Resource Guide

Guide to Effective Community Care Hub Committees (Governance and Advisory) and Committee Charters

Community Engagement and Participation in Community Care Hubs

> "A community care hub (CCH or hub) serves as a community-focused regional, statewide or multi-state umbrella organization that coordinates, centralizes and scales administrative functions and operational infrastructure on behalf of a network of community support providers—e.g., Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and other community-based organizations (CBOs). The goal is to enhance efficiency, standardization, compliance, performance and quality on behalf of the network. The local providers that comprise the network address community care needs and close care gaps through the CCH's funding arrangements with health plans, health care providers, public health departments, Medicare and Medicaid programs, Veterans Administration Medical Centers and more. A CCH may also offer programs and services directly to consumers through a variety of payment arrangements and may hold contracts with other government agencies to coordinate administration of programs and services across a region or state."[i]

The effectiveness of a CCH depends in part on its ability to engage and empower community stakeholders. A mature CCH "provides routine opportunities for key stakeholders to influence strategy and planning."[ii] Key stakeholders include "people with lived experience, community residents and/or consumers."[iii] A CCH has at its disposal a wide spectrum of structures for engagement of community stakeholders. The role and authority of stakeholder committees can vary from informing stakeholders about CCH activities to organizational decision-making as part of formal governance (ee Spectrum of Engagement visual). **This brief will discuss committees that a CCH may establish for governance and other purposes to harness the knowledge, energy and wisdom of its stakeholders.** It will also discuss the process of chartering committees to ensure their effectiveness. It does not cover more general governance topics or the development of board bylaws, both of which are addressed in separate pieces.

Note that a new CCH may be developed within an existing organization or as a standalone organization (whether nonprofit or LLC formed by several nonprofit organizations). An existing organization that decides to start a CCH should have existing structures for engaging community stakeholders that can be leveraged to guide and govern the CCH. Depending on the situation, those committees may be adequate for engaging CCH stakeholders, or the organization may decide to create one or more CCH-specific committees.

As a cautionary note, there is a risk of overinvesting in advisory and governance committees, particularly early in the development cycle of a CCH. A CCH should spend the vast majority of its time and effort developing its operational structure, recruiting and investing in its CBO network and securing contracts and other funding to deliver services. This brief is intended to help ensure the committees that can be supported are effective and to guide the development of additional committees as the scale and maturity of the CCH warrant.

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Purpose of CCH Committees

For purposes of this brief, a CCH committee is a group of CCH stakeholders that meets regularly in order to advance the mission of the CCH. A committee can be a subset of the board of directors, like a finance or executive committee. It can also be a group of contracted CBOs or community residents that reports to CCH leadership and provides advice or works on improvement efforts. For organizations that host a CCH as one of its functions, the functions of a CCH committee may be fulfilled by an existing organizational committee whose scope is not limited to the CCH.

The spectrum of engagement describes four different roles and purposes that a CCH committee may play: decide, advise, improve and inform. Each of these roles is important, and a mature CCH should have different committees serving each of the four different purposes. In some situations, committees may perform different roles, depending on the context; for example, a committee may be authorized to decide certain issues while it merely advises on other issues. In establishing a new committee, it's important to think about which purpose is primary— that will help drive decisions about the committee's membership, authority, goals and reporting.

Inform: A CCH (and its network) should be well known to and trusted by community residents who may require their services, as well as other CBOs serving the local population. Committees whose primary function is to inform are tasked with sharing CCH activities and learnings with stakeholders and gathering input from stakeholders to inform CCH priorities and activities. These committees do not have decision-making authority over the CCH, but their input is often received by the CCH leadership and decision-making bodies.

Advise: There are a wide range of perspectives that should guide CCH strategy and operations. Advisory committees can be designed around a particular stakeholder group (e.g., community members) or a topic area (CBO capacity building). Advisory committees do not have formal decision-making power, but their recommendations are valuable to the board and CCH leadership team and are often used by such decision-making bodies to obtain input as part of their deliberative processes.

