

[All Articles](#)

# What Is A Patient Advocate, and How Do They Help? (Updated June 2025)



Medical Reviewer: Dr. Luke Nelligan, MD  
Published: June 30, 2025



10 min read

## CONTENTS

What Can a Patient Advocate Do?

Who Needs a Patient Advocate?

Where Do Patient Advocates Work?

The Proven Impact of Patient Advocacy

Patient Advocates Have Never Been More Accessible

FAQ: Common Questions About Patient Advocates

Related Reading

## KEY POINTS

- **Patient advocates** help patients focus on healing by breaking down barriers and providing critical support throughout the American healthcare system.
- From **scheduling appointments** and **managing insurance issues** to **attending medical appointments** and **organizing records**, patient advocates handle the day-to-day challenges of care so patients can focus on their health.
- **98% of Solace patients report better healthcare outcomes**, and advocates achieve a 54% success rate in overturning denied insurance claims, often saving patients thousands of dollars.
- Older adults, individuals with complex diagnoses, those facing insurance challenges, and anyone feeling overwhelmed by the healthcare system see the **greatest impact from advocacy**.
- Unlike hospital-employed advocates who may face conflicts of interest, independent advocates like those at Solace **work exclusively for patients** with no competing loyalties or institutional pressures.
- **Solace advocates are covered by Medicare and many Medicare Advantage programs**, making professional advocacy accessible to millions of Americans across all 50 states.

Healthcare is anything but easy. Patients face an endless stream of jargon, insurance struggles, appointment delays, and countless other challenges. On a good day, it's stressful. But when a patient is vulnerable – say, they're a senior, or they're reeling from a complex diagnosis, or both – managing the U.S. healthcare system can be downright overwhelming.

That's where patient advocates come in.

Patient advocates, like those at Solace, are seasoned experts who have spent years mastering the ins and outs of healthcare. They've been on the inside as nurses, social workers, pharmacists, and other healthcare professionals. They've seen exactly how the system fails patients – which is why they're so skilled at making it work.

The profession of patient advocacy has evolved significantly since its origins in the 1950s, when families of cancer patients first raised concerns about treatment practices and research ethics. What began as grassroots advocacy has grown into a recognized profession, with advocates now working in hospitals, independently, and through organizations like Solace to ensure patients receive the care they deserve.

With an advocate, you've got a partner in the healthcare struggle, and you're never alone. Whether you prefer to be hands-on or let your advocate handle most everything, they're here to make things easier.

In fact, **98% of Solace patients report better healthcare outcomes after working with an advocate.**



What Can a Patient Advocate Do?

A patient advocate does whatever they need to guide you through the healthcare system and deliver top-notch care. The scope of their work is remarkably broad, addressing both clinical and non-clinical barriers that can prevent you from getting the care you need.

#### Appointment Management and Coordination

- **Scheduling Appointments:** This sometimes means working to expedite visits in urgent situations, or scheduling a complex series of appointments with multiple specialists. Even in simpler cases, they'll always listen to the hold music so you don't have to.
- **Attending Medical Appointments:** Your advocate can join you virtually for important appointments to ensure questions are answered and concerns are addressed properly. They'll prepare key questions beforehand to maximize effectiveness and ensure nothing important gets overlooked.
- **Care Transitions:** Advocates manage transitions between facilities, like moving from hospital to rehabilitation center, to prevent dangerous miscommunications. They'll review discharge plans to ensure you understand follow-up care requirements.

#### Medical Information and Education

- **Providing Medical Information:** Sometimes it can be tough to even understand your treatment plan, especially if you're dealing with a complex diagnosis or multiple doctors. Advocates are master explainers; they can help patients understand their diagnosis, their treatment options, and next steps.
- **Research and Information Gathering:** Your advocate can research medical conditions using reliable sources, find appropriate specialists with expertise in specific conditions, and investigate treatment options to help you make informed decisions about your care.
- **Medical Documentation:** Advocates organize medical records from multiple providers into a coherent, accessible format. They'll retrieve missing documents from various healthcare facilities to create a complete medical history and identify and correct errors in medical records.

#### Insurance and Financial Support

- **Assisting with Insurance:** Advocates can massively reduce the financial stress of healthcare. They'll handle denials, resolve billing issues, and even craft appeals. Essentially, they'll manage your claims so you don't have to – and they'll make sure you're billed fairly.
- **Financial Assistance:** Solace advocates have a 54% success rate for overturning denied insurance claims. They also reduce medical bills by identifying errors, working with providers to establish payment plans, and securing financial aid from government programs and nonprofits.
- **Prescription Support:** Advocates can find discounts on prescriptions and other healthcare expenses to reduce your out-of-pocket costs, and help with insurance pre-authorizations to prevent delays in necessary treatments.

