

A history of PFACs in Massachusetts



BETSY LEHMAN CENTER
for Patient Safety

Massachusetts was the first state in the U.S. to require all acute and rehabilitation hospitals to have a PFAC, recognizing the value of patient and family engagement in health care. To align with state law, PFACs must:

- **Reflect the community:** Membership must reflect the diversity of the community and the patient population the hospital serves.
- **Prioritize patient voices:** At least 50% of PFAC members must be patients, family members, or caregivers, giving the community a strong voice within the council.
- **Maintain transparency:** PFACs must meet at least quarterly and publicly report on their activities annually.

From local roots to national impact

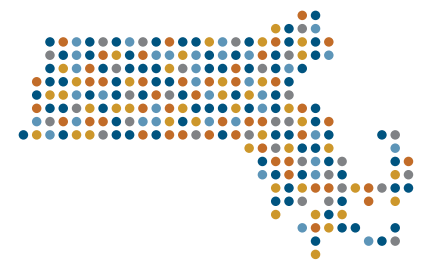
Today, the PFAC movement continues to grow across the state, the country, and beyond. In 2024, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services issued a Patient Safety Structural Measure that asks hospitals across the country to attest to having a PFAC, and that the PFAC is made up of members that reflect the patient population served. This signals nationwide support for effective and equitable engagement of patients, families, and caregivers as an essential component of safe, quality care.

Supporting the future of PFACs

The Betsy Lehman Center, a state agency, is the central hub for PFAC resources and reporting in Massachusetts. The Center is dedicated to supporting these councils as part of its broader mission to advance health care safety across the state. The Betsy Lehman Center offers:

- **Statewide reporting and trends:** Collecting data from PFACs and reporting back findings.
- **Networking and events:** Creating a statewide community for PFACs to connect, learn from each other, and share ideas.
- **Strategic advocacy:** Ensuring the patient voice remains central to safety and quality improvements across the Commonwealth.

Key PFAC milestones in the Commonwealth



1982

Boston Children's Hospital establishes the first hospital-wide PFAC in the U.S.

2008

Landmark legislation makes Massachusetts the first state to mandate PFACs in hospitals.

2010 – 2023

Health Care for All, a Massachusetts nonprofit, supports the state's PFACs and collects their annual reports.

2024

PFAC resources and reporting shifts to the Betsy Lehman Center, reflecting the Commonwealth's commitment to supporting PFACs and advancing health care safety.