

# Building a Stronger Community via PFAC Recruitment (Patient and Family Advisory Council)

## Student Interns

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## Academic Preceptor

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## Community Preceptor

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## Mazzoni Center

The Mazzoni Center is a community healthcare clinic dedicated to offering services that promote the health and well-being of the LGBTQ communities. Located in Center City Philadelphia, the Mazzoni Center clinic services include primary medical care, mental health and substance-use treatment services, legal services and gender-affirming services. The center is also the host of the largest free trans-specific conference in the world, the Trans Wellness Conference, and is one of the largest providers of HIV prevention and care in the city of Philadelphia.

Services include:

- Primary Care
- Gender Affirming Care
- HIV Care
- STI/STD testing and treatment
- PrEP and PEP
- Youth Drop In
- Legal Services
- Food bank
- Insurance/Housing

## Background

The Patient and Family Advisory Council is a group of involved Mazzoni Center medical providers (i.e. physicians, nurses, PAs), administrative staff, patients, and family of patients who meet once per month (currently over Zoom). PFAC's purpose is to facilitate discussions of patient experiences in a safe, honest environment. A coalition of dedicated PFAC members ideally will have deep, ongoing conversations that lead to real solutions.

## Goals

The Mazzoni Center administrators who run the Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) asked the interns to recruit more members for the council, specifically patients who were HIV positive, patients on PrEP or PEP, and those of diverse ethnic backgrounds and gender identities.

## Activities & Contributions



**Patient & Family Advisory Council**

**What is a patient and family advisor?**  
A patient and family advisor is someone who helps improve the quality of the treatment experience for patients with ongoing conditions such as HIV, high blood pressure, or diabetes.

**Why should YOU become a patient and family advisor?**

- If you or a family member has received treatment at Mazzoni Center, you could help to bridge the gap between how patients experience treatment and how their providers perceive the care they provide.
- If you want to improve the quality of Mazzoni Center's care for all patients and family members.
- By sharing your experiences and perspective, you can help us make important changes to improve health care services for other patients and families.

## Project Description

The Bridging the Gaps student interns started a recruitment process for PFAC. They created flyers outlining the PFAC goals and responsibilities and handed that out to the staff members at the clinic, the providers, and hung the flyers up at the front desk area, in the bathrooms, and in other waiting areas. Additionally, the interns made a powerpoint slide for PFAC to post on the TVs in the waiting room and an Instagram post for the Mazzoni instagram page. They recruited individual patients by speaking with them during their visits, calling them on the phone, and via email.

## Activities & Contributions



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**What do patient and family advisors do?**

- Talk about your experience. Advisors help by talking about their health care experiences with providers, staff and other patients.
- Advisors tell us what it's like to be a patient and how we can improve the care we provide.
- Advisors help review or create materials like forms and educational handouts. Advisors provide a patient perspective and help us make these materials easier for all patients and family members to understand and use.
- Discuss what programs or resources could be offered in the community to help support patient self-management.

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**We will:**

- Provide you with training and resources to help you be an engaged advisor.
- Listen and respond to your ideas and suggestions.
- Keep private/confidential the details of your experiences and insights unless we have your permission to share them.

For more information about becoming a patient and family advisor, contact Andrew.gudzelak@mazzonicenter.org

PFAC Meetings are on the 4th Thursday of each month at 1PM on Zoom!

**You will have the opportunity to:**

- Share your insights and opinions, provide feedback, offer recommendations and participate in short-term projects or activities (such as assisting in creating and testing patient and family engagement tools and materials).
- Talk about your experience about what it's like to be a patient or family member of someone with a chronic condition, to help doctors and care teams improve how they care for patients with this information.
- Attend meetings to discuss patient care improvements.
- Volunteer your time—usually 1 hour per month. Patient and family advisors provide a voice that represents all patients and families of patients who receive care at Mazzoni Center.

## Accomplishments

Due to the interns' recruitment efforts, the number of patients present on the council doubled as of the end of their internship, with other patients expressing interest in attending future meetings. The interns were able to participate in two PFAC meetings during June and July and interact with patients. Additionally, new participants on the council expressed their ideas and suggestions such as creating an accessible and wheelchair-user friendly walkway into the clinic or finding a meeting time that allows patients who work to still participate in the council.

## Reflections

The Patient and Family Advisory Council embodies the concept of "bridging the gaps." It brings medical providers and patients together in a space meant for honest conversation, questions, and constructive criticism, which then enables change to be implemented. Thanks to PFAC, patients are better cared for and providers have a better understanding of the wants and needs of the population they serve.