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

Best Practices for Convening a Consumer Advisory Board

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.