



www.APHAdvocates.org

Is Independent Advocacy Right for Me?

Transcript of Podcast 2: Making a Living as an Independent Advocate

Today's podcast is called Making a Living as an Independent Advocate. We're going to cover MONEY questions – like – can I make a living as a professional independent advocate? How much do advocates charge? What does it cost to get started?

I think, over the years, these have been the questions that maybe-someday-advocates ask the most... although they usually dance around them.

What they ask me: do people make a living doing this? They ask it as if making a living as an advocate shouldn't be allowed! As if creating a career out of helping someone isn't kosher! And honestly, I find that to be ridiculous... I mean – do you ever hear a doctor ask that question? Or a lawyer? Or any other service professional? Of course not!

What they really want to know, what they really want to ask is: How much money can I make? what do advocates charge? Can I afford to quit my job to be an advocate?

And what I so often hear – all the time! Is: I've been helping people all my life, now I just want to get paid for it!

Yup – you may also be thinking that! Go ahead – chuckle – I read your mind didn't I? uh-huh...

Whether or not you can make a living as an independent advocate is answered by responding with a definite maybe – in two parts.

Part I: Yes – when we look at just the numbers you can most definitely make a living at being an independent advocate. APHA has member advocates who are easily making six figures, and they have a waiting list of clients – they are THAT good. I know of one who made six figures in her first year of business! Making six figures in the first year is not the norm, but it's certainly possible. So that answers THAT part of the question.

What are those advocates charging? That I don't know for sure, because they all structure their contracts in different ways, and they charge different amounts for different services. But what I



www.APHAdvocates.org

can give you is a range of charges for all the advocates I know of in business – who are SUCCESSFUL – and let me emphasize that phrase “being SUCCESSFUL” – because there are many who are charging less than this who aren’t being successful – I’ll address that more in a minute.

Among successful advocates, the range of hourly charges seems to be from about \$75 to \$450 per hour. Yes, I said \$450 per hour. Now, I don’t tell you that so you’ll think – WOW – yes! I can make a ton of money! Because there is little to NO chance you can start out with those kinds of charges. The one advocate I know who charges \$450/hour has been doing independent, professional advocacy for decades. You aren’t there yet! If I had to make a guess on an average charge I would put it somewhere around \$150 an hour.

Now – as I mentioned a minute ago – there are advocates charging less than that \$75 per hour and guess what – they will be OUT of business – kaput! – in a few months. I know that may seem like a lot of money to you if you have been employed somewhere else up to this point, but remember, you’ll be self-employed, paying for things your employer paid for like health insurance, your work computer, or even retirement savings – and now that YOU will be your own employer, the costs for those things will come directly from – YOU.

I’ll throw in one other thought here – that is – the smartest, best prepared advocates have taken the time to figure out exactly what they should charge. There are books, and courses, and articles available to help with that, all available either free or with discounts provided to APHA members.

Now – Part 2 to this answer of making a living as an advocate:

Part 2 isn’t about money directly. Part 2 is about YOU and YOUR EFFORTs toward putting yourself out there to let the world know about your services and your ability to help them. It’s called Client Acquisition, it’s a marketing activity, and its paired with other business-related efforts you will need to make, like budgeting, and contracting, and obtaining liability insurance – all those tasks required to keep a business humming.

So that’s what I want you to know today. I want you to know that Yes!! Sing it loud and sing it proud! – you CAN make a living through professional, independent advocacy! And you CAN quit your job to do it! And you CAN be highly and financially successful, helping people on their journey through the healthcare system... Not only is it possible math-wise, but it’s possible in reality, because hundreds of people are doing it – today.



www.APHAdvocates.org

And I'm here to tell you – very proudly, like mother-hen proudly – that many of them are succeeding because they have turned to their APHA membership to help. Because that's what APHA does – we hold your hand through the process of learning the business skills needed, helping you to set up and grow your practice. That's WHY The Alliance of Professional Health Advocates exists. It's what we do, the core of our work – and we do it primarily for the patients who need you – by helping YOU to start and sustain a practice.

Find additional resources for this podcast and topic on the page where you downloaded your podcast:

<https://myapha.org/advocacy-right-for-me-podcast-2/>