Welcome to the Community Engagement Learning Network!

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Community engagement refers to the different ways in which health (& social) care organizations can reach out to, engage, and partner with people with lived experience, with the goal of working together to improve healthcare and achieve positive health outcomes.

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Please join us for our next session on **Oct 28th from 3-4:30pm ET**

Featured presenter: TidalHealth

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www.consumerpartnership.org/assessment

Welcome to INSPIRE's Community Engagement Assessment & Practice Library

This self-assessment takes less than 10 minutes to complete and offers customized suggestions, including 'easy wins' for your organization and community!

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Start Your Assessment

Start Now

Your responses will be used to provide recommendations about specific ways your organization can strengthen partnerships with PWLE.

We strongly recommend that you start with the self-assessment so we can help point you in the right direction, but you can choose to skip the self-assessment and explore our full Practice Library on your own.

- What is this self-assessment? +
- Who should take this self-assessment? +
- How to take this self-assessment: +

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Click to filter by practice category

- Building authentic and impactful relationships with PWLE
- Building organizational infrastructure for engaging PWLE
- Creating strategies and goals for engaging PWLE
- Measuring and evaluating your work with PWLE

Search resources...

Articulating A Clear Statement Of Purpose

Creating strategies and goals for engaging PWLE

Creating Engagement Opportunities

Building authentic and impactful relationships with PWLE

Engaging Executive Leaders

Building organizational infrastructure for engaging PWLE

Ensuring Representation

Creating strategies and goals for engaging PWLE

Establishing Feedback Loops That Support Action

Building organizational infrastructure for engaging PWLE

Hiring And Training Dedicated And Skilled Staff

Building organizational infrastructure for engaging PWLE

The INSPIRE Framework for Engaging PWLE

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Creating Strategies and Goals for Engaging PWLE

- Articulating a Clear Statement of Purpose
- Setting Specific Goals and Objectives
- Ensuring Representation

Building organizational infrastructure for engaging PWLE

- Engaging executive leaders
- Hiring and training Dedicated Staff
- Integrating PWLE into Governance and Operations
- Establishing feedback loops that support action

Measuring and evaluating your work with PWLE

- Process measurement and improvement
- Understanding the impact and outcomes of engaging PWLE
- Measurement tools and processes

Building Authentic and Impactful Relationships with PWLE

- Creating Engagement Opportunities
- Recruitment and Onboarding
- Supporting Participation
- Training & Capacity Building
- Transparent Communication

How healthcare organizations and people with lived experience can work together to save Medicaid:

A case study in community partnerships from Utah.

Stephanie Burdick, Consumer Advocate

Adam Cohen, CEO of Odyssey House

Protect Medicaid Utah Coalition

Objectives for Today

- Unlearn a common myth about Nonprofits Advocacy
- Recognize the benefit that can come from having impactful community partnerships in advocacy
- Learn how to practice ethical community engagement principles while advocating for policy change
- Identify what makes a mutually beneficial partnership versus an exploitative or misaligned partnership
- Discuss how to apply these concepts in your organization or in your network

We are a coalition of consumers, community organizations, healthcare providers and advocates united together to protect, defend, and improve Medicaid.

PROTECT MEDICAID UTAH

Organizational Partners:

Behavioral Health Organizations:

Odyssey House

First Step House

USARA

Community Based Organizations:

Holy Cross Ministries

Take Care Utah

Advocacy Organizations:

Voices for Utah's Children

United Way of Salt Lake

Utah Domestic Violence Coalition

United Today, Stronger Tomorrow

Legal Aid:

Disability Law Center

Clean Slate Utah

Other Healthcare Organizations:

Association of Utah Community Health Centers

Utah Association of Family Physicians

Weber County Human Services

Homeless Services:

Fourth Street Clinic

Consumer Partners

Members of our steering committee with either current or past lived experience with one of Utah's Medicaid programs or are parents of children on Medicaid or CHIP.

