As communicators in the health care field continue to expand their use of social media, the American Hospital Association has compiled the following tips for using social media on behalf of a hospital, health system or other health care facility.

Under federal law, hospitals that are 501(c)(3) organizations can, within permissible limits, lobby about issues, including communicating with any legislator or legislative staff member, where the principal purpose is to influence legislation. There is an absolute prohibition on section 501(c)(3) organizations, like hospitals, participating or intervening in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to candidates for public office. However, "(c)(3)" hospitals can encourage their employees to register and remind them to vote through social media and other forms of communication. To ensure that your organization's activities are permissible forms of lobbying, and not impermissible campaigning, it is highly recommended that you consult with your organization's legal counsel before engaging on Twitter.

Note: The above parameters apply to posting on social media organically. Social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook, have specific guidance and parameters for advocacy and political content when used within advertising or other types of paid promotion. Please see each platform for specific guidance when running paid content.

Key Points and Tips to Remember:

DO Encourage Your Employees to Vote

- Provide information that helps your employees to vote.
    - Share polling locations near your hospital and key dates and information about the upcoming election.
    - Include links to polling location finders.

- Share voter registration information.
    - Provide information on how to get an absentee ballot and your state's voter hotline and information website.

- Remind them of the value of having their voice heard, especially on an issue as important as health care.

DON'T Endorse, Support or Intervene on behalf or in opposition to any candidate.