

Boston Medical Center Patient Family Advisory Council Annual Report 2023



Boston Medical Center (BMC) is an academic medical center focused on changing lives through clinical, research and innovation, and equitable care excellence. BMC delivers adult and pediatric inpatient, emergency, and ambulatory primary and specialty care. BMC is a founding partner of Boston Medical Center Health System, which enables coordination across the care continuum. Over 70% of BMC's patients represent underserved communities; this drives the organization's mission to *provide exceptional care without exception*, and values: *Built on respect, powered by empathy, move mountains, many faces create our greatness*.



What is the BMC PFAC?

The PFAC is comprised of Patient/Family Advisors who volunteer their time and ideas to inform improvements at BMC. Members of the PFAC have interacted with a variety of departments and represent diverse experiences, perspectives, and identities, including age, sexual orientation, gender expression, ethnic and racial identity, and healthcare conditions. The rich perspectives that members bring to the PFAC lead to nuanced understandings and multifaceted approaches to healthcare improvement. Among the topics discussed and opportunities identified are: communications, accessibility, care of older adults, social determinants of health, stigma, and respect-based partnerships.

PFAC Mission: *To meet the hospital's mission of providing Exceptional Care. Without Exception through enhanced partnership between patients, families, caregivers and staff.*

BMC Facts and Figures: 2022/2023

- 23,374 admissions
- 1,234,933 Outpatient visits
- 131,638 Emergency visits
- 70 specialties
- 514 beds
- 698,245 interactions aided by interpreters
- 950 physicians, 1, 786 nurses

This report was produced collaboratively by the BMC PFAC. Please contact us at PatientExperience@BMC.org with any questions. Thank you.

The PFAC draws on multiple insights to provide guidance, feedback, and direction to BMC teams, including:

Lived experiences of health conditions and BMC services

Drawing on individual experiences while listening to and learning from peers

Shared value system

Formed by group decision making and a co-designed recruitment strategy

Research evidence, best practice, and literature

Advisors reflect on their reading and interests to inform their approach

Informed, balanced, and thorough perspectives that guide improvements and initiatives

This year, the BMC PFAC has weighed in on:

- Acquisition of a new MRI machine
- Magnet recognition in nursing
- BMC's new marketing campaign
- Lost personal belongings
- Patient Experience goals
- PFAC onboarding process
- Patient information projects
- BMC's external website
- Patient experience initiatives
- Patient experience surveys

Case Study: Patient information improved by PFAC feedback

BMC researchers have been looking to improve patient education in post-surgery care and recovery. The research team created an information sheet to share clear, accessible, digestible - and visually appealing —guidance. The PFAC reviewed the information sheet and advised on language, ease of use, tone, and design. They integrated their feedback into an updated version of the sheet to meet the needs of the research team and, most importantly, the patients who would use it.



“[PFAC] helps us sit together, from all walks of life... I can have a seat at the table and make decisions to help people who are just like the people I live with”

PFAC considers patient experience goals

BMC's Patient Experience goals for 2023 included focus on respect, listening, and empathy. The PFAC discussed what these meant to them and what they looked like in practice. Below are examples of how PFAC defined these terms.

Respect

"The provider asks questions and does not make assumptions"

"Knowledge is accepted, valued, and recognized, not dismissed"

"The scheduling and navigating processes are made easy"

Empathy

"Acknowledging when something is hard and painful"

"Knowing my full story and making space for questions"

"A simple 'I am sorry this is happening to you'"

Active Listening

"Listening to understand, not just listening to reply"

"Focusing on the present patient and being in the now"

"Answering questions sincerely and taking them seriously"

As part of **Patient Experience Week**, in collaboration with BMC Marketing and Communications, **PFAC created video and written stories** to share definitions of respect, empathy, and compassion as well as members' reflections on joining PFAC and experiences of care. These were shared on **social media** and during **provider and staff training**. To the right are some quotes from the videos and at the bottom of each page of this report are excerpts.

"I've always gotten a nice feeling [at BMC], a nice spirit... You feel like the people here are here for the best reasons"

"I've been clean and sober for 25 years and put my life back together but [not everybody] has had that opportunity. But here they are, and here you are, and that's why I want this hospital to provide the best care"

"We have a duty to serve people who maybe don't have a voice. We can speak up for them. So let's do it."

