

Insights

4 Steps for Starting a Patient and Family Advisory Council



A cross between a focus group and an improvement

team, a patient and family advisory council (PFAC) is an effective way for a healthcare facility—be it a primary care practice or a hospital—to engage customers in improving the quality of care provided. The PFAC platform enables providers and patients to work side-by-side to discuss and test ways to enhance service delivery.

For practices seeking to become patient-centered medical homes, a PFAC can be essential. While it takes time, energy and commitment to build and maintain a PFAC, getting started is straightforward. Just follow these four steps from the [Creating a Patient and Family Advisory Council: A Toolkit for Pediatric Practices](#).

Step One: Assess Practice Readiness

It is important to conduct a self-assessment of the practice and the staff to determine readiness. Then you'll want to create a PFAC launch team. The launch team should include a physician champion, a staff member liaison and a parent partner. The launch team will clarify the structure of the PFAC (e.g., is it formal or informal) and develop a purpose statement and guidelines for the council.

Step Two: Recruit Members

A PFAC should represent the voices of the entire practice. The launch team should initiate a recruitment process that includes invitations to a diverse group of desired participants and host informal meetings where recruits can learn about PFAC member expectations. From there, members are selected and provided an orientation to the PFAC.

Step Three: Engage and Involve

Once your group is formed, be sure to provide practice supports (e.g., meeting materials at an appropriate level, meetings times that are convenient for families) and skill development (e.g., cultural competency training, deep listening skill building).

Step Four: Sustain, Evaluate and Improve

A great strategy to make PFAC members feel valued and to help sustain their efforts is to continuously share successes. It is also important to evaluate and incorporate feedback into the work. One way is by using the Medical Home Index self-assessment tool to target improvements moving forward.

More detailed information on each of these steps can be found in [Creating a Patient and Family Advisory Council: A Toolkit for Pediatric Practices](#). The free toolkit is a product of the Family-to-Family Health Information Center at the Federation for Children with Special Needs, Mass Family Voices and NICHQ.