

HEALTH NIMHD – RCMi

Addictions Research and Cancer Prevention

Community Engagement Core Community Research Advisory Board (CRAB)

What is the Community Research Advisory Board (CRAB)?

The Community Research Advisory Board (CRAB) is designed to provide investigators affiliated with the University of Houston's *HEALTH Center for Addictions Research and Cancer Prevention* with feedback from community representatives about their research projects from conception (research question) and design through the dissemination of results.

The CRAB is composed of a diverse group of community stakeholders, including individuals who are addiction recovery advocates, cancer survivors/caregivers, or otherwise passionate about addressing unique health challenges that disproportionately burden community members. CRAB members represent themselves, not the organizations they are affiliated with/employed by, although we strive for diversity across disciplines and life experiences.

The CRAB members receive training from the Community Engagement Core of the *HEALTH Center for Addictions Research and Cancer Prevention* regarding research ethics, design, and execution. Thereafter, CRAB members provide their knowledge, experience, and insights in the review of research projects to:

- ensure cultural appropriateness of the research questions, measures/assessments used, etc.;
- confirm relevance of the protocol to the best interests of the targeted community or communities;
- problem-solve issues and potential barriers pertaining to study design, implementation, etc.;
- optimize participant recruitment strategies and materials;
- optimize participant retention strategies; and/or
- ensure results and their implications are disseminated back to the communities in an understandable way.

Investigators seeking CRAB consultation can expect to receive verbal CRAB feedback and a written summation.

What Training is Given to CRAB Members?

CRAB members are required to attend a training about ethics and research that will be offered by the *HEALTH Center for Addictions Research and Cancer Prevention*. This training will take 6-8 hours. The training is video-recorded for convenience, but we request CRAB members attend a live question & answer session afterward.

Training consist of modules on topics including:

- purpose and goals of the *HEALTH Center for Addictions Research and Cancer Prevention*;
- the role of the CRAB;
- how research teams formulate their research questions and study designs;
- the process of writing and submitting research grants to the Center and external funders;
- the grant review and regulatory processes;
- study implementation, analysis and dissemination; and
- research ethics.

What are the CRAB Feedback Meeting Logistics?

After training is complete, the CRAB will convene between 1-2 times monthly to provide University of Houston investigators with feedback on their research projects. These meetings will last no more than 1.5 hours each. The CRAB will meet by demand. A maximum of 2 CRAB meetings/month will be conducted. On months when there are 2 meetings/month, CRAB members may attend one or the other meeting in order to minimize burden, but members are certainly welcome to attend both.

Who Convenes CRAB Feedback Meetings?

Meetings will be coordinated by the Community Engagement Core Director (Dr. LeChauncy Woodard; Lwoodard@uh.edu) or her designee. After an initial consultation of schedule alignment, meetings will be set for a standard time each month and cancelled as needed in times of lower demand. We strive to give 10 business days advance notice for cancellations.

How Do Researchers/Investigators Get a Meeting with the CRAB?

HEALTH Center for Addictions Research and Cancer Prevention affiliated investigators can make a request to meet with the CRAB via a service request form (email us for more information at healthrcmi@central.uh.edu). The Community Engagement Core Director or her designee will confirm the date/time of the CRAB meeting. The investigator is expected to provide any materials to be reviewed at least 2 weeks in advance of the CRAB meeting so that they can be considered by the CRAB in advance of the meeting. On the day of the meeting, the investigator/investigative team should be prepared to make a ~15-minute presentation to the CRAB about their research study and goals, along with assistance needed from the CRAB. Thereafter, the CRAB will provide pointed feedback for consideration.

Do Researchers/Investigators Have to Meet with the CRAB?

All project investigators funded through the *HEALTH Center for Addictions Research and Cancer Prevention* are expected to meet with the CRAB at least 2 times: once prior to their kick-off/enrollment (re: study design) and once after data collection and preliminary analyses are complete (re: results dissemination). They are welcome to meet with the CRAB more than these 2 times. Beginning in the fall of 2021, investigators seeking funding from the *HEALTH Center for Addictions Research and Cancer Prevention* will also be asked to consult with the CRAB about their study design, etc. prior to pilot grant application submission. Finally, the CRAB will be present for funded pilot teams' "Innovation Research Talks," where they will learn more about project progress.

Researchers are expected to make every attempt to be responsive to the CRAB members' suggestions, and to discuss any obstacles with the CRAB members to ensure congruence/agreement. Investigators may discuss any unresolved points of disagreement with the Community Engagement Core Director for resolution, as needed.

Do Researchers/Investigators Have to Pay for CRAB Consultations?

CRAB consultations are provided free of charge for *HEALTH Center for Addictions Research and Cancer Prevention* affiliated investigators.

Is the CRAB Compensated?

Members of the CRAB receive an honorarium semi-annually of \$500 (issued in February and August, for a total of \$1000 annually). The *HEALTH Center for Addictions Research and Cancer Prevention* reserves the right to prorate this honorarium in cases of repeated non-attendance. Should any meetings be held in person at the University of Houston campus, parking passes will be supplied to attending members. Meetings held over the lunch hour will include the provision of lunch for in-person CRAB attendees.

What are Other Benefits to the CRAB for Active Participation?

Through active participation in the CRAB initial training and meetings, CRAB members can expect to get enhanced awareness and understanding of research taking place at the University of Houston that is targeting the mitigation of health disparities in the areas of addiction and/or cancer prevention. They will be able to substantively contribute to this research across all aspects of the project, from design to dissemination. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions and learn more about how the research process works, enabling them to be active community partners in the research process.

Interested in Joining the CRAB?

If you are a community member interested in joining the CRAB, please send information about your interest along with a resume listing your experience to Dr. LeChauncy Woodard (Lwoodard@uh.edu). Diverse community stakeholders, including individuals who are addiction recovery advocates, cancer survivors/caregivers, or otherwise passionate about addressing unique health challenges that disproportionately burden community members, are invited to apply. CRAB members will be appointed annually.