

PATIENT AND FAMILY ADVISORY COUNCILS: A CHECKLIST FOR GETTING STARTED

- Read the available literature.
- Talk with people who have been involved in advisory groups in other organizations.
- Convene a planning meeting with a small group of patients/family members committed to implementing an advisory council. This can be initiated by either a patient/family or a provider.
- Develop specific goals.
- Conceptualize the structure of the group.
- Define potential benefits and risks.
- Contact the leadership of your organization by letter to request a meeting with administrative personnel. Follow up with a phone call.
- Present a convincing case for patient/family involvement to your organization. Anticipate questions and provide written materials on other advisory groups. Include telephone numbers of people to contact in other organizations with advisory councils.
- Ask for general administrative support as well as help with specific needs.
- Request a staff person be assigned as liaison to the committee. This person must:
 - have authority
 - have a commitment to patient- and family-centered care
 - be able to work closely with patients and families
 - have access to support staff
 - have time to devote to the committee
- Obtain a commitment of funds for supplies, copying, postage, and refreshments for meetings.
- Obtain a commitment for meeting space.
- Communicate the existence of the group through announcements at staff meetings, articles in employee newsletters, announcements on bulletin boards, and in materials for patients and families served by the organization.
- Develop bylaws.

Adapted from Jeppson, E. Thomas, J. (1994) *Essential Allies: Families as Advisors*. Institute for Patient- and Family-Centered Care, Bethesda, MD and from Phoenix Children's Hospital materials.

