that are folded into their local business community are more likely to deepen relationships and garner local support for hospital initiatives. Statewide groups like the **Texas Association of Business** are great avenues for ensuring hospital voices are heard in the business community. Additionally, local chambers and business groups advocate for their members and provide opportunities for networking, special events and industry education. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce offers a **Texas directory** of local chambers, and a listing of accredited chambers is available **here**. Joining other groups – such as local business groups focused on health care, **Rotary Clubs** and **Kiwanis** – is an excellent way for hospitals to deepen community engagement.



### Ensure Hospital Follows Local Groups

If you follow them, they'll follow you. Ensure that your hospital's communications team follows local organizations, such as chambers and Rotary Clubs, from your hospital's social media accounts. Showing hospital support – digitally – is an easy and effective way to begin

building those connections. Tagging and partnering on content takes that relationship even further. Encourage your communications team to amplify local posts that carry health-related sentiments or other messaging appropriate for the hospital to highlight.

### **Add Local Groups to Newsletter D-Lists**

Many Texas hospitals routinely distribute electronic newsletters or news releases highlighting hospital successes and innovations. Much of that content may be suitable for external audiences. An easy way to broaden the distribution of this good news is to ensure local organizations, such as chambers and business groups on health care, regularly hear from their local hospitals. Encourage your newsletter staff to include local businesses, news media, business groups and chambers on your external newsletter distribution lists.

### **Submit an Opinion Piece on Positive Impact**

From delivering babies to employing personnel, hospitals are vital to the economic and social health of their communities. Often, this impact is not obvious to the community – and sometimes it is underappreciated. Local newspapers routinely accept opinion pieces, letters to the editor and personal perspective essays from local leaders and businesses. Every hospital has its own economic and human impact story to tell. Every hospital has poignant news and perspectives that can be shared with the community to build trust and credibility. The key to having an opinion piece placed is following the guidance provided on the news outlet's website, which can typically be found under the Opinion tab on most outlets' websites. Guidance often touches on word count, structure, timing, pitches and submission forms. Here are two guidance examples, from the **Washington Post** and the **Austin American-Statesman**, specific to their publications. Note that most major publications will not accept opinion pieces that have been submitted or placed elsewhere.

### **Submit a Good News Story to Local Media or THA's The Scope**

Similar to opinion pieces, hospitals can pitch or submit good news to local media – TV, newspapers, local radio and other digital outlets. Once published, good news can be digitally amplified (shared on social media) by hospitals to further enhance positivity and credibility between hospitals and their local communities. The simplest way to pitch a story to local media is to send a compelling, clear email with several facts and a description of why the story is compelling to readers/viewers. Several public relations companies offer excellent tips on how to do this; **MuckRack** and **Meltwater** are two great resources. Additionally, THA's digital news source, **The Scope**, pushes out Texas hospital industry news and often accepts story ideas and submissions in coordination with THA's communications team. Email ideas for The Scope content to Julia Mann, communications manager, at [jmann@tha.org](mailto:jmann@tha.org). For assistance with news media, contact Carrie Williams, chief communications officer, at [cwilliams@tha.org](mailto:cwilliams@tha.org).

## **Recommend Your Executive Team Donates to HOSPAC**

Along with making your own donation to HOSPAC, you can pay it forward for THA by spreading the word to your executive team on HOSPAC's role in championing hospital-friendly candidates for elected roles. Encourage your team members to join you in becoming a tangible part of HOSPAC's advocacy, and direct them to [www.hospac.org](http://www.hospac.org) to join and/or donate. For assistance or more information about how to engage your leadership in HOSPAC, contact Wendy Thomas, director, public policy & HOSPAC, at [wthomas@tha.org](mailto:wthomas@tha.org).

## **Consider Nominations for THA Awards**

There's nothing like peer recognition, a sturdy award and time in the limelight on stage at THA's annual conference. THA's **awards program** recognizes Texas hospital programs and people who make outstanding contributions to health care in Texas. During quarter two, hospital CEOs are encouraged to evaluate the eligibility and nomination information for each award, and consider staff members and/or initiatives that would be worthy of nomination. THA typically begins accepting nominations for the following awards in late summer:

- **Bill Aston Award for Quality**
- **Excellence in Community Service Award**
- **Legends Award**
- **Pioneer Award**
- **Earl M. Collier Award for Distinguished Health Care Administration**

For an overview of all THA awards, visit [www.tha.org/awards](http://www.tha.org/awards). For assistance or more information, contact THA's Sharon Beasley at [sbeasley@tha.org](mailto:sbeasley@tha.org).

