

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Increasingly, policy and health system leaders recognize the importance of engaging consumers in health care system design and implementation.¹ Despite emerging consensus on the evidence, there remains uncertainty about the best strategies to accomplish this.² To better understand the most effective strategies for engagement, in 2017 Community Catalyst launched the Consumer Voices for Innovation (CVI) Grant program, which funded 6 state health advocacy organizations to catalyze grassroots organizing and base building in health system transformation (HST). The program focused on consumers who have presented particular challenges for engagement: people from low-income communities, people of color, and/or older adults. Grantees used a wide variety of strategies to engage consumers, including broad-reaching techniques (e.g., advertising in local media), smaller-scale strategies (e.g., house parties) and outreach via service provision (e.g., providing care coordination). Each grantee also received technical assistance (TA), mentorship and group learning opportunities.

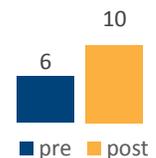


The Institute for Community Health (ICH) conducted a mixed methods evaluation, using grantee surveys and interviews, a consumer survey, conversations with CVI staff, and review of quarterly reports and TA tracking. The evaluation provides evidence that the CVI program is making progress toward increasing grantee capacity to build an engaged consumer base. Grantees made progress in developing capacities for mobilizing and organizing at the grassroots level, gaining visibility, recruiting volunteers, establishing credibility and training leaders. Over 3,200 consumers were added to the base. The number of

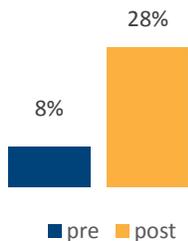
consumers participating in activities consistent with participation, and commitment/ leadership increased. Consumers also reported increases in their leadership skills and their sense of their own power to be involved in HST.

Although grantees reported starting with high levels of engagement with decision-makers, there was evidence that engagement with decision-makers further increased over the course of the grant, and that decision-makers increased their incorporation of consumer experience into health policies and practice. While it is too early to understand the full impacts of this effort, grantees reported a range of positive impacts, from increased consumer and grantee influence at the state and local level, to legislative wins or changes in state processes, to helping defend the ACA and Medicaid.

Top 2 decision-makers meeting grantees ≥ every 2 months (n=10)



Target communities for which grantees report 'Very Strong' capacity to mobilize base



Overall, the evaluation findings are promising, and highlight a range of positive outcomes. The evaluation data also suggest areas for focus of the technical assistance and supports for the second grant year. Grantees will benefit from support in understanding how to most effectively build relationships with consumers, and how to connect individual consumers' experience to the bigger policy picture, in order to get consumers more meaningfully engaged, particularly as leaders. Continued supports to help grantees best leverage connections with individuals of relevant professional backgrounds and points of contact with decision-makers will maximize impact. Finally, the evaluation data point to the need for continued investment and ongoing support for engaging consumers in HST. The evaluation of the second year will be an opportunity to build upon the findings presented here, with the ultimate aim of creating a deep and nuanced understanding of how best to support consumer advocacy organizations in engaging consumers in HST efforts.

¹ Jacobs LM *et al.* Journal for Health Care Quality; 2018. <http://europepmc.org/abstract/med/28786845>.

² Frampton SB, *et al.*: National Academy of Medicine; 2017. <https://nam.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Harnessing-Evidence-and-Experience-to-Change-Culture-A-Guiding-Framework-for-Patient-and-Family-Engaged-Care.pdf>