

Impact of advocacy letters sent to hospital administrators

Feedback from the libraries that participated

Positive Responses

CO

I really appreciated the effort behind these letters, and it was a great opportunity for our little library to connect to something much larger and well respected. I don't think the administrators who received the letter had thought about our library within this context before. I hope that this opportunity is offered every year.

FL

The letter was a wonderful idea! Worked very well here. Rather than send it to my immediate boss, I had the letter sent to the CEO for the organization, who was very impressed. He wrote me back a wonderful reply and thanked me for being an asset to the organization. (I can email you a copy of it, if you'd like.) I personalized the letter by adding in the work that I'm doing and have done for local, state, and national organizations.

My recommendation would be to send out something along this vein every other year.

FL

Yes, I do believe that the letter does make an impact. I feel that it should be done every year, but it shouldn't be just a form letter. It should include something specific to the particular library, which would make it obvious that NLM is aware of library's efforts and accomplishments.

FL

Even though the library service is well supported and appreciated at the highest level of our organization, the letter was passed around and added to our prestige. So I would certainly vote for a continuum. Some hospital libraries may not be here in five years. Every other year, maybe? If you were not wanting to do it yearly.

The way ideas were solicited and the letter reflected the ideas, it couldn't have been done better.

GA

A few days after I received my copy of the letter, I got my administrator's copy with this hand-written note in the corner: Jane, Thanks for the recognition you bring to us nationally and for all you do for us here. Great job! [signed with my CEO's first name, cc his senior VP.] I thought it was wonderful, and encouraged other librarians in my statewide association to take advantage of the letter. I'd love to see it offered again, maybe not yearly, but five years is too long. Even years?

A GMR Library

I sent a version of the letter to our new CEO and received a congratulatory note in reply. I believe in Library advocacy at any level.

ID

I believe the advocacy letter helped increase library visibility among our executive staff at my institution. The letter was routed to all members of our leadership council including our system CEO and COO. I received a congratulatory note from the Vice-President of Human Resources, to whom I report. I would be delighted if letters could be sent out again. I would recommend every 3 to 5 years. I think every year might be overkill. Thank you for providing this valuable support to hospital librarians.

ID

I feel the advocacy letter had a positive impact here at Eastern Idaho Regional Medical Center. I think every 3 to 5 years would be great to repeat. Once a year is probably too frequent for it to be meaningful. The focus on evidence based care is making the library and its subscription to tools like the Cochrane Database more visible with department managers and that gets reflected to administration as well.

IL

I feel that the letter was important, while I didn't hear from the CEO acknowledging receipt of the letter, I have done an important search for him on a health system committee that he chairs. In addition, he is now participating in my libraries current awareness service. Our CEO has been here 3 years, and prior to this has not used any library services.

The letter addressed the value of libraries in hospitals. I believe it is important to remind administration of our value to our organizations through our delivery of information that supports our institution's mission.

IL

I received a thank you note from my administrator and he also praised the library in the monthly newsletter.

KS

My CEO forwarded to me the opened envelope with his initials. I assume that means he looked at it, and wanted me to see it (and/or file it). Thanks for this effort from Wayne to advocate for us!

MD

I thought the Advocacy Letter was GREAT..... Our COO left about two weeks after the letter was sent...he knew that the library had a great impact because I am extremely active in our hospital in so many ways, including being a past co-chairman of our hospital ethic's committee. I think the letter is fine as written and should go to the COO as well as the Vice President of Medical Staff Affairs....once a year.

MS

I believe the letter was well received by my CEO, especially considering he was new to our corporation. It was a very well written letter.

Since it's a voluntary sign-up, I think it should be offered annually. I might like to do another one in a year or two - depends on how often administrators change or if my "chain of command" changes. Having the option to send a letter would be great. Thanks for your efforts!

MN

I had a letter sent to our CEO and three hospital presidents. The bad news is I didn't hear boo from the hospital presidents. The good news is that our CEO did read the letter and asked my boss for our staff roster so he could send personal notes to each one thanking them for their contributions. I've seen the cards on several staff members desks. He also asked for me to write a column to put on his website highlighting library services but due to more pressing news the column never ran. I used the data and comparable ROI figure in my narrative.

