

CONTEXT SETTING

A BHC Governance discussion took place on August 8, 2024, providing insights from a collaboratively reviewed document. Members expressed a desire to establish a clear mission and vision before developing the governance structure. To support this process, a survey was distributed to gather input on the Consortium's core purpose, goals, and governance from both collective and organizational perspectives.

GOVERNANCE-THEMED FEEDBACK SUMMARY

The BHC members' feedback suggests a strong preference for a governance model that promotes **collaborative and transparent decision-making**, **inclusive representation**, and **equitable voting rights**. There is a need for clarity in roles and responsibilities, as well as for a structure that is **efficient and adaptable**. The chosen model must also support **cross-sector collaboration** and **resource coordination** to achieve the Consortium's mission and strategic goals effectively. (See page 3 for Governance Structure examples, beginning with a hybrid structure and moving on to other examples starting on page 6.)

DETAILED GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE FEEDBACK THEMES

Feedback Themes on Governance Models

Desire for Inclusive & Balanced Representation

- **Member Input:** There is a clear emphasis on ensuring that all key stakeholders, organizations, and sectors have a voice in decision-making.
- **Implications:** The governance model should prioritize inclusivity, where both individual organizational needs and sector-wide perspectives are represented. Members seek a balance between organizational and sector-based input to ensure equitable representation without over-complicating the voting process.

Focus on Collaborative & Transparent Decision-Making

- **Member Input:** Many members expressed a preference for a governance model that fosters **collaborative decision-making** with open, transparent processes. They highlighted the importance of equal access to information and participation in decision-making to ensure trust and shared responsibility.
- **Implications:** This feedback aligns with the **Collaborative Governance Model**, where shared decision-making is key. However, it will be critical to establish clear processes to facilitate collaboration effectively and ensure transparency in how decisions are made and communicated.

Need for Efficient Processes & Clear Accountability

- **Member Input:** Some members expressed concerns about the potential complexity and time required to make decisions when every voice must be heard, particularly if consensus is required. There is also a need for **clear accountability** for decisions and outcomes.
- **Implications:** There is a recognition of the importance of efficient governance. A **Lead Agency Governance Model** could address this concern by providing clear accountability and a more centralized decision-making structure. However, it must be balanced with mechanisms to maintain collaboration and engagement from all members.

Clarity in Roles, Responsibilities & Voting Rights

- **Member Input:** Members emphasized the importance of defining clear roles, responsibilities, and voting rights within the governance structure. They want a system where the responsibilities of each voting member are understood, and decision-making processes are clearly outlined.
- **Implications:** Regardless of the chosen governance model, there is a need for a well-documented structure that specifies who has voting power, how votes are cast, and how leadership roles are distributed. This could also include **hybrid models** that combine organizational and sector-based representation to clarify roles.

Ensuring Equity & Preventing Power Imbalance

- **Member Input:** Concerns were raised about potential power imbalances, where larger organizations or sectors could disproportionately influence decisions. Members emphasized that the governance model should not favor any one group over others but should ensure **equitable decision-making**.
- **Implications:** An **equitable approach to representation** is crucial to prevent power imbalances. Both the **Collaborative and Sector-Based Voting Models** address these concerns by ensuring equal voting power or sector representation. A hybrid approach could also help balance interests between sectors and individual organizations.

Flexibility & Adaptability to Changing Needs

- **Member Input:** Members expressed a desire for a governance structure that is adaptable and responsive to the **changing needs of the community** and the Consortium's evolving priorities.
- **Implications:** A flexible governance model should allow for adjustments as the Consortium grows and its priorities shift. This could mean periodic reviews of governance processes, voting structures, and leadership roles to ensure they continue to align with the BHC's strategic goals.

Emphasis on Cross-Sector Collaboration & Resource Coordination

- **Member Input:** Given the BHC's strategic goals, many members highlighted the importance of ensuring that the governance structure supports cross-sector collaboration and coordinated use of resources to improve behavioral health services.

- **Implications:** The governance model should encourage active participation across sectors, fostering partnerships and resource-sharing. This aligns with a **Collaborative Governance Model** but requires mechanisms to ensure that resources are coordinated efficiently and that the governance model supports strategic priorities like harm reduction, stigma reduction, and prevention.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE EXAMPLES

HYBRID GOVERNANCE MODEL: COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP WITH PROJECT DIRECTOR SUPPORT

Key Components

Steering Committee as the Governing Body

- A **Steering Committee** composed of representatives from key sectors (e.g., healthcare, law enforcement, public health, housing, recovery support) and representatives from member organizations. This committee holds the primary responsibility for setting strategic priorities, making decisions, and guiding the Consortium's activities.
- Each member represents both their **organization's interests** and the broader **sector's needs**, encouraging integrated perspectives and holistic decision-making.
- The **Steering Committee** meets regularly to review progress, make strategic decisions, and ensure alignment with BHC's vision, mission, and strategy.