#### Communication and Coordination

- **Communicating with Healthcare Teams and Facilities:** Advocates can act as a liaison between all of a patient's healthcare providers to make sure everyone understands the patient's care and nothing slips through the cracks. They'll make sure your doctors are on the same page and keeping you informed. And they'll work to guarantee care continuity across all of your doctor visits and any facility stays.
- **Family Communication:** Advocates keep family members updated on care plans, treatments, and medical status, which is especially important for caregivers who need to stay informed about their loved one's condition.
- **Translation Services:** They translate complex medical language into plain, understandable terms that you can comprehend, making sure you truly understand your health situation.

#### Resource Connection and Support

- **Connecting with Resources:** Advocates locate local resources like support groups, transportation services, and food assistance programs. They'll connect you with therapists and social workers when additional support is needed.
- **Emotional Support:** Beyond the practical aspects, advocates provide coaching and encouragement throughout your healthcare journey. They listen to concerns with empathy and understanding, help you process difficult decisions, and celebrate milestones in recovery or treatment progress.



# Who Needs a Patient Advocate?

Anyone can benefit from a patient advocate, just like anyone entangled in the legal system can benefit from a lawyer. Advocates are like having a nurse in the family – they handle any healthcare problem with a superior level of understanding and skill.

That said, some of the groups who see the greatest impact:

## Older Adults

As we age, healthcare becomes more involved. Seniors often see multiple specialists, take numerous medications, and face increasingly complex treatment plans. Advocates help older adults manage care across multiple providers, simplify these treatment plans, and ensure nothing falls through the cracks. They're especially valuable when family members live far away or have their own demanding schedules.

## Individuals with Complex Diagnoses

Conditions like cancer, autoimmune diseases, or multiple chronic conditions require careful coordination and attention to detail. Advocates make sure patients see all the right specialists, understand their treatment options, and that no details fall through the cracks. They can also help patients access clinical trials or emerging treatments that might benefit their specific condition.

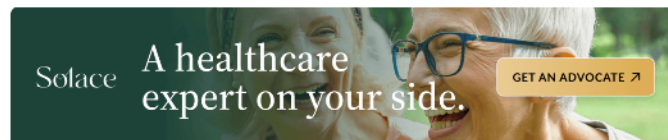
## Those Facing Insurance Challenges

From denied claims to confusing billing statements, an advocate's expertise can save a LOT of time, stress, and money. With healthcare costs rising and insurance becoming increasingly complicated, having someone who understands the system can make a significant financial difference.

## People with Limited Health Literacy

Not everyone feels comfortable asking questions in medical settings or understanding medical terminology. Advocates bridge this gap, ensuring that all patients – regardless of their educational background or familiarity with healthcare – can make informed decisions about their care.

Advocates are especially valuable during major life transitions, like adjusting to a [new diagnosis](#), starting Medicare, or recovering from hospitalization. These are times when the stakes are high and the system feels most overwhelming.



# Where Do Patient Advocates Work?

The short answer: It depends. In fact, patient advocates can work remotely, which has made advocacy services more accessible than ever before.

Let's break this down:

## Hospitals

Some patient advocates are employed directly by hospitals to support patients during their stays. While these advocates can be helpful, they ultimately work for the hospital, which can limit their ability to challenge hospital policies or practices that might not be in a patient's best interest.

## Private Practice

Some advocates work independently, providing personalized services directly to patients. These advocates typically charge hourly fees and work with clients who can afford to pay out of pocket.

## Advocacy Organizations Like Solace

Solace is unique, offering personalized advocacy services to patients across the country, and patients don't have to leave their living rooms. After you speak with your advocate, they can start fighting for you immediately. Unlike hospital-employed advocates, **Solace advocates work exclusively for patients, ensuring no conflicts of interest.**

## Government and Nonprofit Organizations

Some state governments and nonprofit organizations also employ patient advocates, particularly for specific populations like those with mental health conditions or seniors in nursing homes.

The beauty of modern patient advocacy is that geography doesn't have to be a barrier. A skilled advocate can work effectively on your behalf regardless of where they're physically located, as long as they understand the healthcare systems and insurance networks in your area.

## The Proven Impact of Patient Advocacy

The benefits of working with a patient advocate extend far beyond convenience. Research and real-world outcomes demonstrate significant improvements in both health outcomes and patient satisfaction.

Studies have shown that patients supported by advocates experience fewer treatment errors and require fewer readmissions after discharge. The emotional support provided by advocates also addresses the isolation often experienced by those with complex health conditions, with individuals with chronic illnesses being at higher risk for depression than those with other mental health conditions.