Stephanie Burdick

Kari Harbath

Paul Gibbs

Angela Turner

Marcella Patino

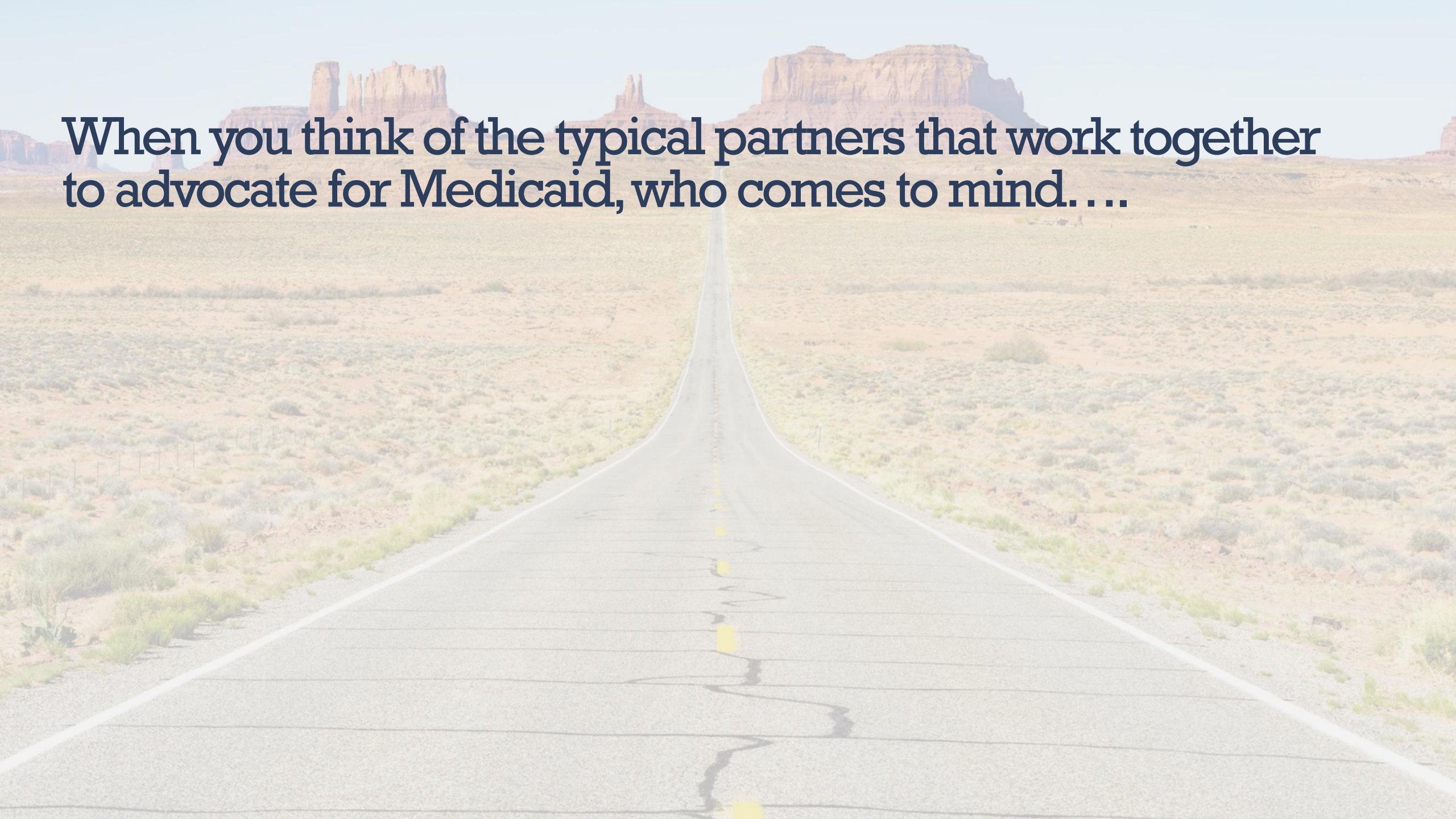
Destiny Garcia

Evan Done

Chris Robinson

We also have a peer group that meets monthly and beyond our steering committee and our peer group, our coalition has engaged with over 100 individuals with lived experience with Medicaid. We plan to continue to grow partnerships across organizations and consumer leaders.

