

EMPOWERMENT IN CONSUMER GOVERNANCE

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This workshop focuses on how a consumer advisory board (CAB) and a governing board can enhance consumer involvement in governance and advocacy on behalf of consumers of the HCH project and in the community.

Different models for CABs and governing boards will be discussed, including real-life challenges and achievements.

Goals: Equip consumers and staff with knowledge, skills and inspiration

IMPORTANCE OF CONSUMERS ON ADVISORY AND GOVERNING BOARDS

“The only way to affect change in policy is to be part of the conversation”

- Help decision-makers understand the needs of consumers from the consumer point of view.
- Monitor HCH project performance and challenge decision-makers to consider consumer-driven options for health care delivery.
- Increase consumer confidence in making a difference
- Keep governing boards focused on the needs of the special population that homeless and formerly homeless consumers represent.



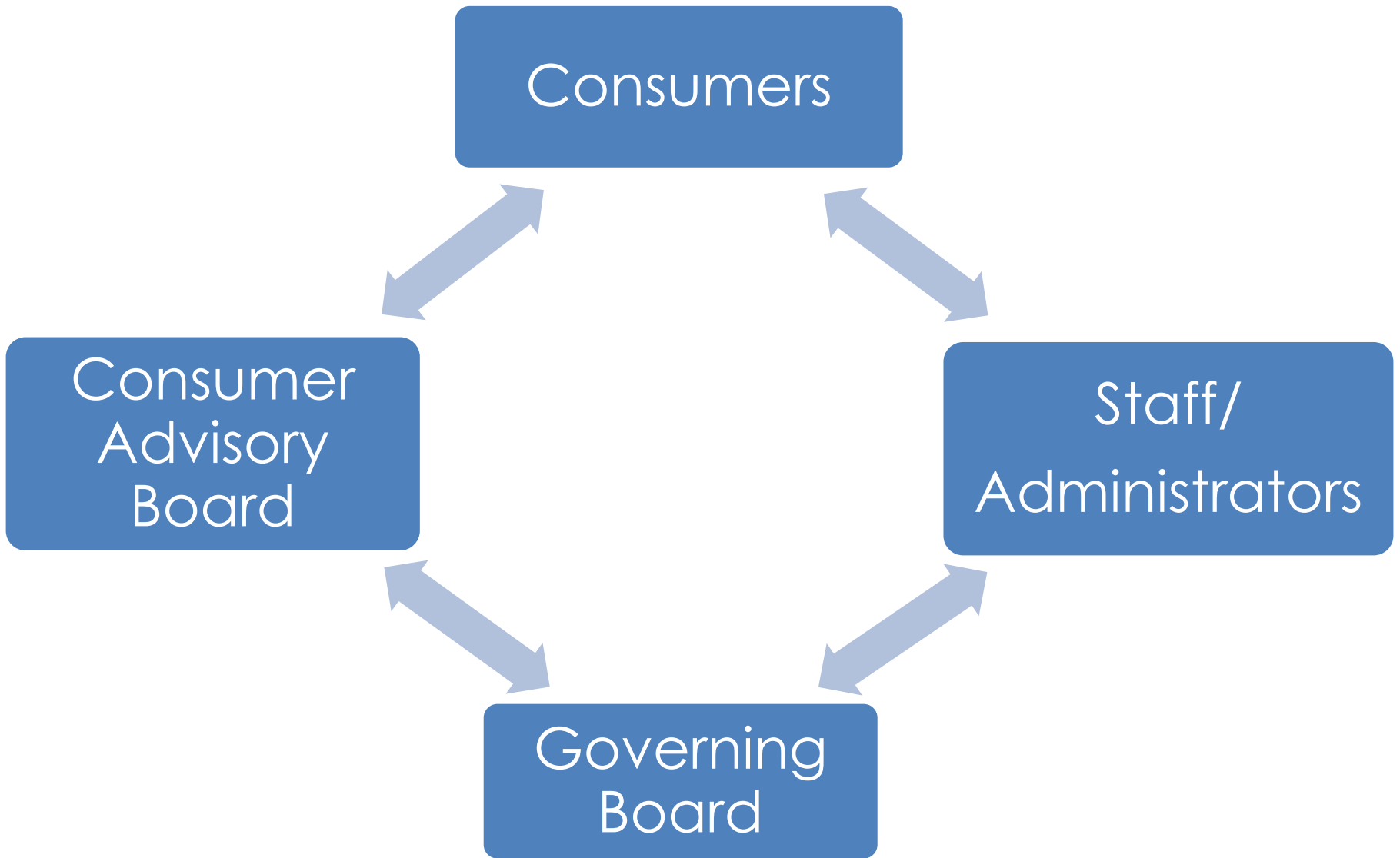
FEDERAL GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS THAT AFFECT HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS PROJECTS

Section 330 of the Public Health Service Act:

- The governing board is composed of a majority of individuals being served by the center
- If your health center is a 330(h), or HCH center, waivers to the “consumer” majority rule can be requested, but consumer participation in governance is still required.

