

BEST PRACTICES FOR CONVENING A CONSUMER ADVISORY BOARD

Creating a **consumer advisory board** (CAB) is one way health care organizations can better support community needs and address underlying contributors to poor health.

Following are key considerations for health care systems to convene and maintain a consumer advisory board.

For more on how the Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS) is identifying best practices to engage community members, visit www.chcs.org/consumer-voice.



As part of CHCS' **Community Partnership Pilot**, the following health care organizations shared these ideas for effective consumer advisory boards.

- **Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program**
- **Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers**
- **Roots Community Health Center**
- **UCSF Women's HIV Program**
- **Stephen and Sandra Sheller 11th Street Family Health Services**



1

Lay the Groundwork

- » Define goals, roles, expectations, and scope upfront. One way to accomplish this is to create by-laws.
- » Gain leadership buy-in and develop a formal process for considering CAB recommendations.
- » Acknowledge that creating and maintaining a board requires substantial time, effort, and resources from both the health system and CAB members.



2

Recruit Members

- » Consider a variety of recruitment strategies, such as word-of-mouth, social media, and recommendations from staff and other clients.
- » Recruit a diverse range of CAB members. Consider education, literacy, employment status, gender, race/ethnicity, as well as experiences with the health care system.
- » Ensure applicants are aware of and willing to meet participation expectations.



3

Support Meaningful Participation

- » Collaborate to develop and set expectations for respectful and safe conversations.
- » Involve consumers in determining agendas.
- » Consider having a consumer chair the CAB.



4

Reduce Barriers to Participation

- » Empower members to set meeting times and locations, acknowledging that convenience may vary by community.
- » Provide transportation and childcare support.
- » Work with members to identify other barriers to participation and how to address them.



5

Compensate Members for Their Expertise

- » Value members' time and expertise through hourly wages, honoraria, gift cards, or meals.
- » Collaborate with CAB members to determine appropriate compensation rate.
- » Recognize that access to a bank is not universal, so paying cash may be the best option.