I do think it was a useful advocacy measure but I would like to see some sort of personalized data or item in the letter that tells the administrator how (how much) the library contributes to the industry (ILL volumes, benchmark figures, something...) The realization that the library touches their own and the greater medical community may garner recognition not readily achieved otherwise.

ND

I was one who asked that the letter be sent to my administrator. I believe it had to have made some impression. My administrator forwarded it to me with a nice note. (He is a strong supporter of the library anyway, but I think attention from someone outside our organization is a plus.) I really don't think there's any way to quantify the results at all, but it has to be positive.

If this were done every year, it would lose some effect. I'd say every three to five years would be better. Thanks for your efforts on our behalf.

OH

I received a "CHIP" from my boss thanking me for my work. It is an in-house program for employees to recognize co-workers for outstanding efforts. One CHIP (Caring Helps in Patient Satisfaction) is good for a \$1.00 DQ coupon (my favorite) and about 15 gets 8 hrs personal time off. There are choices for various quantities of CHIPS.

TN

Here's what happened to me after the CEO and CMO (my immediate supervisor) received this year's letter. I received a handwritten letter from the CEO thanking me for everything I do for the hospital community. She also recognized me at Leadership Council that week. I also received a bouquet of flowers from the CEO and the CMO jointly with a card of gratitude. Due to the CEO's announcement at Leadership Council I also received flowers from the very large Hospitalist group (very active library users). Yep, it worked for me. I would suggest that the letter come every three years or so. Thanks for doing this....

UT

Yes, I believe it did have an impact. The CEO of my organization took note of it and mentioned to my supervisor that he had received it. It played a part in my ongoing campaign for recognition of the library's value to the organization and the services it offers. I definitely think this sort of thing should be continued annually. Thank you again for doing this.

VA library - SEA

Our hospital administrator was most impressed with the advocacy letter. I hope that you can continue this on an annual basis.

WA

Yes, I believe this letter has a great impact. Our hospital administrator came down here to congratulate me in person. And yet, they will file the letter for future reference.

Our libraries in the Calgary Health Region have merges several times for the last 13 years. We are now one library six sites (instead of six hospital libraries). For the last 2 years, our admin team is discussing about merging again with the Health Science Library of University of Calgary.

WA

Who can say what impact these kinds of things can have? The COO and CIO to whom I had you send letters are not usually in my sphere of operations, so I had no direct feedback.

For some time, I wanted to find a way to meet with our CIO and his associates on a regular, though not frequent, basis, to ascertain what initiatives were coming and how we can best align with them. I report to someone who reports to our CIO, and she was enthusiastic about making this happen, which it did for the first time earlier this month. Was the letter a factor in making this happen? I don't know. But I do feel strongly that external validation of what we do, of our value to the organization, of our special skills, and of our potential to provide return on investment are extremely important. When you're just one (or two or three) voices in an organization, having the director of the health sciences library with which your faculty are affiliated speak on your behalf is, I think, very powerful. Please continue to offer this service, annually or biannually, with a fresh take each time. Thanks very much.

WA

Our CEO appreciates our Consumer Library. He speaks about it very favorably. Keep the letters coming :).

WA

The letter was mentioned to me as having been received both by our CEO and my direct supervisor (the CEO had forwarded it to her). As far as impact.....I don't know. But the fact that the letter was mentioned to me shows that the receipt of it was noted, and I would expect the content had some favorable impact.

I do think it's a good idea for letters to be mailed again. Perhaps every year is too often, but every five years is too long in between. How about every other year? And, as before, please let us all know when the letters have been sent. We can pay attention in each of our hospitals regarding receipt/any reaction. Thanks for your efforts.

WY

My administrator made the effort to stop by and wish me well, he also sent a copy to my immediate supervisor and myself with a handwritten note thanking me for all that I do.

No response from administrators

CO

None has said anything to me. With regard to future frequency, I'd say every three years.