WAYS TO FACILITATE CONSUMER REPRESENTATION

- Include consumers or former consumers on the project's governing board
- Conduct consumer satisfaction surveys
- Create regular focus groups/listening sessions
- **Create a Consumer Advisory Board**



CONSUMER ADVISORY BOARDS

WHAT IS A CAB?

A group of homeless and/or formerly homeless individuals, advocates, providers, and community members brought together to improve services and delivery of care at their Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) project.

PURPOSE OF A CAB

- Monitor HCH project performance and challenge decision-makers to consider consumer-driven options for health care delivery.
- Help the Center recognize its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges in accomplishing its mission
- Keep governing boards focused on the needs of the special population that homeless and formerly homeless consumers represent.
- Advocate for consumers with respect to services at the Health Center

CAB ACTIVITIES

HCH Services

- Reviews and recommends program services

Consumer Feedback

- Solicits and communicates suggestions and grievances

Education and Awareness

- Organize or speak at community events or forums

Policy

- Advocate throughout community for rights of consumers

CAB STRUCTURE AND BYLAWS

Name and
Purpose of
Board

Membership
and Terms

Officers and
Responsibilities

Meetings and
committees

Decision –
Making
Process

MEMBERSHIP

Important Questions

- Who is eligible for the CAB?
- How many members should be on the CAB?

Your CAB should reflect the diversity in your HCH community:

- People who are currently and formerly homeless
- People who are current or former users of clinic's services
- Inclusive of all the project's services and populations

CONSENSUS DECISION MAKING

Consensus aims to find a proposal that all members can support and no member opposes. Consensus is not a majority vote. Consensus is based on compromise, and the ability to find common ground

Consensus requires:

- time
- active participation of all members
- communication skills
 - listening, conflict resolution, discussion facilitation
- creative thinking and open-mindedness

ENGAGING THE CONSUMER VOICE AT CAB MEETINGS

- Be mindful of task and process/relationship goals
- Summarize key points and clarifying understanding
- Set ground rules and guidelines for conduct
- Ensure all voices are heard
- Be aware of personal and group dynamics
- Pay attention to non-verbal cues
- Listen to understand, not to respond

CONSUMER LEADER GUIDELINES

DO'S

- Know the HCH's mission, goals, programs and services
- Get all the information before making a decision
- Pitch in Enthusiastically
- Come to meetings prepared to participate

DON'TS

- Lose your sense of humor!
- Speak for anyone else
- Ask staff for special favors
- Hold grudges with other members based on voting

CONSUMERS ON GOVERNING BOARDS

GOVERNING BOARDS



Approves the operating budget, and scope of service.

Establishes and evaluates Health Center policies.

Monitor and evaluate Health Center activities.

Helps establish HCH project program priorities.

Regularly evaluate the CEO/Executive Director

Governing Boards

Makes decisions

Focus on budget,
organizational structure,
programs

Includes professional experts,
community stakeholders and
sample of population served

Advisory Boards

Offers recommendations

Focus on services, impacts

Representative sample of
population served

EMPOWERING CONSUMERS IN GOVERNANCE

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Interpersonal Skills

- Communication and Empathy
- Understanding and Cooperation

Creativity and Analytical Skills

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Project Management and Delegation

Functional Knowledge

- Mission, Goals, Resource Management
- Strengths and Needs Assessment

PERSONAL GROWTH

- Empowerment through engaging with the decision making process
- Can increase confidence in our abilities to make a difference and affect change

PEER SUPPORT

- CABs allow members to see the connection of their struggle with the struggles of others
- We can build on this empathy and understanding to better understand how we can support one another

CHALLENGES TO CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT

- Priorities of meeting basic needs
- Possible disengagement from systems
- Frustration with previous attempts to advocate
- Comfort telling your own story
- Overcoming stigma, fear and shame
- Education on policies, history and systems context

BENEFITS OF CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT

- Authentic voices of those directly impacted
- Instills sense of purpose and community
- Demonstrates value of participation
- Builds self-esteem, confidence, sense of worth
- Improves engagement with care and health
- Facilitates direct conversation

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS



NCAB is here to help with any questions or support you need in forming or maintaining your CAB!

Reach out to Katherine Cavanaugh, Consumer Advocate, at kcavanaugh@nhchc.org or (443) 703 – 1320