BHC Project Director as Central Coordinator

- The **BHC Project Director** serves as the primary coordinator for the Consortium's activities, providing **day-to-day leadership, operational support, and coordination** among members.
- The **Project Director** acts as a facilitator, ensuring efficient implementation of Steering Committee decisions and enhancing collaboration across sectors.
- **Discovery Behavioral Health** serves as the fiscal agent, providing **financial oversight and support** to the Project Director. This ensures transparent and responsible management of funds to achieve BHC's objectives.
- While the Project Director leads operational tasks, they remain **accountable to the Steering Committee**, ensuring decisions reflect the collective priorities of the BHC.

Advisory Subcommittees for Strategic Focus Areas

- **Subcommittees or Working Groups** are formed around key strategic priorities (e.g., harm reduction, prevention, data collection, community engagement).
- Subcommittees are responsible for developing recommendations, conducting focused work, and bringing forth proposals for review by the Steering Committee.

- Membership in these subcommittees can be **inclusive of non-voting community members and subject-matter experts**, enabling diverse input and engagement on specific topics.

Balanced Voting Structure within the Steering Committee

- **Voting Rights:** Each Steering Committee member has one equal vote, regardless of whether they represent an organization or a sector, ensuring balanced representation.
- Decision-Making Approach:
 - **Major Decisions** (e.g., strategic priorities, significant resource allocations) require a **supermajority vote (e.g., 2/3 agreement)**, ensuring broad support while maintaining decision-making efficiency.
 - **Operational Decisions** (e.g., program updates, routine actions) may be made through a **simple majority vote** to avoid delays and ensure the BHC can respond quickly to emerging needs.

Regular Review & Adaptive Structure

- An **annual review process** will be built into the governance model to assess its effectiveness, ensuring that it remains aligned with BHC's strategic goals and the community's evolving needs.
- A **Governance Review Subcommittee** could be established to evaluate the structure and processes, gather feedback, and recommend changes as needed to improve the model.

How This Hybrid Model Addresses Feedback Themes

Inclusivity & Balanced Representation

- The **Steering Committee** ensures representation across all key sectors and member organizations. Voting equality prevents any single entity from dominating decisions, balancing both organizational and sector interests.

Collaborative & Transparent Decision-Making

- The **Project Director** facilitates transparent and inclusive processes, and the **Steering Committee** fosters a collaborative decision-making environment where diverse viewpoints are openly discussed.
- **Subcommittees** ensure that key focus areas receive attention and in-depth exploration, contributing to transparent and informed decision-making.

Efficient Processes & Clear Accountability

- The **Project Director** acts as a point of coordination, allowing for efficient operational management and clear leadership, while remaining accountable to the **Steering Committee** for strategic direction.
- The **fiscal oversight by Discovery Behavioral Health** ensures proper management of resources, enhancing financial accountability.

Clarity in Roles, Responsibilities & Voting Rights

- Clear distinctions are made between the Steering Committee's strategic leadership, the Project Director's operational coordination, and Discovery Behavioral Health's fiscal role.
- Voting processes are defined for major and operational decisions, maintaining both clarity and flexibility in how decisions are made.

Equity & Prevention of Power Imbalance

- The equal voting structure of the **Steering Committee** promotes equity and prevents power imbalances, ensuring all sectors have an equal voice in decisions.
- Input from diverse sectors and subcommittees reinforces balanced, holistic decision-making that reflects the broader interests of the behavioral health community.

Flexibility & Adaptability to Changing Needs

- The **annual review process** supports a dynamic governance model that can evolve to meet changing community needs and strategic shifts in BHC's priorities.
- Subcommittees provide flexibility by allowing in-depth focus on emerging issues and adapting efforts to new challenges.

Cross-Sector Collaboration & Resource Coordination

- The **Project Director's role** enhances collaboration across sectors, providing central coordination and facilitating partnerships.
- The involvement of **Discovery Behavioral Health as the fiscal agent** ensures that funds are managed responsibly, with strategic oversight from the Steering Committee to align resource allocation with BHC's goals.

Balancing Potential Tensions

- **Inclusivity vs. Efficiency:** The Steering Committee provides inclusive decision-making, while the Project Director ensures that operational tasks are carried out efficiently. The **supermajority vote** for major decisions balances the need for broad support with timely action.
- **Collaborative Governance vs. Centralized Coordination:** While the Steering Committee holds ultimate decision-making power, the Project Director provides centralized leadership to coordinate daily activities and drive actions forward, ensuring alignment with strategic priorities.