Spectrum of Engagement

	INFORM	ADVISE	IMPROVE	DECIDE
DEFINITIONS	Range of shared learning opportunities for community to inform and be informed on community needs, priorities, and the activities of the organization.	Variety of structures for diverse individuals/organizations to offer community voice, insights, and recommendations for community and organizational priorities.	Improvement groups by which contracted partners, resource/referral partners, community-based workforce (CBWs), clients and others work with the hub to mutually monitor performance and make improvement recommendations.	Governance structures with formal decision-making authority for the organization. Board approves strategic direction and financial plan, among other responsibilities, reflecting community priorities and representation.
STRUCTURES	• Hosting Shared Learning Forums • Attending Community Meetings/Forums	• Diverse Community Advisory Group(s)	• Contracted Network Partners Improvement Teams • Community-Based Workforce Improvement Teams	• Board of Directors • Board Committees

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Improve: A CCH should be engaged in continuous improvement efforts to maximize its value to payers, contracted CBOs and the populations served. Formal improvement committees are one way to ensure that CCH management is receiving feedback and co-developing improvements in its processes and operational practices. Improvement efforts can focus on areas such as workforce development, CBO capacity building, IT infrastructure and service offerings. While improvement committees do not have decision-making authority over the CCH, they often recommend CCH-wide changes that can be implemented by CCH leadership without board approval.

Decide: A committee with formal decision-making power is usually a board committee. These committees are typically made up of a subset of representatives of the board. However, in some membership organizations, it is common to have individuals who are not themselves board members but are employed by a member organization to sit on committees based on their individual area of expertise (e.g., finance, IT, etc.). A board committee typically deliberates and adopts formal recommendations to the board, which are then reviewed and either adopted or rejected by the full board.

All of the functions in the spectrum of engagement are important. In practice, a committee's purpose and value may span more than one role. For example, an improvement committee may identify changes that are beyond its authority and therefore recommend that the board or CCH management team take action, putting it in an advisory role. It is important, however, to be clear about the role and scope of its power of the committee at the time of its formation to avoid misunderstanding and loss of credibility.

Formal governance v. network engagement

The types of committees employed by a CCH will depend on whether the CCH is a freestanding organization whose sole purpose is the operation of the CCH ("freestanding CCH") or is part of a larger organization that has a broader mission and also operates non-CCH programs and departments ("departmental CCH"). In a freestanding CCH, the formal governance structure—including board of directors and traditional board committees—is focused exclusively on the work of the CCH. In departmental CCHs, the formal governance structure has a wider purview than just the CCH. Departmental CCHs may create a CCH committee within its board structure or may rely exclusively on CCH committees whose role is to advise, improve and/or inform.

The CCH should establish committees based on its overall goals, approach and needs. Particularly for new CCHs, it is important to be realistic about whether and how many committees to have. The development of the CCH's committees should be gradual and iterative and reflect the culture and direction that the CCH pursues. Managing working committees (whether informing, advisory, improving or governing) requires staff time and effort, which are often limited commodities. Remember also that committee participation requires stakeholder's time, often without compensation, so it is critical that the work of the committee be well thought out and impactful. No one wants to be on a committee that is just for show and has no actual influence over the work of the CCH.

For departmental CCHs, it is common to begin with a single CCH committee that advises on all topics related to the CCH. Over time, as the CCH contracts with multiple health care providers and payers and grows the size of its network, it may develop additional committees, including improvement committees and topic-specific advisory committees. Given the enormous work of standing up the CCH and its network and operationalizing the work, a new CCH should avoid over-investing in stakeholder engagement at the expense of other critical elements.

Committee Types

Freestanding CCHs will typically use traditional board committees to organize oversight of the CCH. They may have a larger board that represents the various stakeholders in the CCH and form board committees, which may include a mix of board members and non-board members who are relevant members of the organization, participants in the CCH's network or community stakeholders.

For departmental CCHs, the traditional board committees have a broader purview because they are responsible for the entire organization. Therefore, the board will likely create CCH-specific committees that are ultimately subject to board authority but may not be formal board committees. A departmental CCH often has an operating committee that is a higher level authority for the CCH, and which then charges sub-committees with more specific purposes.

Below are some standard committee types.

