



BWF Client Advisory Series

Serving Our Communities: Health Care Fundraising in a Time of Crisis

Our health care institutions are prioritizing all available resources to address immediate patient needs, expand research and clinical trial efforts for testing and treatment, and maintain a healthy workforce ready to serve our communities. While these efforts were not necessarily a part of operating or strategic plans, nor the philanthropic agenda, they exemplify the true mission of our institutions to care for our patients from all walks of life.

As the economic impact unfolds, our development departments must be flexible with donors, proactive with outreach and steadfast in the commitment to the institution's mission. Philanthropy has been buffeted in the past but is resilient and comes back, stronger than ever. A focus on strategic communications, constituent engagement and sharing philanthropic needs and opportunities will be even more important to secure long-term success. The following offers ideas to address immediate needs, weather the current crisis and emerge ready to meet the future philanthropic needs of your institution.

Communicate Impact and Priorities

- Develop donor communications to showcase stories from “behind the scenes” of your institution. **Sharing stories** will help your donors understand your institution's vital responses to the crisis. Repurposing materials shared internally can save resources and provide a consistent message across all internal and external constituents.
- Illustrate your **impact on community** with a focus on mission and your hospital's commitment to improving health. When your institution is in the news for how it helped the community or contributed to fighting the crisis, share the story (print or video) across your donor communication channels.
- Build intentional and **personalized messages** to the board and key stakeholders. Sharing timely insider messages will equip these key constituents with tools to share the impact more broadly within their own networks.
- **Enhance research messages.** A solution to this infectious disease requires investments in research. Share your story of how philanthropy accelerates

research and discovery to expand our understanding of diseases and improve the health of our communities.

- Focus on your **philanthropic agenda**, especially if you are in or about to enter campaign. While the current crisis may change timelines or adjust priorities, long-term needs will remain. Be prepared to communicate the short-term needs. Donors will want to be a part of the solution and ready to help.

Share Philanthropic Impact

- Share the **immediate demands** in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis. Consider developing a specific fund to support the efforts and develop outreach materials outlining the need and value to vital programs and services. Share the information through targeted email and social media channels.
- Target donors who give through a **Donor-Advised Fund**. In a time when the markets fluctuate widely from day-to-day, donors may be reluctant to give stock or cash. Tapping a previous commitment to a donor-advised fund may provide resources to make an immediate impact across the institution. Stewarding that commitment may prepare the donor for a long-term commitment when the markets have stabilized.
- Review individual strategies for top donors to identify any **key partners** who could help lead COVID-19 efforts with a significant investment through their own giving and through engaging the corporate community. Plan to publicize such efforts within a targeted circle of peers. It can be comforting to see your peers take a leadership role in difficult times.
- Engage **current donors** interested in community outreach programs, research or patient care initiatives to provide a short-term, one-year emergency commitment to support crisis recovery.

Steward past support

- Communicate with top donors. A pause in the solicitation cycle provides an opportunity to **develop meaningful stewardship reports and outreach**. Now more than ever, helping a donor understand where past giving has grown a program, impacted patient care, encouraged others to give, and/or advanced research, will help keep your donors close.
- **Enrich your endowment reporting**. Showing impact through an enhanced narrative report, especially if there is market downturn, will provide added meaning in these turbulent economic times.
- Encourage those most impacted by philanthropic support to **reach out directly** to donors through email, phone or video. A call directly from the leadership, physician, nurse, staff or student directly impacted by philanthropy will further

solidify the donor's institutional connection to the hospital and understanding of their impact.

Across the nation and the world, communities are coming together to thank the health care workers at the frontlines. Residents are applauding and waving flags from their balconies and sending notes and videos of gratitude from various social media platforms. When we emerge from this crisis, you will be there to partner with your donors and, together, advance the mission and secure the health of our communities.

At BWF, we are ready to serve as thought partners to advance the mission of your organization in periods of sustained growth or economic uncertainty. Thoughtful decisions, especially in these challenging times, are essential to meeting key organizational objectives and philanthropic goals. To learn more about the BWF approach, please email info@bwf.com.