



CASE STUDY

Engaging the Community in the Housing as Health Campaign (Pennsylvania)

With community engagement at the center of their work, the Pennsylvania Health Access Network (PHAN) partners with their local community to advocate for Pennsylvania's Medicaid program to cover supportive housing services for consumers with either physical or behavioral health conditions. This story highlights PHAN's meaningful engagement of community members in Pennsylvania's Housing as Health Campaign.

Awareness: In partnerships with various communities and stakeholders, the Pennsylvania Health Access Network has held community forums in different parts of the state that focus on their housing and health campaign: [Housing as Health](#). These enlightening forums have acted as a space in which community members gain a broad understanding of the adverse effects chronic homelessness has on the health and livelihood of people. They also discuss how health insurance can be tactically used to combat the issue of chronic homelessness.

Interest: Over the course of the past year, 289 individuals and organizations have participated in forums and trainings hosted by PHAN and the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania. The forums and trainings aim to answer questions that community members have. PHAN and their partners have answered questions such as "How does Medicaid work?", "How is Medicaid set up in Pennsylvania?" and "What are the opportunities for Medicaid to support housing?" Doing this has prompted community members to develop intrigue in the innovative ways in which they can radically transform the housing system in their state.

Participation: PHAN along with Project HOME have worked with individual community members to encourage individuals to share their stories about housing as health. As one outlet for story sharing, the campaign created a [YouTube](#) channel dedicated to highlighting the vital role stable housing plays in improving the health of individuals. Individuals who have experienced and overcome chronic homelessness are featured in videos where they share their narratives and the transformation they were able to undergo due to effective and supportive housing programs.

Commitment: In an effort to increase their cohort of committed community members, PHAN has sent out a [commitment form](#) to participants at the end of each training. This form is comprised of questions asking people about their willingness to commit to PHAN's campaign at different levels. Amongst the variation of questions included in this form, the most vital request is to ask community members to take the next step by furthering their level of commitment. The questionnaire prompts participants to think critically about how they have shown commitment to PHAN's campaign.

Leadership: PHAN has formed a leadership team with the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Health Law Project, and Project Home. This team has spearheaded the Housing as Health campaign and is actively working to ensure individuals are receiving safe, stable housing with supportive services. On an individual level, community members have exemplified leadership by raising awareness in their communities about issues of homelessness. They have also urged their peers to become more involved in PHAN's campaign and have volunteered to train others on how to interact with the healthcare system.

The Pennsylvania Health Access Network has been successful in incorporating the Pyramid of Engagement in their work by:

- 1. Offering their community access to vital information regarding the innovative opportunities that can be used to combat chronic homelessness.*
- 2. Being transparent with community members by openly answering questions that community members sought answers to that pertained to Medicaid in relation to homelessness.*
- 3. Understanding the power of individual storytelling and using it as a powerful medium of advocacy.*