Traditional Board Committees

- Executive
- Finance and Audit
- Governance
- Quality
- Compliance

CCH-Specific Advisory Committees

- CCH Operating/Advisory Committee
- CBO Capacity Building
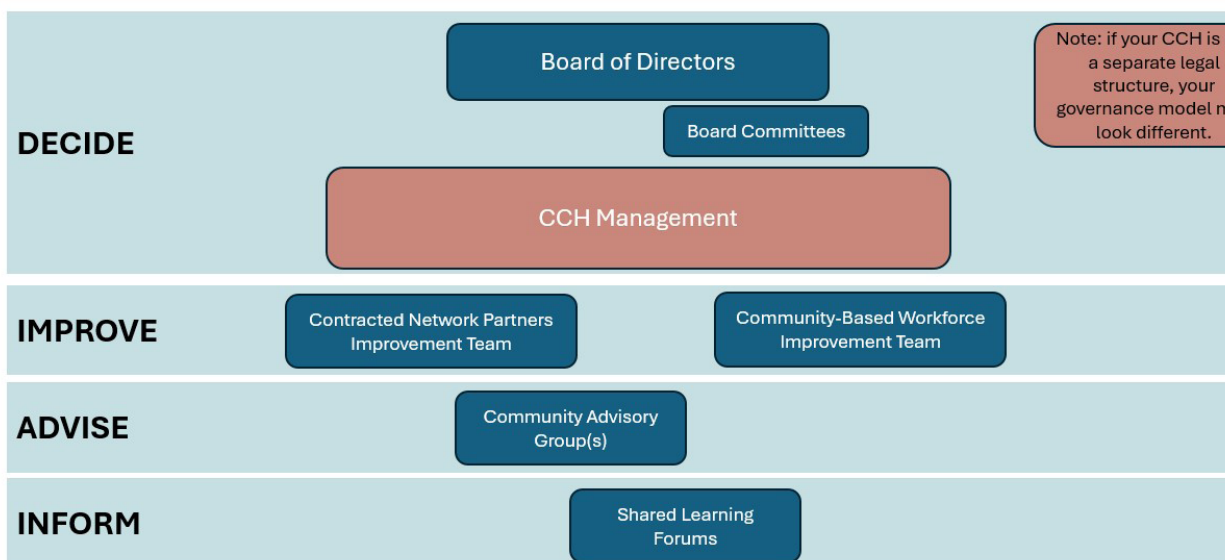- Community and Consumer Voice
- Data Governance

CCH Improvement Committees

- CCH-Contracted Provider Improvement Committee
- CCH Workforce Development Committee
- Nutrition Services Workgroupiv

CCH Inform Committees

- CCH Stakeholder Forum
- Shared Learning Forum

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Board and Committees vs. CCH Management

In nonprofit governance, the board of directors is the ultimate authority and fiduciary charged with overall strategy and direction of the organization. If the nonprofit is a membership organization, the board is typically chosen by and therefore accountable to the members. The board hires and evaluates the CCH CEO or executive director, who is responsible for operationalizing the strategy and mission of the CCH. The CEO and the executive team manages the day-to-day business of the organization, including contracting, staffing, program design and operations. The exact delineation of roles between strategy and operations—and the level of involvement of the board in major organizational decision-making—can vary in practice and over time as an organization matures. For example, some CCHs will require board approval of all contracted partners and contracts above a certain value, whereas others will leave those decisions to the management team.

The board and CCH management may each charter committees, though those committees will play different roles. Typically, board committees are decision-making bodies that operate on behalf of the larger board to oversee critical aspects of the organization (hiring and oversight of the chief executive, finances, compliance, etc.), whereas CCH management assembles committees to advise, inform and improve CCH operations and management.

Role of Committee Charters

Committees should have charters. The creation of a formal committee charter helps ensure accountability to CCH management or the CCH governing body. Chartering doesn't need to be an overly burdensome process. Rather, it provides transparency around key elements of the committee—its purpose, scope, membership, decision-making rules and priority activities. Documenting these elements in a written charter makes onboarding new members easy and creates an agreed-upon structure and set of goals that guides the committee's work with staff throughout the year. This clarity also helps ensure a more positive experience for staff and committee members.

The process of developing a charter fosters critical strategic conversations. The charter may be drafted by CCH staff or committee leadership, but it should ultimately be discussed and approved by the board of directors or CCH management, because that is the body to whom the committee is accountable.

The following are major sections of a committee charter and a brief discussion of some key questions to discuss when developing a charter.