Click on the links to the right to see our Patient Stories and videos, or view these on BMC social media

Patient Stories

- [Darrin's story](#)
- [Monique's story](#)
- [Sebra's story](#)
- [Charlie's story](#)

PFAC videos

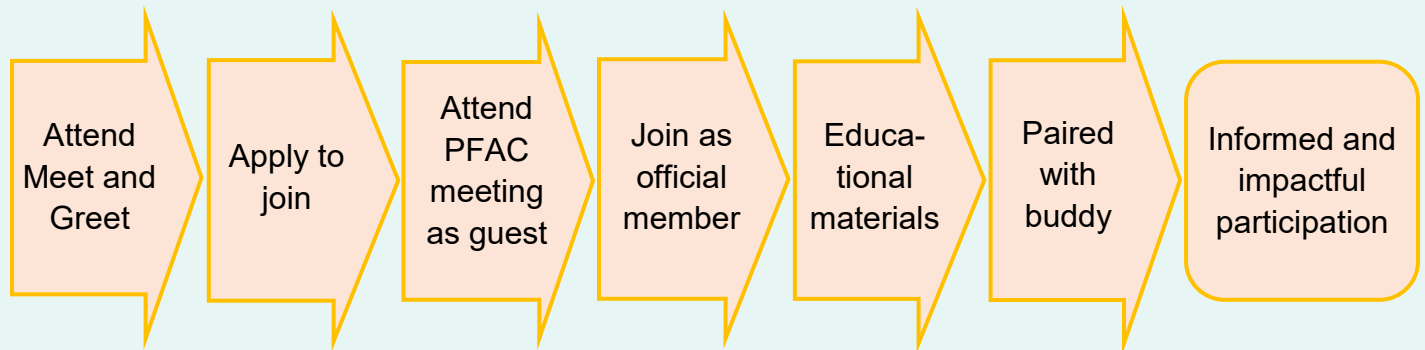
- [Mark's video](#)
- [Rhonda's video](#)
- [Monique's video](#)



"It's been 10 years since my transplant. I joined the PFAC to share my story so other people will know that you can get back to life after kidney disease"

Co-designing a PFAC recruitment and onboarding process that positions PFAC for success

PFAC advisors led the 2022 PFAC recruitment strategy with successful results. Advisors also shaped the onboarding package that new members receive when they join the PFAC. Collaborative practice sets the foundation of BMC's PFAC; from re-writing the charter (including roles, responsibilities, and scope), co-designing a recruitment strategy and application process, and focusing on the onboarding process, new members to join the PFAC with confidence and the right tools.



The PFAC onboarding materials include:

- Facts about Boston Medical Center
- A copy of the PFAC Charter
- The previous year's annual PFAC report
- The PFAC feedback form to share feedback with clinical teams and departments
- Reporting structure (where the PFAC sits in BMC)
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) overview to protect sensitive information
- A confidentiality form
- An outline of how reimbursement works in the PFAC
- A welcome letter

The PFAC will soon begin a new phase of recruitment for 2024. We wish to further deepen the rich perspectives and insights of the council by continuing a membership reflecting diversity of race, ethnicity, age, gender and gender expression, and experience at BMC.



“Although I’ve received stellar care, I know all institutions can make improvements...The PFAC can act as a conduit for criticism, look at the problem, and help make sure it gets to the right person”

PFAC Advisors join BMC Health System committees

“When the Ethics Committee asked for volunteers from the PFAC, I applied immediately. It is hard for providers to know the right thing to do. I also see big potential for learning things that could improve the patient experience”

“There are many times when decisions about quality of care, goals of care, and quality of life can be very challenging for patients, families, and staff. I will be adding insight and perspective to the process. It is exciting that the committee explores and discusses biases that can factor in and affect outcomes, whether one is giving or receiving care”

Two patient and family advisors have joined BMC’s Ethics Committee. The committee meets monthly to review ongoing cases across the hospital, share recent findings and publications, and share opportunities for training and education.

Another PFAC advisor has joined the Boston Accountable Care Organization’s Health Equity Committee as a patient representative. This is a new role that will advise on wide-ranging projects with high impact across Greater Boston.

Integrating patient and family voices to promote patient-centered improvements is a key PFAC goal. To the left, members reflect on their joining the Ethics Committee.

2024 PFAC goals

- Increase the number of PFAC members on BMC committees
- Promote and provide education on PFAC as a resource and collaborator across BMC
- Recruit new members with a focus on representation of BMC’s patient population
- Harness patient stories to complement ongoing data collection
- Support patient experience goals and engage in initiatives to enhance performance
- Identify and support system-wide challenges to promote change and improvement
- Encourage BMC teams to engage PFAC early in processes to optimize input



“After my mother’s death, I needed to do something to help advocate for dementia-friendly practices and mindful care, so I joined the PFAC. I’m so glad I did because it’s been healing to express my feelings and share my perspective on the pros and cons of our experience”