

**Success in development and maintenance of a diverse community advisory board (CAB) supports the mission of broadening access to clinical trials for underserved populations at a multi-site, not for profit, community-based research center -community research Initiative.**

Green J, Sheble-Hall A; International Conference on AIDS (16th : 2006 : Toronto, Canada).

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Community Research Initiative of New England, Boston, United States.

**Issues:** Community Research Initiative's (CRI) mission includes offering research trials to the chronically underserved HIV-infected populations with the most rapid growth - women and minorities. During the past 5 years, CRI has had great success enrolling these populations into clinical trials. This success can be partially attributed to an active informed CAB that supports the agency mission and contributes to the agency's knowledge of consumers' needs. Maintenance of CABs by NIH-funded clinical trials centers is mandatory and success requires dedication despite limited resources. **Description:** CRI's components of successful CAB development include dedicated agency staff time, clearly defined mission and goals, periodically reviewed bylaws that promote self-governing, clear member role expectations, access to information and investigators, facilitation of conference attendance, membership incentives including small stipends and meals at meetings, ongoing training and education at monthly meetings, and engaging in a wide variety of activities such as fundraising, advocacy, community education through speakers bureau engagements and outreach via representation at community events. **Lessons learned:** The CRI approach to CAB maintenance has been highly successful. The CAB is a committed and diverse collection of HIV-positive and HIV-affected individuals closely reflecting the agency's client population and area epidemic demographics. Survey of the membership reveals a high level of satisfaction in the collaborative relationship with the agency, a high level of perceived agency commitment to CAB success and a high level of commitment by individual members to their roles on the board, with half of the 16-person board have been members for at least 3 years with 3 members claiming 5 or more years of affiliation. **Recommendations:** Thoughtful and thorough development of a diverse CAB can be achieved through agency investment, consistent provision of resources, diverse community representation and board investment in the mission. With these devoted resources, membership is consistent and committed to agency mission achievement.

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