

Boston Medical Center

Patient Family Advisory Council

Annual Report 2024



The Patient Family Advisory Council serves and represents the patient and family voice at Boston Medical Center (BMC), covering inpatient, ambulatory, and emergency services, and over 70 specialties. This report shares how the council approached its mission this year to advocate for exceptional patient experiences by partnering with teams across the hospital.

2024 numbers

- 12** members total
- 9** patient/family members
- 3** staff members
- 3** new members
- 2** meetings per month

Taking the stage for Patient Experience Week

Council member **Kacia** shared opening remarks at a hospital-wide webinar to celebrate Patient Experience Week. The webinar, delivered by Toya Gorley from NRC Health, focused on the importance of trust inside and outside of clinical practice and drew on findings from a survey that the council had supported earlier in the year. Dr. Jodi Larson, BMC's Chief Quality Officer, opened the event and handed over to Kacia who spoke about the power of trust and the importance of two-way trust between patient and provider, before Toya delivered the presentation.

Patient representation at EQTY 2024

Michelle, who joined the council this year, attended Boston Medical Center's [EQTY 2024](#) summit in September. Michelle says: "BMC recognizes that all stakeholders can affect changes to improve the healthcare system", "I was delighted and honored to represent patients". Speakers at the event introduced programs that will deliver innovative services in communities affected by health inequities in Boston. Michelle believes that "these programs will help [residents] trust the healthcare system and live healthy lives".



Michelle (right) with staff member, Sophie, at EQTY 2024

New partnerships

Some new partnerships have developed this year:

- *Learning Health System Research*: The council will serve as the community advisory arm of a large research program led by researchers at BMC and Boston University. The council will review incoming projects and developments through intervention-based studies.
- *Physical Therapy in Critical Care*: Over the summer, members of the council joined a 'summer series' to update a tool that shares helpful information with families and individuals who have a loved one receiving critical care. The tool aims to empower individuals to become active participants in their loved one's healing and recovery process.
- *Patient Listening Sessions*: The Patient Advocacy department and Patient Family Advisory Council are exploring ways to connect with patients who may want to talk about recent hospital experiences. We hope this will provide a compassionate ear to patients looking to be heard and that it might deepen council members' insight into experiences at the hospital.



Committee Connections

Many council members are part of hospital committees and advisory groups. **Sebra** and **India** serve on the hospital's Ethics Committee that ensures the protection of patient's rights and autonomy. **Kacia** is on the Health Equity Committee that leads and monitors equity initiatives for [Boston Accountable Care Organization](#). Finally, **Michelle** and **Samuel** sit on the system's Equity Advisory Board, hosted by the [Health Equity Accelerator](#), which shares updates between equity workgroups and leaders to identify opportunities for partnership and learning. Updates from committees are shared at council meetings and members bring insight gained through the council to their respective committees.

Setting up for increased impact

To meet growing demand, a new meeting structure has been launched. Meetings are now held twice a month: one for guests and partners, and the other to focus on internal matters. This has led to richer discussions and feedback sessions, more opportunity to accommodate requests, and protected time for council priorities and information sharing.

A Year in Review: What has the council advised on this year?

The council has had another year in high demand. Project trends included a focus on quality improvement, patient communication, and change management.

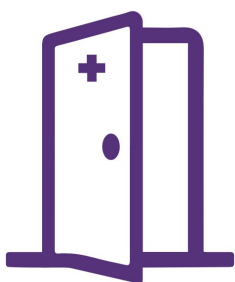
Changes in Patient Transport

Provided suggestions and talking points to communicate important changes to patients about patient transport. Resulting messaging to patients was clear, respectful, compassionate, and accounted for individual circumstances.



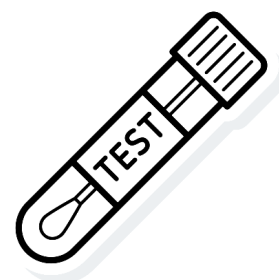
Increasing Screening Rates

Advised on how hospital teams can use, and make the most of, new text-messaging technology to increase return rates of remote testing swabs, including what information to share and how, and potential challenges.



Changes in Patient Registration

Discussed ways to communicate upcoming changes to patient registration process, including where and when to share updates with patients and the amount of information to include.



Metal Screening in the ER

Shared ways to help patients feel at ease while the hospital's Emergency Room starts metal screening upon entry. Council recommended highlighting the purpose of screening and planning for possible challenges and concerns.



Patient Survey on Finance

Informed design of patient-facing survey asking patients about their financial health and familiarity with financial support options. The council was instrumental in ensure the topic was approached sensitively and respectfully.



