



Patient & Family Advisor Councils

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A Working Definition of Patient Advisors

*Patient & family advisors work in a variety of healthcare settings sharing their personal stories to represent all patients & families in providing an educated perspective of care by bringing authenticity, empowerment, respect and inspiration to the design and delivery of healthcare systems. Patient & Family Advisor roles include partner, educator, speaker, listener, advocate, collaborator and leader, ensuring the focus of healthcare is centered on the patient & the family. **

**Collaboratively written by the patient & family advisors in attendance at the IHI Forum, 2012*



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Patient & Family Advisor Council (PFAC)

- A team of patients and families and healthcare members that provides an opportunity to engage patient perspectives in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of healthcare services and programs
- PFACs assure the patient and family point of view, perspective, and experience are not only heard, but also integrated into the delivery of healthcare
- PFACs provide an efficient and effective approach to solicit the unique perspectives of patients on issues that impact care

PFAC Benefits: Healthcare Organizations

- An effective approach to receiving and responding to consumer input
- A means to ensure that services, programs, and policies address patient and family needs and priorities
- An opportunity to improve understanding and cooperation among patients, families, and staff
- An intentional method to promote meaningful partnerships among patients, families, and clinicians
- A unique way to collaborate with patients as partners in care

PFAC Benefits: Patient & Family Advisors

- An opportunity to enhance understanding of the healthcare system
- A way to have their opinions valued
- A means to advocate for patient and family-centered healthcare in their community
- An intentional approach to actively participant in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of healthcare services and programs
- A way to give back and build relationships
- A unique way to learn new skills, including group facilitation, listening skills, and story telling

PFACs: Opportunities and Barriers

- Lack of skills, knowledge and confidence
- Long-standing attitudes and behaviors concerning contributions of patients and families
- Assumptions that customer service is sufficient
- Lack of empirical evidence to demonstrate direct benefit of patient and family engagement in decision-making
- Concern with costs and time necessary to support council
- Competing priorities
- Inadequate leadership and vision