

The Rhode Island Consumer Group By-Laws

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The Rhode Island Consumer Group By-Laws

I. MISSION

The mission of the Rhode Island Consumer Advisory Board (CAB) is to provide advice to the staff of the Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) Ryan White HIV Provision of Care Program and to work collaboratively on a range of strategies, policies, and programmatic issues affecting the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS and those at risk.

II. VISION AND VALUES

The vision of the RI CAB is to be a strong, consistent, sustained, accurate, comprehensive, respected, and inclusive voice for the community of people living with HIV/AIDS in Rhode Island.

The board is committed to a partnership with providers and funders that is both collaborative and advisory.

The board is committed to having the membership reflect the diversity of PLWHA in Rhode Island.

The mission, goals and procedures of the RI CAB are designed to provide clarity regarding the roles and functions of the Group and to support the collaboration of all parties.

III. GOALS

Although the objectives of the RI CAB may change from time to time, there are three fundamental goals that support its mission:

Goal 1

- Provide consumer input to EOHHS on the development, implementation and assessment of statewide HIV/AIDS policies.

Goal 2

- Promote significant input to HIV/AIDS service providers and promote the inclusion of people living with HIV/AIDS in service planning and delivery through the support and education of consumer advisory boards and other consumer and community based groups.

Goal 3

- Act as a liaison between consumers and the agencies or other community based groups, in the identification and resolution of problems.

IV. MEMBERSHIP

The RI CAB membership is drawn from consumers in the state of Rhode Island. In addition, the RI CAB seeks to have as diverse a membership as possible so that the perspectives of people of all ages, races, ethnic groups, sexual orientation, etc., are represented.

A. Composition

1. The RI CAB will strive for a membership of 10 with a maximum of 21; however there is no minimum number required for the group to function.

B. How Members are Selected

1. Any individual living with HIV in RI, or the parent or guardian of a person under the age of 18 living with HIV in RI, or anyone who is affected may apply for membership.
2. Recruitment will occur as needed. The leadership will actively pursue diverse demographics to keep the committee balanced and to try to have a true representation of all categories of infected and affected population from various statewide medical care providers. Group leadership to meet with any interested applicants to review group background, expectations, capabilities and commitment. Applicants will be presented to the CAB after the leadership interview with their recommendations to accept or decline the application. When approved by the CAB by a majority vote, applicants will be invited to the next meeting.
3. RI CAB members are elected for a two-year term. There is no limit on the number of terms a member may serve.
4. Incumbent RI CAB members may reapply at the end of each term using the standard application process followed by other candidates. All candidates will be chosen according to the same criteria, i.e. regional diversity, racial/ethnic diversity, gender, sexual orientation, transmission mode, community involvement, and completeness of application.

C. Responsibilities of Members

1. Members are responsible for opening ongoing dialogues with other consumers in their areas.
2. Members are encouraged to present the activities of the RI CAB to other consumer advisory boards, other community based groups, and/or any other consumers or providers interested in the work of the RI CAB.
3. Members are responsible for maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality, and for declaring any potential conflict of interest regarding their role in CAB deliberations.
4. Members are responsible for mentoring newly seated members.

5. Members are responsible for attending monthly RI CAB meetings. Members must arrive on time and stay for the entire meeting. Members more than 30 minutes late for the meeting will not be eligible for compensation (gift cards) without a valid excuse determined by the executive committee.
6. Members are responsible for notifying the Chair or his/her designee when s/he is unable to attend a particular meeting in advance of the meeting. If a member does not contact the Chair or his/her designee this will be considered an unexcused absence.
7. Members who have a total of four absences annually will forfeit their seat on the RI CAB at the discretion of the leadership committee.
8. RI CAB members will take on and complete their fair share of the group work, as necessary.
 - Helping to plan future meetings and prepare materials and updates for members
 - Assuming other duties at the request or with the permission of the membership
 - Involving the Co-Chair in any and all decisions and actions whenever possible.

If the Chair is unable to complete his/her term for whatever reason the Vice-Chair will assume the position of Chair for the remainder of the term and an alternate Vice-Chair will be elected by the membership.

Responsibilities of the-Co-Chair

The Co-Chair will be responsible for:

- Working with the Chair to plan the agenda for the monthly meetings
- Supporting the Chair in planning and facilitating monthly meetings
- Supporting the Secretary as needed
- Assuming the duties of the Chair if the Chair is unable to carry them out. This includes both on an interim basis if the Chair is unable to plan or attend a specific meeting, and assuming the position of Chair if the Chair is unable to complete his/her term for whatever reason.

If the Vice Co-Chair is unable to complete his/her term for whatever reason an alternate Vice Co-Chair will be elected by the Group to complete the remainder of the Vice Co-Chair's term.

C. Responsibilities of the Secretary

The Secretary will be responsible for:

- Taking minutes at monthly meetings.
- Writing up the minutes and sending them to the Chair, Co-Chair, EOHHS and EOHHS's designees for approval within two weeks after the meeting date.
- Working with EOHHS to distribute the minutes to the members as soon as possible before the next month's meeting.

- Tracking attendance of members and keeping the Chair or Co-Chair informed if a member has more than two absences in a row.

If the Secretary is unable to complete his/her term for whatever reason an alternate Secretary will be elected by the Group to complete the remainder of the Secretary's term.

D. Responsibilities of the Treasurer (if position exists)

The Treasurer will keep track of the Group's budget (if any) and present periodic updates to the Group.

VI. MAKING DECISIONS

A. Consensus

Because the RI CAB has a commitment to a collaborative process, every attempt will be made to reach consensus on decisions. Consensus means that while each member may not think a particular decision is the best one, it is a decision each member understands and is willing to support in public. Where consensus is not possible a vote will be taken and a simple majority of a quorum will suffice.

B. Quorum and Voting

A quorum for voting is fifty percent (50%) plus one of the full RI CAB voting membership. For example, if the Group has sixteen (16) seated members a minimum of nine (9) would be required for a vote. (If the membership is sixteen (16) then 50% of the full membership would be eight plus one would be nine).

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VII. CODE OF CONDUCT

1. RI CAB members will demonstrate respect for fellow consumers during meetings by one person speaking at a time after being recognized by the chair.
2. The Group will create Group Agreements, which will be adhered to during all meetings. At a minimum the Group Agreements will include: respect other group members; no side talking; cell phones off or on vibrate; and only speak when no other member is currently speaking.
3. The content of RI CAB meetings will be kept confidential.
4. RI CAB members will conduct themselves in full accordance with local and statewide guidance relating to RI CAB membership and participation.
5. The Group Agreements will be posted at every meeting.

VIII. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

RI CAB members are expected to openly identify any potential areas of conflict of interest in fulfilling their responsibilities. Identification of conflict of interest should be made verbally

during any meeting in which a conflict arises and in writing to the Chair in advance if possible. Conflict of interest is defined as participation in any decision that might result in actual or perceived direct or indirect financial benefit to the RI CAB member or a member of their family.

IX. CHANGING THE BY-LAWS

A change to the RI CAB by-laws requires a discussion by the full group and either consensus or a two-thirds majority vote with a quorum present. Group members must be notified by mail prior to the discussion and vote that an amendment has been proposed. It is sufficient to notify group members of a proposed amendment as part of the monthly meeting reminder mailing.