CO

I almost hate to comment on this, because I thought it was such a great idea. The letter was sent to our VP of Patient Care Services (my supervisor's boss). She passed it immediately to my supervisor, who passed it on to me. I believe that the term used was "propaganda" as in "Here's some propaganda that was sent from some library group." I explained the program to but I don't think that the letter really made an impact. Maybe because it was coming from a library organization. That said, I would participate again in the future, maybe targeting a different set of administrators.

FL

I never heard any follow-up from the Administrator at all. It was like nothing had happened. This is fairly normal though, because I believe when I received my AHIP renewal he was made aware of it, and I did not hear anything from his office, either. Actually, I haven't seen him for awhile, but I believe he still works here!! So it is hard for me to know if the letter had any effect.

I am leaving this position this month, so I cannot comment on whether you should send one next year or not....not sure of the status of the library at the moment.

FL

I couldn't tell. There were no responses from Administration. I do think it is a good idea but I don't think I would send every year particularly if the same Administrator gets it. Maybe every 3 years...???

GA

I am sorry to say that after requesting the letter my vice president has not said anything to me about the letter nor has my direct supervisor.

I would like to try again but this time I would request letters be sent to others here at the hospital that may recognize the importance.

ID

I have had no indication that the letter had an impact on our administrator. It was not mentioned to me. On the other hand, the library continues to be supported in spite of serious budget cuts.

IL

I wish that I could say that this advocacy letter made an impression on my employer. No indication was made that this letter ever arrived. Thank you for the thoughts. I want to believe that somewhere someone's administrators were impressed by this effort.

I doubt that it changed his perception. I don't think an annual letter would be useful. It would lose its impact. Every 3 or 5 years might be useful. Maybe every year they could be available if people have a new boss or CEO and would like one sent.

IL

I hate to say it, but I am not sure the letter had much impact.

I think the only thing that would have much impact would be publication in an influential publication that hospital administrators read regularly that touts the value of a hospital library or at least the librarian. The Wall Street Journal would be perfect. Modern Healthcare would be OK. Harvard Business Review would help but only if the story gets picked up by one of the news sources our administrators see (we see Health Advisory Board news every day). Of course, JCAHO's seeming dwindling support has not been good. We were just surveyed and the library was not even mentioned.

I have thought something relating Solucient's Top 100 Hospitals to the existence of a library would be good but I have not had time to do that research. I know that Solucient's Top 100 designation is done on pure numbers (financial and quality markers). Our hospital is on a quest to regain that status. We were designated a Top 100 hospital by complete surprise in 2002. If such research is done, it would need to be published in something administrators read. Yesterday I read an article in Majors newsletter by Doody about the value of a hospital librarian that was pretty darn good. It would be even better if it appeared in a publication other than a library publication. If I send that to my administration, it will seem self serving.

I still have a job and am struggling to change our library to an electronic learning center under the direction of our Director of Organizational and Staff Development. I constantly have to keep reminding her of the clinical needs of our physicians and staff. She is heavily oriented toward management development. Doctors have lost power here.

Sorry for the long response, but I thought it might be useful somehow. Basically, I don't think another letter will help. We need more than that.

IL

I never received any indication from Administration that such a letter was received.

KY

Thank you for your initiation of this important activity. Personally, I didn't see our hospital's administrator knocking at my door to pass along any comments. However, the library is still up and running for the five years I've been here and prior to that for 17 years with my predecessor. I know with budgetary crunches and downsizing within an organization, the library is usually one to get the axe. However, I have a supervisor who goes to bat for our library and my position. I, also, do my best to stay in the forefront in any way I can as a means of publicizing the library through presentation at new employee hospital orientation, physician surveys, patient/family member services, thorough and accurate lit searches for nurses returning to school (get word of mouth advertisement here), bulletin boards, promote local public library initiatives through local consortia work, hold position on State library consortia group, etc. When our "other community hospital" cut their staff to 24 hours per week and subsequently lost their librarian, I offered my services to them and his replacement. This was a gesture of good will on our part. As far as frequency of advocacy letters, I think on a bi-annual basis would be beneficial.

MD

We were one of the libraries that had letters sent. I did not hear anything back from our administrators but I do know they each received a letter and it was read. I did think this was a very nice thing to do but whether it really made any difference for the amount of work that must have gone into it I cannot say. I do thank you all for your efforts.