Quick tangent: Myth-busting for Nonprofits and Advocacy



When you think of the typical partners that work together to advocate for Medicaid, who comes to mind….

UTAH SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION, INC

Scott Burns
Executive Director
P.O. Box 2
Junction Utah 84740
(435) 592-9806
burnslaw7@gmail.com

M. Helen Spann
Treasurer

Sheriff Tracy Glover
President
Kane County

Sheriff Jared Rigby
First Vice-President
Wasatch County

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Second Vice-President
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Salt Lake County

Sheriff Lehi T. Lacy
San Juan County

Sheriff Jared Buchanan
Sanpete County

Sheriff Nathan Curtis
Sevier County

May 5, 2026

Tracy Gruber
Executive Director
Utah Department of Health and Human Serv

Dear Director Gruber,

On behalf of the Utah Sheriffs' Associatio
continuation of Utah's Targeted Adult M
efforts to secure ongoing federal approv

From a public safety perspective, TAM
addressing some of the most persisten
A significant majority of TAM participa
struggle with substance use disorders
These are the same underlying facto
contacts, incarceration, and crisis si

By providing continuous eligibility
to stabilize, engage in care, and br
impact clearly. In Sanpete County
inmates has been associated with
this translate directly into fewer

TAM also plays a meaningful ro
individuals receive consistent
likely to encounter them in cri
that connect individuals to ca
for the individuals themselve

In addition to these public s
Providing treatment and st
repeated incarceration, en
involvement.

Utah Chiefs of Police Association

express our strong support for the
ram and for the Department's
id waiver process.

ective and practical tool in

GOV & POLITICS HEALTH

Sheriffs, police, mayors rally to save Utah Medicaid program for the homeless, parolees

Utah's Targeted Adult Medicaid Program at risk of discontinuation after feds signal they won't extend waiver

BY: KATIE MCKELLAR - MAY 11, 2026 5:02 AM

Probably not your local sheriff and police chief?

How do we get Police Chiefs and Sheriffs and Mayors and conservative state legislators and prosecutors and county commissioners and correctional facilities to support Medicaid?

Because we had established the internal work that conflicts, ensure that people can express their own self interest, were able to broaden our net to capture other

Collaboratio er in siloed spaces where we are a l which means that Medicaid is erate when we think more about

We can have stand do all kinds of stakeholder engage

Let's dive in to talk about how we practice community engagement in a way that has made us more successful.

inspire community engagement for better healthcare

For community engagement to be authentic it should be:

1. Asset-based
2. Diverse & inclusive
3. Equitable
4. Impactful
5. Integrated
6. Mutually beneficial
7. Resourced & compensated
8. Transformational & restorative
9. Trust-based

We discuss these dimensions - and practices to bring them to life - in further detail in this brief:

The nine dimensions of authentic community engagement

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While we have not perfectly achieved all of these dimensions, we continue to strive.

We want to focus on three dimensions we have prioritized:

Mutual Benefit

Impactful

Integrated

Mutual Benefit

"Authentic community engagement involves creating space that is beneficial not just for organizations but also for the PWLE participating and the communities they represent. Both organizations and PWLE should have a shared understanding of the goals and scope of their work together, what each is expected to give, and what each is expected to get. Mutual benefit relates to the idea of impact but emphasizes the importance of benefit being experienced by both sides of the partnership – in the outcomes as well as the process."

(INSPIRE Report on Nine Dimensions of Community Engagement)

Mutual Benefit

Example: Working on TAM together and with broad stakeholders

Mutual Benefit

Where to begin:

Venn Diagram or a more facilitated exercise in mapping out interests.

Organization tip: measure yourself and your organization for how trusted you are by PWLE – can they tell you their own experiences?


DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
UNITED STATES SPACE FORCE
DEPARTMENT OF THE SPACE FORCE


CVC


U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Impactful

Authentic community engagement should make a difference. Both organizations and community members should see community engagement as a strategy to make meaningful improvements to things they care about. Feedback loops ensure that community members clearly understand how their work and partnership has led to improvements. To achieve the most meaningful change, community engagement should involve representatives who understand the issues and identities of the people being served. By designing solutions that address the most complex challenges, organizations can create positive ripple effects that benefit everyone.

