



## **Community Advisory Board Fact Sheet**

Community Advisory Boards (CABs) build and foster partnerships between researchers and local study communities impacted by HIV/AIDS. An active CAB with a committed membership is an integral part in the effort to combat AIDS. CABs can help strengthen local capacity to respond to critical research needs in the future.

The success of the HPTN's research agenda depends upon active participation by the communities involved in the studies. Including community members at all levels of the research process helps build trust and mutual understanding of research issues and ensures that values and cultural differences among participants are respected.

### **Function of the CAB**

Typically, the clinical research site (CRS) obtains community input into the research process through CABs, although a CRS may refer to this structure by any locally chosen name or establish an alternative structure. Community representatives provide input to protocol teams, particularly in adapting sample consent forms for local use and in developing other study materials.

CABs are responsible for evaluating the impact of HPTN studies on local communities. They serve as a voice for the community and study participants. CABs bring specific, unique expertise to the research process, by participating in the processes of defining the HPTN agenda and informing researchers of local issues or concerns that can affect the conduct and successful implementation of the scientific agenda. Each CRS participating in HPTN studies will be linked with and support an active CAB or some other community advisory structure.

CAB members may be of diverse backgrounds (e.g. race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, socio-economic status, etc.). They may contribute professional or personal experience (e.g. people living with HIV/AIDS, current and/or former study volunteers, representatives from community-based/non-governmental organizations). CABs provide advice on scientific, ethical, and operational issues regarding study design, recruitment and protection of study volunteers. Each CAB develops its own mission statement and operating guidelines.

Face-to-face meetings facilitated by CRS staff provide opportunities for CAB members to share their community expertise and gain new skills. Compensation for CAB members should be offered to offset legitimate costs of participation in the advisory process, such as reimbursement for transportation, meals and other reimbursements that are deemed appropriate at the local level but that do not include payment. CRS staff and other HPTN members (e.g., protocol team members, Statistical and Data Management Center (SDMC), Network Laboratory (NL) or CORE) on travel to sites are available to participate in CAB meetings as needed. CRSs are encouraged to support representative CAB members' participation in HPTN meetings and trainings.

### **CAB Member Recruitment**

CAB members will be drawn from the groups mentioned above, and through recommendations from leaders in the community, other CAB members, study participants and HPTN staff. Recruitment should be viewed as ongoing,

wherein new members are added over time as attrition occurs. Site community education staff and/or CAB coordinators will provide new CAB members with an orientation and background materials prior to their first meeting.

To ensure CAB autonomy and to reduce the potential for conflict of interest, CAB members are volunteers from the CRS community and are not paid staff members at the CRS. In order to serve on a CAB, members agree to certain terms of membership, generally having to do with roles, responsibilities, and meeting attendance. CAB members are expected to participate meaningfully so that issues requiring community dialogue can receive appropriate attention.

### **Responsibilities of CAB Members**

- Attend local CAB meetings and provide feedback on issues under discussion.
- Voice concerns from the communities and study participants.
- Demonstrate commitment to developing an understanding on issues where they may have little expertise.
- Participate on HPTN scientific committees and community working group as appropriate.
- Assist in the development and implementation of community education activities (health fairs, community forums, community sensitization/mobilization activities, etc.) and materials.
- Advise the site research team and HPTN protocol team in the development of informed consent forms and other study related documents.
- Suggest strategies to address ethical and operational aspects of study conduct.
- Advise in the development and implementation of study participant recruitment and retention strategies.
- Provide real-life experiences.
- Serve as a resource to community liaison officer/community educator and research team.
- Disseminate study information to local community.
- Inform research team about information, misinformation, and/or rumors circulating in the community about the study.
- Recruit and orient new CAB members.

### **Additional Information and Contact Details**

HPTN Website: <http://www.hptn.org>

HPTN Leadership and Operations Center Community Involvement Program

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