## **Reply to/Amplify THA Social Posts**

Just like in quarter one, please take some time each month to either comment on or share a THA post. This is especially valuable on LinkedIn and Twitter. Doing so helps maximize the post reach and performance, meaning more people like you will see THA's content. Contact Amy Rios, senior director of marketing, at [arios@tha.org](mailto:arios@tha.org) if you have questions or need assistance.

## **June: Nominate an Employee to Join a Board, Council or Committee**

Every year, THA members have the opportunity to impact health care policy and governance through participation in one of **THA's boards, councils, committees or forums** that shape the work of THA.

The nomination period for THA's boards, councils and committees will be from **June 3 to July 3, 2024**. Any staff member of a THA member hospital is eligible to nominate a colleague or themselves for a position.

The Emerging Leadership Forum accepts new members year-round. If you or a member of your hospital's executive team would like to learn more about the Emerging Leadership Forum, contact Corey Cotton, vice president of Member Solutions at [ccotton@tha.org](mailto:ccotton@tha.org).

## QUARTER THREE (deadline: Sept. 30)

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### **Last Chance: Nominate Employee to Join a Board, Council or Committee**

With a July 3 deadline, there is still a little time to nominate a standout employee to serve in an official capacity with THA. It fosters a sense of inclusiveness and leadership and helps ensure your hospital's voice is heard. **THA's boards, councils, committees or forums** shape the work of THA. Any staff member of a THA member hospital is eligible to nominate a colleague or themselves for a position.

If you miss the deadline, note that the Emerging Leadership Forum accepts new members year-round. If you or a member of your hospital's executive team would like to learn more about the Emerging Leadership Forum, contact Corey Cotton, vice president of Member Solutions at [ccotton@tha.org](mailto:ccotton@tha.org).

### **Participate in a THA Advocacy Alert**

In the health care advocacy world, legislation and other policy initiatives move and morph at a rapid rate, and THA sometimes calls on its members to take swift action on a particular piece of policy – such as by soliciting member engagement in a THA Advocacy Alert.

These alerts, which are crucial to letting policymakers know where hospitals stand, often take on the form of prompting members to write their state or federal representative to educate them on a particular bill, and urge their support or opposition. When an Advocacy Alert is needed, THA issues notification by email and directs members to the online **THA Action Center** to participate. The Action Center automatically uses the address you enter to identify your representative and comes with a pre-written letter, but also allows you to personalize your message.



### Meet in Person With One Lawmaker/Staffer

Face time with lawmakers representing your district and/or their staff is a vital component of advocacy. Hearing directly from hospital leaders about the issues and challenges important to them gives lawmakers vital personal context for those issues and can directly influence their stances and votes.

You can find out which lawmakers – both federal and state – represent you at the state’s **Who Represents Me?** tool, and contact their offices to arrange a meeting. Amp up your meeting by also offering a tour of your hospital. Additional information about hosting a lawmaker tour is available in the next checklist item.



### Host at Least One Hospital Tour for Lawmakers/Staffers

It’s one thing to tell a lawmaker what your hospital – and others – need from policymakers in order to thrive. It’s another thing entirely to show them.

While getting in touch with legislators at their offices is a key part of being a hospital advocate, hosting lawmakers at your facility – offering them an up-close look at your day-to-day operations, and why you and other THA members are asking for their help at the Capitol – is an invaluable chance to for them to absorb those lessons.

The best time to meet with legislators is when they are home in their districts between legislative sessions – making 2024, an even-numbered “interim” year where the Legislature isn’t in session, a good time to do it. Anytime during the interim year can work, but the second half of 2024 is a particularly ideal time. You can use the opportunity to establish a relationship with a new legislator or get reacquainted with an incumbent.