Patient Survey on Trust

Consulted on the design of patient-facing survey that would ask patients how they feel trust is built during clinical interactions. The council shaped survey questions, including order, content, and options for multiple choice.



Community Connections

Many members of the council work in the community to improve opportunities for those around them. In addition to the positive impact this makes, it deepens council members' insights into what patients might be experiencing outside of hospital and what resources are available to them.

Council member, **Monique**, founded the non-profit organization, Amazing Legacies, to transform lives by working with local communities to provide resources and opportunities needed to thrive. Recently, Monique partnered with BMC's Immigrant and Refugee Health Center and Pediatrics department to supply 140 book bags to young patients and refugee families.

Murshid, who joined the council this summer, works on the City of Somerville's [Commission for Persons with Disabilities](#) to promote accessibility in the community. He also pursues this mission in his work with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority as part of their [Access in Motion Campaign](#) to improve accessibility for Boston's buses and subways.

Another council member looking to improve things for marginalized groups in her community is **Kacia** who serves on the [Community Advisory Board for Boston's Health Care for the Homeless Program](#) (BHCHP). Members of this board are patients who experienced homelessness and provide critical advice on BHCHP programs and policies.

Finally, council member **Sebra** volunteers with the [Alzheimer's Association](#) as a community educator, legislative advocate, fundraiser, and facilitates a dementia caregiver support group with as part of the [City of Boston's Age Strong Commission](#). Sebra hosts the ['Mindful Aging Show'](#) on Boston Community Radio, [recently speaking with BMC geriatrician](#), Dr. Lisa Caruso, about her journey becoming a geriatrician and health needs for seniors.



In the photos: Monique delivering 'Amazing Legacies' holiday donations, Murshid in the community for 'Access in Motion', Kacia with BHCHP President, Dr. Jim O'Connell.

New member spotlight: Michelle

Michelle joined the council in August 2024. She says: “The council is one of the voices for diverse patients and families [at BMC]”. “It allowed me to interact with other members, share knowledge, and offer advice. Members bring their experience, share their unique points of view, and partner with healthcare teams... [Our] efforts have led to real, positive impacts on patient experience”. Michelle believes that educating young people is a vital step to making public health improvement. “Prevention is better than cure”, says Michelle, “we can leave a legacy for future generations”. Looking to 2025, Michelle hopes the council can spread the word of healthy habits and self-advocacy to patients and families: “The ‘self’ and family play a big role in maintaining a healthy lifestyle”.



New member spotlight: Samuel

Samuel joined alongside Michelle in August 2024 as they are both members of Boston Medical Center Health System’s Equity Advisory Board. Samuel decided to bring his experiences of healthcare and perspectives to the council. He is an advocate for patients having routine bloodwork in clinic as an important way to avoid illness or progression of disease: “some people are not aware of this deadly disease until they have crisis... [Thankfully] my detection was in the early stage and that is why I am here today”. In 2025, Samuel hopes the council will focus on equitable access to primary health care and support improving healthcare access for immigrants. He takes a strategic approach to racial health equity and is interested in community mapping to identify the types of support most needed in Boston neighborhoods and surrounding areas.



New member spotlight: Murshid

Last but not least, Murshid joined the council in August 2024. He joined to advocate for decision-making that represents underprivileged populations, especially migrants and individuals with disabilities. In particular, Murshid would like to highlight areas and complexities that have been traditionally overlooked in healthcare, such as the intersection of disability and fertility, reproductive health, and ageing. Murshid believes more research should be done into these areas, including into specific conditions like [post-polio syndrome](#). He hopes 2025 will see the Patient Family Advisory Council support a patient and community outreach strategy that communicates all that the hospital has to offer to diverse patient groups, resulting in increased access to services and higher awareness of what resources are available those to those who will benefit from them.

2025 Goals and Strategy

Goal: Increase integration and impact of patient voices across hospital.

Plan:

- Identify more ways to hear and learn from patients who are not part of council.
- Continue to grow council with new members, partnerships, and collaborations.

Goal: Increase awareness of hospital resources among patients and prospective patients.

Plan:

- Assess areas for opportunity and need
- Partner with relevant BMC teams
- Co-design and implement course of action with key stakeholders

Goal: Develop and formalize protocol for engaging with council.

Plan:

- Outline expectations and norms for visiting council
- Identify best way to communicate protocol at hospital
- Begin implementing protocol

Contact us at PatientExperience@bmc.org

For our application form, previous reports, and more about the council, go to:

www.bmc.org/patient-family-advisory-council