

ABSTRACT ID# P29

Developing an Institute-Wide Community Advisory Board at the University of Michigan Institute for Clinical & Health Research

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The National Center for Advancing Translational Science (NCATS) requires hubs funded by the Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSA) to engage community partners in leadership, integration, and all phases of translational research. NCATS defines “community” broadly to include industry, patients, caregivers, and other stakeholders such as community-based organizations and community-based clinicians. In the past, the Michigan Institute for Clinical and Health Research (MICHHR), the University of Michigan’s CTSA hub, engaged community partners through a Community Engagement (CE) Coordinating Council which provided guidance to the CE Program, not the full institute. This practice is common among CTSA CE programs. A 2015 survey administered to CTSA CE programs reported the majority of CE programs have CABs. NCATS mandates that CTSA CE programs utilize External Advisory Boards (EAB), however, EABs typically have minimal community partner representation. In 2014, a group of national community engagement experts recommended strengthening community partner leadership and inclusiveness across the institute. In response to this recommendation, a design team, comprised of diverse community stakeholders was created to recruit a CAB and draft its charter. To our knowledge, very few CTSA CE programs include CABs to guide entire hubs. MICHHR’s CAB will assist its leadership on matters such as program development, resource allocation, and policy to guide institutional priority setting. We will discuss the process of developing the design team and the CAB, and metrics used to evaluate both. We will also describe the CABs plans for ensuring communities are consulted for their research priorities, and are respected, valued, and rewarded for their expertise.