

Using Community Advisory Boards to Build and Sustain CHC-Community Connections

Community Advisory Boards (CABs) bring together community members and health center staff to guide services. They help health centers better respond to local needs, including around cancer prevention and social factors that affect health.

WHAT WE'RE DOING

As a part of Mass-ACCERT, we are partnering with **six community health centers (CHCs) participating in the Gateway to Health Study** to test and refine a toolkit, which provides guidance on establishing and sustaining CABs.

1. Testing the Toolkit – Helping health centers establish CABs and strengthen clinical-community ties by providing guidance on organizing and leading a CAB. Health centers with existing CABs provide feedback based on local best practices.
2. Building Prioritization Skills – Guiding CABs in selecting key community health priorities, engaging diverse community members, and facilitating effective meetings.
3. Expanding Reach – Refining and implementing the Toolkit statewide with a focus on prioritizing health issues and planning for sustainability.



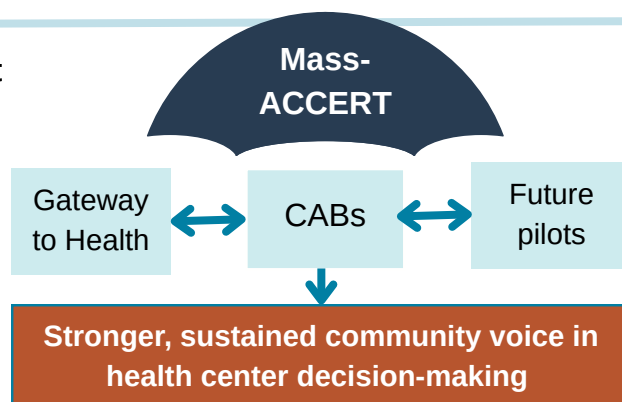
HOW IT WORKS

- Health center staff participate in interviews about existing community partnerships, cancer control activities, and prior experience with CABs.
- Two-part training for health center staff, plus optional technical assistance.
- Establish CAB by June 2025. Inform research project that begins in Spring 2026.
- Host CAB meetings on a quarterly basis.
- Learning sessions for health centers promote cross-site adaptation and knowledge-sharing.
- After Years 1 and 2, health center staff and CAB members complete a 15-minute survey assessing acceptability, feasibility, appropriateness, and engagement
- Health center staff participate in interviews to gather feedback on each component of the Toolkit and recommendations for improvement in Year 2.
- Revise CAB Toolkit to train and support health centers across Massachusetts.

WHAT'S THE CONNECTION?

From Research to Lasting Community Engagement

- The Community Advisory Boards (CABs) guide decisions for the Gateway to Health Study.
- Community priorities shape future pilot projects of the Center.
- CABs support long-term partnerships between health centers, community organizations, and patients.



Mass-ACCERT is a research partnership between the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers, Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health, and health centers across Massachusetts.

