

Active community voice effective tool for population health improvement, study reports

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Health care providers and public health and social services agencies who include the community members they serve in collaborative activities, a practice called "community voice," will improve health equity and progress in meeting communities' health goals and needs according to researchers at Georgia State University's Georgia Health Policy Center (GHPC).

In a new study, co-authors Aliza Petiwala, Daniel Lanford, Glenn Landers and Karen Minyard reviewed three dozen documents addressing community voice in health collaboratives. Their findings can help those in the [health care](#), public health and social service sectors improve population health in their communities.

Strategies to engage community voice fall along a spectrum of active and passive approaches that vary in the level of power shared between communities and collaborators, as well as in the level of involvement required from the community.

Active strategies include priority-setting, participatory decision-making, employing [community members](#) and engaging with community-led coalitions. Passive engagement includes holding community forums, measuring community experiences and conducting community assessments.

"Sustainable collaboration across sectors is necessary to bring the profound systems change necessary to address deeply embedded societal challenges like [health equity](#)," said lead author Aliza Petiwala. "As the Aligning Systems for Health initiative examines facilitators of this cross-sector work across the country, we generally recognize the value of inclusiveness and need to better understand the pathways for how community voice can improve community health."

"GHPC, as the national coordinating center for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Aligning Systems for Health: Health Care + Public Health + Social Services initiative, is honored to help keep the focus on effective ways to align health care, [public health](#) and social services to better address the goals and needs of the people and communities these systems serve," said Karen Minyard, CEO of the Georgia Health Policy Center.

More information: Aliza Petiwala et al, Community voice in cross-sector alignment: concepts and strategies from a scoping review of the health collaboration literature, *BMC Public Health* (2021). [DOI: 10.1186/s12889-021-10741-9](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-10741-9)

Provided by Georgia State University

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