MI

I don't know if it had any direct impact but it certainly did not hurt and it helps to keep positive ideas in the forefront of their minds. I think a letter every 3 years or so would be good

MO

I haven't heard from the administrator as to whether he received the letter, but I know that if he received it he was glad to see it. I think this is a great idea!

I think it would be a good idea to include in the letter template a place to insert the name of the librarian at the institution. I know my busy CEO is more likely to read a letter more closely when he sees the name of one of his employees included in the text.

MT

I liked having the letter sent and would like to do it every year. I didn't see the impact (in fact my administrator didn't acknowledge it) but I think it's worthwhile and would like to see it continue.

ND

As far as I know, the letter had no impact whatsoever on our library. I never heard a word from Administration. I'm not surprised, however. The Medical Library is not a priority here. In fact, my budget and hours have been cut to "bare bones". Nonetheless, I think it's a good idea. I can't reach them. Maybe you can. Thanks for all your hard work.

OH

My administrator did receive the letter because she forwarded it on to me. She did not attach any comments to the letter and never mentioned receiving the letter. Based on this information, I don't believe the letter had any impact on how my administrator views the library and what we do.

OH

I saw no impact/response. Who knows if he ever even saw the letter? I send the CEO at least 2 emails a day and he instantly reads anything I send him. Still, I would like to have the opportunity to do this every year. Thanks for asking and for doing this. I think it is a great idea.

OH

I am one librarian who is shared by two hospitals. I had letters sent to the Presidents of both hospitals. I saw no change. Neither president even acknowledged receiving the letters. Thanks for the effort.

OR

If it made any impact, it might have been subliminal. I heard nothing from my administrator nor from my boss, both of whom received a copy. I hope they read it, because it was an excellent letter. I cannot recommend doing it again, however, since I received no feedback from it at all.

OR

Hello library friends. I have an extremely pro-library administrator, so I don't think it had any particular impact, and I didn't really see any change. However, every little bit helps. I would rather not see this every year, as then it becomes a bit pro forma and not as valuable, but I think every 5 years is too long. I would like to see this when especially when something exciting and novel can be touted. Thanks for doing this.

OR

No response here. I think it may be effective in smaller institutions. I'm in a health system and the senior administration in my area would be highly unlikely to have time to read anything that didn't require their action. **For my setting, an appropriate pitch from me when I have their attention or comments of physicians are the things that make a difference.**

I don't mean to sound negative but I question that this is an effective strategy in many settings.

SC

How about a letter every other year? I can't define the impact, but I think it is impressive. We need all the help, real or perceived, we can get.

SD

I am unaware of any effect it had. None of the individuals who should have received the letters made any comments to me. Thanks for the effort, but I can't document any effect one way or the other.

TN

I never received any response from the letter locally, that doesn't mean that it wasn't read and mentally filed though. It couldn't hurt. I do find I get feedback when someone in our hospital sends a letter of appreciation. Positive words are always meaningful.

TN

To my great disappointment--I did not even get acknowledgement that it was received.

TN

I did not hear anything about it from my administrators

VA library - SEA

Please, send advocacy letter every year. Management has never mentioned receiving your letter.

WA

Unfortunately, I don't think the letter made any impact. Or, none that I noticed. As far as another letter, I think in the three, maybe four, year span would be good.

WA

Sad to say, the letter was never acknowledged or commented on by our director or administration. Thanks for your efforts - I appreciated it!

WI

I don't know if the letter had any impact. The administrator never mentioned it, and library use/support has not gone up noticeably in the last few months. However, the reminder that hospital libraries are a

part of a national network of library professionals is always a good thing and despite any tangible evidence that this changed behavior, I would like to see the program continue biennially, or upon request whenever a new administrator is hired.

WY

I don't know what, if any, effect they had. The administrator at my hospital thinks library services are important and is a good supporter, as are the medical staff.

Wants Another Opportunity

Military Library

I did not have a letter sent to my hospital administrator last October; I should have. Hopefully, you will send them out this year, catching a lot that missed out on it last year. Then, every third year would be good since military (DOD) hospitals change commanding officers that often. Five years would be too long to go without a reminder of the necessity for libraries.