From a financial perspective, advocates have proven their worth time and again. **Solace advocates maintain a 54% success rate for overturning denied insurance claims**, often saving patients thousands of dollars. They also identify billing errors, negotiate payment plans, and connect patients with financial assistance programs that many people don't know exist.

Perhaps most importantly, advocates help reduce the cognitive burden of managing healthcare, allowing patients to focus their energy on healing rather than paperwork, phone calls, and system challenges.

## Patient Advocates Have Never Been More Accessible

Patient advocates are here to simplify the system, fight for your rights, and make sure you get the care you deserve. But they can only do so if they're affordable and easy to find.

Thanks to Solace, advocates are readily available to patients in all 50 states. **Plus, they've been covered by Medicare since January 2024, making professional advocacy accessible to millions of Americans who previously couldn't afford these services.**

The healthcare system isn't getting simpler anytime soon. If anything, it's becoming more complex as new treatments emerge, insurance rules change, and healthcare costs continue to rise. Having a skilled advocate on your side levels the playing field and ensures you get the care you need when you need it.

Whether you're facing a complicated diagnosis, struggling with insurance, or supporting an aging loved one, a Solace advocate can make all the difference. They bring years of experience, deep knowledge of healthcare systems, and most importantly, a commitment to putting your needs first.

Solace

A healthcare expert on your side.

[Get An Advocate ↗](#)

## FAQ: Common Questions About Patient Advocates

### What is a patient advocate?

A patient advocate is a healthcare professional who helps patients focus on healing. They do this by assisting with tasks like scheduling appointments, explaining treatment plans, coordinating care, managing insurance issues, and resolving [billing disputes](#).

### Who can benefit from a patient advocate?

Anyone can benefit, but patient advocates are especially helpful for:

- Older adults managing multiple providers or medications
- Individuals with chronic or complex diagnoses
- People facing challenges with insurance claims, billing errors, or disputes

- People facing challenges with insurance claims, billing errors, or denials
- Those feeling overwhelmed by the healthcare system
- Families supporting a loved one with serious health issues

#### What can't a patient advocate do?

Patient advocates can't prescribe medications, diagnose illnesses, or replace your doctor. Instead, they work alongside your medical team to make sure your needs are met and your care plan stays on track. They also can't make medical decisions for you, but they can help ensure you have all the information needed to make the best decisions for your situation.

#### How do patient advocates differ from case managers or social workers?

While there's some overlap, patient advocates focus specifically on ensuring you receive appropriate healthcare and treatment. Case managers typically work for insurance companies and focus on cost management. Social workers address broader social and emotional needs. Patient advocates are uniquely positioned to fight for your healthcare needs without competing priorities.

#### Does insurance cover patient advocacy services?

Yes! Solace advocates are covered by Medicare and many Medicare [Advantage programs](#). Check your eligibility to see if you qualify. This coverage represents a significant shift in how healthcare payers view advocacy – recognizing that advocates can actually reduce overall healthcare costs by preventing errors, improving outcomes, and reducing unnecessary utilization.

#### How do I find the right patient advocate?

Solace makes it easy to find the right advocate for your needs. Simply answer a few questions, and we'll match you with a qualified expert as soon as today. All Solace advocates are experienced healthcare professionals including physicians, nurses, pharmacists, and other specialists who understand the system from the inside.

#### How quickly can an advocate start helping me?

With Solace, you can often be matched with an advocate the same day you reach out. Once connected, your advocate can begin working on your behalf immediately, whether that means making phone calls, reviewing documents, or preparing for upcoming appointments.

*This article is for informational purposes only and should not be substituted for professional advice. Information is subject to change. Consult your healthcare provider or a qualified professional for guidance on medical issues, financial concerns, or healthcare benefits.*



## Related Reading

- [What Is a Health Advocate and How Can They Help You?](#)
- [When Should You Ask for a Patient Advocate?](#)
- [Does Insurance Cover Patient Advocates?](#)
- [How Denied Claims Crush Patients \(and How Advocates Fight Back\)](#)
- [The Importance of Health Advocacy](#)



David Teich  
Senior Writer

David is a senior writer specializing in healthcare and patient advocacy at Solace. He writes about the challenges patients face—and how the right support can make all the difference.

WE'RE HERE FOR YOU

Find an advocate and get  
the help you need

Get Started

## Solace

Solace puts an advocate in your corner—someone who's spent years in healthcare, knows the system, and takes on the toughest parts of your care. Don't do this alone.



*Eligibility varies by plan. Advocates do not provide medical or legal advice or services.*

Follow us on