THA has published a detailed guide on how to make these tours successful and well timed. The full guide is available via THA’s The Scope. **Show & Tell: Hosting a Lawmaker at Your Hospital.**



### Reply/Amplify 10 THA Socials

After following THA’s social media accounts, take some time each month to either comment on or share a THA post. This is especially valuable on LinkedIn and X, formerly Twitter. Doing so helps maximize the post’s reach and performance, meaning more people like you will see THA’s content. Contact Amy Rios, senior director of marketing, at [arios@tha.org](mailto:arios@tha.org) if you have questions or need assistance.

### Educate Staff on Advocacy Impact on Job

The actions you take from this checklist generate momentum and energy – and should involve your staff members as well. THA’s advocacy impacts hospital jobs across the organizational chart, whether it’s related to workplace violence protections, educational loan forgiveness, facility signage or resources to improve how care is delivered on the frontlines.

Take time to let your staff know they can make a difference. Lead by example and show them your work. Talk about advocacy in team meetings, showcase advocacy in hospital newsletters, or speak about critical legislative issues during all-staff town halls. Whether your employees donate to HOSPAC, retweet positive messages, show their hospital pride in their communities, or participate in grassroots advocacy through THA alerts, there are numerous ways to get involved and help make Texas hospitals even better places to work.

### Educate and Activate Employees to Amplify Social

It’s important to have frontline workers and health care providers engage with THA on social media. If you have a regular internal newsletter or message to senior leadership, consider encouraging your hospital’s staff members to follow the hospital and THA with the following message, or something similar:

“It’s important that I highlight the significance of [hospital name]’s involvement in the broader health care conversation, especially as it unfolds on social media. We are a member of the Texas Hospital Association, which advocates for policies and practices that directly impact our work and patients. Legislators and policymakers often gauge public opinion through social media, so our collective voice can in fact shape decisions. I highly encourage you to amplify THA messages – which could include following, reacting, commenting or sharing – to ensure our hospital’s voice is heard. Your engagement increases the visibility of these messages. You can follow THA on **LinkedIn, X (formerly Twitter), Facebook** or **Instagram**. I encourage you to regularly check their platforms to stay updated on key issues and messages.”

### Meet in Person With One Lawmaker/Staffer

In the weeks and months before the Texas legislative session formally begins on Jan. 14, 2025, lawmakers and their staff are poised to meet and receive up-to-the-minute information and perspectives about the issues brewing on the front burner.

Just like in quarter three, member face time with lawmakers representing your district and/or their staffs is a vital component of THA advocacy. Hearing directly from hospital leaders about the issues and challenges important to them gives lawmakers personal context for those issues and can directly influence their stances and votes. You can find out which lawmakers – both federal and state – represent you at the state’s **Who Represents Me?** tool, and contact their offices to arrange a meeting.



### **Submit Opinions on Hospital Value and/or Legislative Priorities**

Now is the time to double-down on efforts to ensure hospital perspectives are permeating through news media and other digital publications. With legislative session beginning Jan. 14, 2025, the clock is ticking to push out information about the economic and community virtues of hospitals. It’s best if this work occurs well before the holidays and can be done through opinion pieces, letters to the editor or other thought leadership channels.

Quarter four is also a great time to push out information on legislative priorities for Texas hospitals. This can be done through news releases, newsletters or hospital social media channels. The easiest way is to simply amplify THA’s priorities. THA will release its formal legislative priorities in the fall, and they will be posted on THA’s **White Papers & Reports** page.

Additionally, THA’s new white paper on **The Value of Hospitals** offers a deep dive into hospital value and includes facts, figures and messaging to further inform your communications.



### **Reply/Amplify 10 THA Socials**

Similar to quarter three, it’s beneficial to get in the habit of taking some time each week to either comment on or share THA posts that resonate with you. This is especially valuable on **LinkedIn** and **Twitter**. Doing so helps maximize the post’s reach and performance, meaning more people like you will see THA’s content. Contact Amy Rios, senior director of marketing, at [arios@tha.org](mailto:arios@tha.org) if you have questions or need assistance.

## **CORE MESSAGING**

THA is continually refreshing and tackling key issues and points related to its core messaging through its **White Papers & Reports clearinghouse** and its digital news and thought leadership source, **The Scope**.



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