Partnering together, sharing our voices
At Novant Health, we value the voices of our patients and their loved ones. Community Voice is Novant Health’s patient and family advisory council (PFAC) and patient and family e-advisor council (ePFAC). Community Voice is made up of patients, their loved ones and Novant Health team members, all working together to improve the patient experience.

Community Voice advisors attend in-person meetings while e-advisors participate online via surveys. Our in-person councils meet every other month at several of our medical centers, and our e-advisors respond to electronic surveys a couple of times a month to share their voices. The feedback from our advisors and e-advisors is shared with leaders across Novant Health and used to improve the healthcare experience we provide.

In 2019, Community Voice had tremendous growth, and we are pleased to share our annual report highlighting the important work of these councils.
Community Voice 2019
In-person councils

2 in-person councils created in 2019 (Novant Health Clemmons Medical Center and Novant Health Huntersville Medical Center)

131 in-person advisors

22 projects completed in 2019

9 Novant Health facilities with an in-person council

- Novant Health Brunswick Medical Center
- Novant Health Clemmons Medical Center*
- Novant Health Forsyth Medical Center
- Novant Health Huntersville Medical Center*
- Novant Health Kernersville Medical Center
- Novant Health Matthews Medical Center
- Novant Health Presbyterian Medical Center
- Novant Health Rowan Medical Center
- Novant Health Thomasville Medical Center

*New councils launched in 2019

Demographics:
- 46% Patients and family members
- 54% Novant Health team members
- 29% Female
- 76% Male
- 22% Age 18 to 44
- 48% 45 to 64
- 30% 65+
- 6% White
- 59% Latino
- 6% Other
- 6% Black

22 projects completed in 2019 (Novant Health Clemmons Medical Center and Novant Health Huntersville Medical Center)
Community Voice 2019
E-advisors

4,269
e-advisors at start of 2018

7,000+
Current e-advisors

9
surveys sent in 2019

5
focus areas of engagement

Patient experience
Consumer engagement
Insitutes of care experience
Facility and clinic planning
Technology and digital health

53 years
Average age

85%
15%
71%
3%
6%
3%

White
Asian
Black
Latino
Not provided
Other

7%
24%
69%

Female
Male
Not identified

Patients and family members
Novant Health team members

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Key accomplishments

General preferences
As part of our efforts to engage advisors more deeply in our work, we sent a survey to our e-advisors to gauge areas of interest beyond completing surveys. We learned that 72% of our e-advisors want to do more! We have identified nine different areas of interest:

- Reviewing Novant Health patient forms and informational materials
- Reviewing Novant Health website content
- Reviewing Novant Health policies
- Joining a virtual patient and family advisory council
- Joining an in-person patient and family advisory council
- Participating in the Novant Health reads book discussion
- Joining a speakers bureau to share their story

Delighting our patients
In 2018, our in-person advisors at Novant Health Thomasville Medical Center reviewed food services at the hospital. Advisors continued that work in 2019 and helped revise food selection, as well as the menu. The team’s input also helped us add a specific catering program, Catering to You, which has resulted in improved patient satisfaction.

Tyto care
Novant Health’s digital health and engagement team asked our Community Voice e-advisors to provide feedback on a new healthcare technology product. The survey provided us valuable feedback on where to sell the product, how much consumers are willing to pay for the product and potential use cases. We also offered the product to our e-advisors at a discounted rate and invited them to participate in our pilot program to test the device and provide feedback. We are excited to offer more e-advisor exclusive opportunities like this in the future.

Engaging our community
Our in-person advisors at Novant Health Huntersville Medical Center helped host and participated in a caregiver luncheon. The team identified a need for current caregivers, previous patients, their loved ones and community members to have more information about services and support offered to those serving in a caregiver role. Department representatives came together to share valuable resources with attendees, including information about rehabilitation, library services, chaplaincy, advance care planning, food and nutrition, and local community partners. The event also featured a presentation on mindfulness from Jonathan Fisher, MD. This event helped form partnerships and support for those we serve in the community.

Mammography
The Mammogram Equity for All Council is on a mission to make sure all women have access to potentially life-saving breast cancer screenings. We asked our Community Voice e-advisors questions to better understand barriers that may prevent breast cancer screenings. Of those surveyed, 98% over 40 years old have had a mammogram and 83% receive a mammogram every year. We learned that education, scheduling, affordability, ease of use and waiting for results are some of the major pain points and barriers to getting a screening. We are addressing these issues starting with an upgrade to our physician finder, which gives patients the ability to self-schedule a mammogram appointment online.

Service recovery
Novant Health is dedicated to ensuring our patients have a remarkable experience. Knowing when we do not meet the expectations of our patients and their loved ones is important to us. Community Voice in-person and e-advisors were asked to help us determine when and how we can best provide meaningful service recovery. This feedback was used to help design a tool to empower our staff with various service recovery options for our patients and families.
The year ahead for Community Voice

1. Transition to a more patient-driven focus by having all of our in-person councils led or co-led by an advisor.

2. Create a speakers bureau of advisors who will share their stories and experiences with Novant Health and the community.

3. Increase diversity on our councils so that they better reflect the populations we serve.

4. Launch more institute-specific and medical group Patient and Family Advisory Councils. We plan to launch a Bariatric Council and a Community Medicine Council in 2020.