- Purpose
- Scope and Authority
- Membership
- Meetings and Voting
- Goals
- Duration

Purpose

The purpose is a brief description of the major roles and expectations of the committee. Why is the committee constituted and what function does it serve? Below are some sample descriptions of different committee purposes that you can use or adapt:

Board Committees

Executive: The purpose of the Executive Committee is to support the Board of Directors in executing its responsibilities, including alignment to the organization's mission and strategic direction, sound fiduciary oversight, the hiring and evaluation of its CEO, and effective high-level policy setting. The Executive Committee may also have responsibility for making certain decisions between board meetings and to address other matters as outlined in the bylaws.

Finance and Audit: The Finance and Audit Committee supports the Board of Directors in fulfilling its fiduciary responsibilities, including budgeting, financial modeling, monitoring budget vs. actuals, financial reporting, contracting and audit.

Governance: The purpose of the Governance Committee is to oversee the functioning of the Board of Directors, including the Board's decision-making processes, membership and compliance with industry and regulatory standards.

Management (Advisory, Improvement, Inform) Committees

Quality: The purpose of the Quality Committee is to oversee, evaluate and improve the quality and effectiveness of CCH services.

CCH and CBO Capacity Building: The purpose of the CCH and CBO Capacity Building Committee is to assess and make recommendations about the CCH infrastructure and how the CCH invests in CBOs, including both contracted partners and potential contracted partners. This committee's scope includes workforce development and training of staff involved in delivering services on behalf of the CCH.

Data and IT governance: The purpose of the Data and IT Governance Committee is to create, govern and coordinate a unified network of health and human services providers, with universal access and interoperability between platforms/networks so as to better meet the holistic needs of clients and patients. The committee's role includes recommending which data is shared, with whom and for what purposes.

Community/Consumer Voice: The purpose of the Community/Consumer Voice (CCV) Committee is to proactively engage CBOs and the beneficiaries of services to ensure that their voices guide and influence the decision-making of the CCH. The CCV Committee advocates for the inclusion of authentic community engagement within the planning, development and implementation of the CCH's priorities and projects.

Operating Committee: The purpose of the Operating Committee is to oversee the performance and operational efficiency of the CCH and its network, ensuring that the organization is achieving its strategic and financial goals. The Operating Committee ensures a commitment to evaluation and performance improvement.

Scope and Authority

Defining the scope and authority of each committee is critical to appropriate delegation. The scope refers to the boundaries of issues over which the committee has jurisdiction. The level of authority refers to the power that is given to the committee—is it informing, advising, improving or deciding? The charter should also clarify how the work of the committee, including minutes and decisions/recommendations, are reported to the board or CCH management.

Committee Membership

Committees should include representatives of the various stakeholders whose perspective the CCH wants for the relevant topics. Diverse representation, including CBO leaders, frontline staff and community members and people with lived experience, can help ensure a wide range of perspectives, depending on the topic. In establishing the committee, the governing body or CCH management should be deliberate about who is eligible to participate and the proportionate representation of those stakeholders. One may also identify specific experience or roles that are desirable or required for committee members (e.g., finance professionals for a Finance Committee). For decision-making committees, it is essential to have a clear conflict of interest policy and code of conduct[v] to ensure that members are working on behalf of the CCH as a whole.

Governing and advisory committees usually have elected leadership who are responsible for working with CCH staff to set the agenda and manage the logistics and follow-up associated with the committee. The chair convenes and leads the committee. Most committees opt to have either co-chairs or a vice chair to ensure the committee can operate if the chair becomes unavailable or needs to step down. It is often appropriate to include a member of CCH management as an ex officio, non-voting member of the committee (e.g., CFO on the Finance Committee).

Meetings and Voting

The charter should spell out the frequency of meetings, including options for calling special meetings and the permissibility of voting by email. For advisory and governing committees, the charter should establish voting rules, including abstention when one has a conflict of interest. While majority rule is a common standard, some CCHs may decide that they want a higher level of consensus than 51 percent to proceed on all or some matters. Alternative standards include a two-thirds majority or unanimity. Supermajority or unanimity decision rules can promote consensus building and compromise but can also empower a small minority to hold up decisions or extract unreasonable concessions in exchange for its agreement. In choosing a decision-making standard, the committee should consider how it wants to be able to proceed when it comes to tough and potentially divisive issues.