OTHER GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE EXAMPLES: BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

Collaborative Governance Model

Overview: A **collaborative governance model** emphasizes shared leadership and decision-making across all member organizations. Representatives from each organization or sector work together to form a **governing board or steering committee** that is responsible for setting strategic priorities, making decisions, and guiding the Consortium's activities.

How It Works:

- **Shared Decision-Making:** Decisions are made collectively, often by consensus or through a voting process with clearly defined roles for each member.
- **Inclusive Representation:** All member organizations have representation on the governing body, and the structure supports equal input from all parties.
- **Subcommittees & Working Groups:** Specific tasks or projects may be managed by subcommittees or working groups that report back to the main governing board.

Benefits:

- **Inclusivity & Equal Voice:** Ensures that all member organizations or sectors have a voice in decision-making, promoting transparency and collaboration.
- **Cross-Sector Collaboration:** Encourages input from diverse sectors, fostering partnerships and a holistic approach to addressing community behavioral health needs.
- **Collective Ownership & Accountability:** Shared leadership promotes joint responsibility for outcomes and ensures that no single entity dominates the decision-making process.

Challenges:

- **Decision-Making Efficiency:** Collective decision-making can be time-consuming, particularly when achieving consensus among diverse perspectives.
- **Role Clarity:** Ensuring clarity of roles and responsibilities is critical; otherwise, collaborative governance can lead to confusion or overlap in leadership functions.
- **Risk of Dilution of Focus:** With multiple sectors and organizations represented, there is a potential for too broad a focus, leading to challenges in prioritizing strategic initiatives.

Lead Agency Governance Model

Overview: In a **lead agency governance model**, a single organization or agency acts as the main decision-making body and provides **centralized leadership** for the Consortium. While the lead agency coordinates the activities and governance of the BHC, input from other member organizations is incorporated through an advisory board or coalition.

How It Works:

- **Centralized Decision-Making:** The lead agency makes key decisions, manages resources, and drives the Consortium's activities in line with the mission and vision.
- **Advisory Structure:** An advisory board or coalition of member organizations provides input, recommendations, and expertise to guide the lead agency's decisions.
- **Accountability & Leadership Roles:** The lead agency is accountable for ensuring that the goals and priorities of the Consortium are met while seeking input from the advisory group.

Benefits:

- **Efficient Decision-Making:** Centralizing leadership and decision-making with a lead agency can streamline processes and lead to more efficient actions.
- **Clear Roles & Accountability:** The lead agency has clearly defined responsibilities for guiding the Consortium's activities, ensuring alignment with strategic priorities.
- **Focused Implementation:** Having one central body can help maintain a focused approach to initiatives and ensure that resources are used effectively.

Challenges:

- **Potential Imbalance of Power:** There may be concerns over the lead agency having too much authority or disproportionately influencing decisions, which could reduce collaborative input from other members.
- **Limited Cross-Sector Representation:** While an advisory board allows for input, the primary decision-making rests with the lead agency, which may not fully represent the diverse sectors involved in behavioral health.
- **Need for Strong Communication & Inclusion:** To ensure equitable input from all members, the lead agency must maintain open communication channels and actively engage advisory members in decision-making.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A GOVERNANCE MODEL

Decision-Making Efficiency vs. Representation:

- Consider the need for **timely decision-making** versus the importance of **ensuring all voices are represented**. A collaborative governance model is more inclusive but can be slower, while a lead agency model is more streamlined but may not be as representative.

Accountability & Leadership:

- Think about the balance between **shared leadership responsibilities** and the desire for a **single point of accountability**. Collaborative governance promotes joint responsibility, while a lead agency provides clear leadership and accountability.

Adaptability & Sector Engagement:

- Evaluate how adaptable each model is to changing needs and how well it engages **diverse sectors and community perspectives**. The collaborative model fosters engagement across all sectors, while the lead agency model relies on the advisory group to represent those sectors.

Alignment with BHC's Mission, Vision, & Strategy:

- Reflect on which model best supports the **goals of the BHC**, including **stigma reduction, harm reduction, prevention, and community empowerment**. The chosen governance model should align with strategic priorities and enhance the BHC's ability to serve Jefferson County effectively.

NEXT STEPS FOR BHC MEMBERS

- **Reflect on Model Fit:** Consider which governance model aligns best with your expectations for collaboration, efficiency, and representation.
- **Discuss Preferences & Concerns:** Share thoughts on how each model might support or hinder the BHC's goals and structure.
- **Identify Key Governance Needs:** Think about specific governance needs, such as decision-making processes, leadership roles, and how to best engage all members in advancing the mission and vision.