

MAKING A DIFFERENCEⁱ

Approach #1: Become an Informed Consumer.

Investigate the health care options available to you and other members of your community. Research the health care provider or facility you currently use. They may provide services that you need but are not aware of.

Approach #2: Focus on local government.

The local government is responsible for making sure enough funding goes into community health care facilities, programs and initiatives. Stay informed of local health care policies, and monitor how your local government is spending your tax dollars to enhance the quality health care in your community.

Approach #3: Join forces with local organizations.

Get involved with organizations raising awareness around local health care issues. Attend community events, participate in campaigns or become a member.

Approach #4: Establish relationships with key, influential people.

Identify the leaders making or influencing critical decisions on health care in your community. This may be an elected official or the head of leading organization. Express your interest in their work; praise them for the positive impact they have made in the community; request meetings with them to discuss your thoughts on health care issues and inquire how you can assist them in their efforts.

Approach #5: Become part of a broader advocacy movement

Access barriers to health care are not unique solely to your community; people are struggling with similar problems across the country. Educate yourself on national health care issues. Compare what is going in your local community to what is going on in other people's communities, and research what other concerned people are doing to impact change nationally. Some actions people may be taking to influence national health care issues are making phone calls and writing letters to Congress, signing petitions, meeting face-to-face with members of Congress or protesting.

ⁱ *Access through Action Dialogues*, Human Services Coalition of Dade County, Inc.