5. Include advisors on select Novant Health committees.

6. Engage advisors to create a patient-centered handbook for hospitalized patients.

7. Increase the number of e-advisors.

8. Launch a new council for advisors to meet in person and test and provide feedback on new products and technology.
Community Voice advisor spotlight

We are so grateful for all of our advisors and would like to share more with you about three individuals who serve on Community Voice.

Donnie Holt first learned about Patient and Family Advisory Councils when he attended a healthcare conference years ago after being asked to serve on the Novant Health Thomasville Medical Center board of trustees.

He attended as many conferences as he possibly could to learn how hospitals operate. The idea behind Patient and Family Advisory Councils really hit home with him. “It is like being an advocate for patients,” he said. He brought what he learned back to Thomasville and helped launch the Novant Health Thomasville Medical Center PFAC and has served as its co-leader since 2013. “I have a heart for people. It started with needs of children,” said Donnie, who is a retired principal with over 30 years in education. “If a parent is involved in their children’s education, they will be treated differently. Same concept is true in healthcare.”

Donnie believes that having a diverse PFAC is essential to ensuring the voices and perspectives of many different populations are considered and is doing his part to recruit advisors from various backgrounds.

Caroline is an attorney and wanted to use her degree and apply her skills while making the choice to be a work-at-home mom. This led to her volunteering to serve on an informal NICU family advisory council. Caroline was able to use her NICU experience to take an active part in developing materials for other NICU families. As she put it, “care was wonderful, but I wanted to fine tune the experience and have a voice for other families.” Caroline now serves on the Novant Health Presbyterian Medical Center PFAC and believes the council “is great because it provides an outside influence.”

In 2015, Caroline Strauss was 30 weeks pregnant when she delivered her baby at Novant Health Presbyterian Medical Center. Edward weighed 2.5 pounds and spent 72 days in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). Caroline recalls being very overwhelmed and stressed. She shared that they were “bombarded by a ton of information by mouth” and by monitors and loud alarms, and they had no idea why they were going off.

After she was discharged, Caroline wanted to stay in touch with some of the nurses. She also wanted to do more and started volunteering for Bee Mighty, which she described as a group that “provides grants for out-of-the-box therapy and medical equipment.”

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A native of Salisbury, Nickalaus A. Goodman is committed to serving his community and invested in its success. He currently sits on the Patient and Family Advisory Council at Novant Health Rowan Medical Center. After growing up in a lower income family, he was the second person in his family to earn a bachelor’s degree. He is now employed at a healthcare management firm full time and also works as a paramedic on the weekends. For eight years, Nickalaus worked at two different Novant Health hospitals, so he brings an insightful perspective to the council. In addition, he previously worked for a nearby healthcare organization, providing him with another lens about how healthcare is delivered. A big data person, Nickalaus said it’s always important to remember that “there is a person behind each data metric.” Nickalaus has a ton of ideas on how to improve the overall patient experience and how to further integrate the voice of our Patient and Family Advisory Council members. His unique background and experiences allow him to provide a diverse perspective, making him a great addition to our council.

Nickalaus recently represented the patient and family voice as a member of a group working to create a video that will explain important patient rights. Nickalaus provided wonderful perspective that helped shape the direction of the video. He also participated on a panel at a meeting of Novant Health doctors and spoke about what quality means to patients as families.

“People feel comfortable talking to me since I’ve been around so long. I’m seen as a peer. They tell me the real struggle and I am able to take that transparency back to the PFAC.” On being a paramedic on weekends in addition to his full-time job and volunteer work, Nickalaus said: “I will do it as long as I am able because it is important to remember why we do what we do.”
In 2019, several of our in-person advisors participated in our Novant Health Reads program, a systemwide community book discussion. Together, we read the book *In Shock* by Rana Awdish, MD, and had discussions at several of our in-person Community Voice groups. In 2020, we will invite our e-advisors to join us in reading our Novant Health Reads book selection and look forward to having virtual book discussions.

As part of our ongoing commitment to our patients, we recently debuted the Novant Health Patients as Partners podcast. True patient advocacy requires a partnership between the care team and patients, along with their loved ones. This channel will share information and patient stories related to the Patient’s Bill of Rights, how we support vulnerable populations, shared decision-making, special communication needs, spiritual care and much more. We also will feature our Community Voice advisors.

If you have a story you would like to share, please email us at CommunityVoice@NovantHealth.org. We hope you will tune in to this and other Novant Health podcasts!

In 2019, we created our first institute-specific Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) focused on behavioral health. We started with our own Novant Health team members who have had behavioral health experiences, either as a patient or family member. These council members have provided input and recommendations to help improve this experience. The group reviewed and made suggestions to the behavioral health patient handbook and rounded on several of Novant Health’s inpatient behavioral health units. Projects for 2020 include developing materials for family members and exploring ways to improve the involuntary commitment process, including communication with the patient’s loved ones.

Thank you

We would like to thank all of our in-person advisors and e-advisors for their time and ongoing contribution to Community Voice. You have a voice in your healthcare community, and we value your feedback.

For more information about Community Voice or to learn how to get involved, please visit our webpage at NovantHealth.org/CommunityVoice. If you would like to be a part of Community Voice, please apply to be an in-person advisor or sign up to be an e-advisor.

We look forward to our continued partnership in 2020 and beyond!

Sincerely,
Melissa Parker
Vice president and patient advocacy officer, Novant Health

Hank Capps, MD
Senior vice president and chief digital health and engagement officer, Novant Health
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