Patient Advocacy Certificate

NAVIGATE. CONNECT. CARE.

UCLA Extension
Launch a rewarding new career helping individuals and families navigate the complex health care system—become a Patient Advocate.
Patient advocates are guiding lights in an ever-changing health care system, handling any number of logistical, financial, and communication aspects of care to enhance the patient experience. This strategic and growing role is designed to support patients and families in navigating their care so they can focus on what's most important: health and wellbeing.

This in-depth program will equip students with the knowledge and skillset to pursue a career in patient advocacy and navigation.

“The role of a patient advocate”

Sometimes words can relieve stress and provide clarity. Patient advocacy is about empathetic communication and supporting the patient experience. As health care systems grow in complexity, hospitals, insurance companies, and health care providers are recognizing the critical role patient advocates can play. When patients are preoccupied with the physical and emotional burdens of their medical conditions, they need someone to help them navigate through insurance claims, treatment options, and the financial aspects—someone who speaks that language and whom they can trust.

A day in the life of a patient advocate can include any number of these activities:

**Patient Navigation**
- Facilitate communication between medical professionals and patients
- Facilitate access to care and locate doctors and specialists
- Assist families with the resources they need to make critical decisions
- Schedule, coordinate, and attend appointments with various health care providers
- Identify resources for interpretation services

**Navigate Insurance**
- Help file insurance claims
- Manage or negotiate hospital bills
- Offer information on billing, procedures, and policies
- Provide information so the patient understands their health and financial benefits

**Resolve Issues**
- Facilitate communication and address concerns between patient and medical team
- Provide information on federal regulations and guidelines with regard to privacy and patient rights
- Collect and report data on patient issues, make recommendations for change, and ensure safety and quality care

**UCLA Extension’s Patient Advocacy Certificate**

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Considering the constantly evolving landscape of health care, this program is ideal for both entry-level and mid-level patient advocates. Coursework is updated based on the latest government enacted laws and policies and updates to reflect current health care practices. The program provides the broad-based, fundamental knowledge required to be successful.

Students who complete the certificate program will be able to:

- Describe the fundamentals of the U.S. health care system, including common issues in patient advocacy
- Support patients with their care plans
- Address and resolve complaints involving medical professionals and insurance companies
- Implement best practices as they are applied to legal and financial issues within the health care system
- Apply effective communication skills with other health care professionals and team members
- Practice compassionate communication and active listening skills to work effectively and empathetically with patients and families
What do patients need most in the complex health care system? You.

The program is available entirely online.

The program was developed by a team of academics and seasoned health care professionals to educate and ground students in the necessary fundamentals and specialized skills of this emerging area of health care.

Would I be a good candidate for this program?

Many students who find success in this program come from health care, legal, or insurance industry backgrounds. However, anyone who has a passion to help others with the logistical aspects of health care is an ideal candidate.

There are nuances in a patient advocate's work, many of which are focused around ensuring the patient is receiving all the support he/she needs at a critical and sensitive time. This requires a great deal of empathy, caring, and patience—but also persistence, focus and the ability to persevere through trying situations. Successful patient advocates are emotionally intelligent, excellent communicators, and are skilled at problem solving—on a professional and interpersonal level.

The prerequisites for the Patient Advocacy Certificate are a Bachelor's Degree in any field or an Associate's Degree in: Nursing, Respiratory Therapy, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Physical Therapist Assistant, or other allied health field.
There are a number of settings where one can find a patient advocate. As with any career, the most successful patient advocates find positions suited to their education and skillset based on a number of criteria: prior experience in the health care field, continuing education, and work/mentor relationships.

Those who have prior experience in the medical field—such as nurses, social workers, or other members of hospital staff—tend to have the most success finding work within a hospital or clinic setting.

Others who possess backgrounds in legal, insurance, or financial services may find positions well-suited to them in related settings such as insurance companies, government agencies, exchanges, or as advocates working directly with individuals and families.

As you gain experience, and continue your education around today’s health care policies and practices, you will find that patient advocacy is emerging as a career in many different sectors in health care.
**PROGRAM CURRICULUM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Patient Advocacy Courses</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Winter</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HLT POL X 407.1 — Fundamentals of the U.S. Health Care System: Essentials for Patient Advocacy</td>
<td>Online</td>
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<td>HLT POL X 407.2 — The Practice of Patient Advocacy</td>
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<td>HLT POL X 407.9 — Communication Strategies in the Health Care System</td>
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<td>HLT POL X 407.4 — Health Care Law and Legal Issues in Patient Advocacy</td>
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<td>HLT POL X 407.5 — Introduction to Health Care Finance (6 weeks)</td>
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<tr>
<td>HLT POL X 407.7 — Introduction to Bioethics (5 weeks)</td>
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<td>HLT POL X 407.8 — Care Planning and Patient Navigation</td>
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*This schedule is subject to change. Course availability varies.*

**PROGRAM COST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certificate Candidacy Fee:</td>
<td>$175</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuition</td>
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<td>Estimated Program, Textbook, Materials:</td>
<td>$700</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>$5,745</td>
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*Note: The above estimates are subject to change and DO NOT include parking or other incidental educational expenses.*

**FUNDING YOUR EDUCATION**

You may qualify for UCLA Extension grants, private education loans, AmeriCorps Awards, or Lifetime Learning Tax credits. Learn more: finaid@uclaextension.edu, or (310) 825-4246, or (310) 206-7864.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

To learn more about the Patient Advocacy Certificate, go to our website: uclaextension.edu/patientadv or contact the program office at (310) 825-7093 or email patientadv@uclaextension.edu.

**TO ENROLL**

Please visit uclaextension.edu/patientadv today.

**ABOUT UCLA EXTENSION**

UCLA Extension is the continuing education division of the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). We offer courses on evenings and weekends in Westwood, Downtown L.A., and Woodland Hills, plus online classes available around the globe. Courses range from business, arts, engineering, and IT to entertainment studies, public policy, sciences, public health, the humanities, and more. Explore UCLA Extension at: uclaextension.edu.