(INSPIRE Report on Nine Dimensions of Community Engagement)

Impactful

Even though we did not succeed in removing Medicaid cuts from HR 1, what are some examples where we each saw impact from our work together?

Sometimes it's helpful to look at process goals and interim goals, especially because that helps build collective power for the future.

Impactful

Where to begin:

Social Service Appropriations Committees

Medicaid Advisory Committees Budget presentations

Utah Mecicaid

Authentic community engagement should not be an afterthought or a mere sign-off after decisions have been made. Instead, it involves authentic partnerships with PWLE from the very beginning. By involving community members throughout the process, organizations can benefit from their insights, avoid tokenism, and ensure that decisions are made collectively. Community engagement should not only be integrated into the governance and decision making processes of organizations, but it should also be continuous and ongoing.

(INSPIRE Report on Nine Dimensions of Community Engagement)

Integrated

Integrated

- Tokenizing is being told what to represent versus having a full voice in the experience and using my voice.
- From the initiation of our Coalition, there was always a discussion about how to collaborate together to achieve our goals. We ask our lived experience coalition members what they want to see change.
- Lived experience members can participate in a number of ways, from steering committee to our monthly informal peer group to showing up to events every now and then.
- Integrating people with lived experience is much easier when you take an asset-based approach. We have had our consumer leaders tell us what else they want to work on and help contribute to.
- Adam's experience with Odyssey House patients.

Integrated

Where to begin:

- Create idea generating activities at health fairs. For example, when tabling , you can have a box that says “Imagine you are in charge of Medicaid and were given 5 million dollars to improve the program, what would you do with it?
- Create opportunities for patients to sign up with trusted organizations that may do advocacy.
- Bring Government Relations to your Patient Advisory Committee and work through a patient chosen project to ask for the GR team to incorporate in the next year.
- People with lived experience who sit on patient advisory cmtes or other engagement activities– ask if there are opportunities to share patients insight with policy teams or public affairs teams
- Reach out to advocacy organizations and see if there are community advisory opportunities that you can participate in

We head to Washington DC!

June 2025

Other ideas for where to begin:

Organizations:

- What consumer groups do you interact with? Does it appear that they are driven by actual consumers?
- If you are responsible for philanthropic or grant decisions In your org or have an influence there, can you help give money to community organizing groups?
- If you organize resource fairs, are you inviting organizations who do advocacy to table?
- Is your organization communicating clearly about the impact that Medicaid has on your organization?

People with lived experience:

- Do you participate in facebook groups or other local forums that have patients or disability groups? Often they will share information about social service appropriations and other relevant items.
- Have you asked healthcare organizations that you partner with to connect you to their policy team?
- If it feels intimidating to reach out to your state's hospital association, what about the community health center, behaivoral health provider, or organizations that support 1115 waiver demonstrations (like HRSS).
- If you cannot find a group of people that have Medicaid organizing, what if you just started a monthly meeting with 3 other Medicaid members and then worked from there? The next month have everyone bring one more person. A group of 10 Medicaid members is actually a powerful force – you really can start small! Then bring in a provider or advocacy organization and see if there is a way to start collaborating a bit more.

Group Activity

Hypothetical Scenario to Play Out:

Your state is having budget cuts and a local news article says they are expecting that Medicaid budget will be significantly impacted. They may remove dental services, restrict eligibility, impact people with disabilities funding, and cut rates to primary care, behavioral health and specialty care.

Divide into breakout rooms and talk through the following.

1. Speaking either from your organization or lived experience, collectively brainstorm some of the potential impacts.
2. Identify areas of alignment that come up while listening to perspectives in the breakout.
3. What do you bring to the table as an organization or as a lived experience partner? How can you contribute in a collective work to preserve funding for Medicaid?
4. While listening to other talk, do you start noticing any ideas for collaboration? As you listen and participate, note any ideas that you have for how to implement this in your home state.
5. Is there an organization or a lived experience partner that pops up in your mind during today's discussion? Make a note to reach out to them and grab coffee sometime before the Holidays and see if you can start to collaborate with for aligning advocacy efforts.