Goals

It is useful for the committee to set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound) goals for the coming year and longer term for standing committees. This may be documented in the charter or separately so that the charter doesn't need to be revisited annually. While there may be many topics that the committee could address, the committee, in collaboration with the board or CCH leadership, should identify three to five highest priority goals for the year. These should be contextualized within the organization's and committee's long-term strategy and goals. The committee may also have additional ongoing responsibilities and need to reserve bandwidth to deal with those responsibilities, as well as unforeseen issues that come up throughout the year that are critical to the operation of the CCH.

Duration

With the exception of a few standing committees (e.g., Finance), committees should be chartered for a limited amount of time, particularly in the early days of a CCH when resources are limited and priorities are likely to evolve. Having a practice of revisiting and either terminating or updating a committee's charter every year or two helps ensure that the committee's activities are high value and closely aligned with the overall needs of the CCH. It is also a good time to revisit the membership of the committee to bring on new members and potentially offboard members who have served for an extended period of time.

Conclusion

Operating efficient and effective committees consisting of diverse stakeholders helps ensure the community orientation and buy-in of a CCH. The number, size and scope of committees must be proportional to the scale and maturity of the CCH, with careful attention to not overinvesting in committees early in the CCH's lifespan. Committee charters can help leaders design the committee and its activities thoughtfully and ensure that the committee's work ultimately serves the CCH as a whole. As part of this governance toolkit we have provided a charter template that can be adapted for your purposes and some real-life examples of committee charters for inspiration.

About the Aging and Disability Business Institute

This publication was produced for the Aging and Disability Business Institute via a collaboration of Partners in Care Foundation, stakeholders of the Partnership to Align Social Care, was authored by the Camden Coalition and was funded by **The John A. Hartford Foundation**. Led by USAging, the mission of the Aging and Disability Business Institute (Business Institute) is to build and strengthen partnerships between aging and disability community-based organizations and the health care system. The Business Institute provides community-based organizations with the tools and resources to successfully adapt to a changing health care environment, enhance their organizational capacity and capitalize on emerging opportunities to diversify funding. Learn more at **www.aginganddisabilitybusinessinstitute.org**.

About the Partnership to Align Social Care

The **Partnership to Align Social Care, A National Learning and Action Network** (Partnership) aims to address social care challenges at a national level by bringing together essential sector stakeholders (health providers, plans and government with consumers) to co-design multi-faceted strategies to facilitate successful partnerships between healthcare organizations and community care networks. The Partnership is a unique national effort to elevate, expand, and support a network-based approach to sustainably addressing individual and community health-related social needs. Learn more at **www.partnership2asc.org**.

About the Camden Coalition

The **Camden Coalition** is a multidisciplinary nonprofit working to improve care for people with complex health and social needs in Camden, NJ, and across the country. We work to advance the field of complex care by implementing person-centered programs and piloting new models that address chronic illness and social barriers to health and well-being. Supported by robust data infrastructure, cross-sector convening, and shared learning, our community-based programs deliver care to the most vulnerable individuals in Camden and regionally. Through our National Center for Complex Health and Social Needs (National Center), the Camden Coalition works to build the field of complex care by inspiring people to join the complex care community, connecting complex care practitioners with each other, and supporting the field with tools and resources that move the field of complex care forward. Learn more at **www.camdenhealth.org**.

Endnotes

i   **https://coe.aginganddisabilitybusinessinstitute.org/**.

ii   Partnership to Align Social Care, Functions of a Mature Community Care Hub, May 2023, 6. Available at **Functions-of-a-Mature-Community-Care-Hub-May-2023.pdf**.

iii   Id.

iv   Western New York Integrated Care Collaborative (WNYICC), a CCH operating in western New York, has created working groups for individual service areas, such as nutrition, in which contracted CBOs and CCH staff regularly convene to monitor regulatory requirements and best practices, share lessons and problem solve challenging situations.

v   For example, Western New York Integrated Care Collaborative (WNYICC), a standalone CCH, requires all members of its emerging business and finance committees to sign nondisclosure agreements to protect against improper advantages amongst members of the network.