

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT: LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE FIELD

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INTRODUCTIONS

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SESSION OBJECTIVES

1. Clarify when and how stakeholder engagement can benefit HCBS program design
2. Review engagement methods
3. Highlight best practices in stakeholder engagement
4. Discuss with panel their experience with stakeholder engagement, and lessons learned

WHY ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS?

WHY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT MATTERS

Obtaining Firsthand Insight – stakeholders have first-hand, lived experience using the HCBS system, they are often the best barometers of what actually occurs out in the field.

Anticipating Objections – stakeholders use their voices when they do not like policy or program design, which can be risky to Medicaid agencies. Engagement of stakeholders allows an opportunity to understand objections, respond to those objections.

Understanding Need for Improvement – stakeholders offer specific, realistic insights on where system improvement is needed and are a strong source of input on performance improvement and quality measurement strategy.

Building Partnerships and Consensus – stakeholders often have varying interests, so engaging opposing groups simultaneously offers an opportunity to understand how to build win-wins.

WHY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT MATTERS (CONT.)

Putting the Participant First – stakeholder input offers the state an opportunity to step out of the “ivory tower” and interact with the true end-user, the participants and their caregivers. This is needed to navigate competing interests and prioritize participant outcomes.

Reaching Those with “Quiet Voices” – when methods are used that drive broad outreach and engagement, the State benefits from input from stakeholders who may not be as vocal in state politics or policy making, such as those in rural areas, within minority groups, or who are smaller, local providers.

Managing Optics – stakeholder engagement is necessary to reinforce that the public’s thoughts and concerns matter to policy-makers, resulting in deliberate, thoughtful programs designed to flourish and deliver *best in class* HCBS.

Federally Required – stakeholder engagement is increasingly a mandatory component of HCBS program reform and operation, including substantive changes to 1915(c) and other HCBS waiver types, as a component of statewide transition plans to meet the HCBS Final Rule of 2014, and as one of CMS’ *10 Essential Elements to MLTSS*

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT METHODS

CONSIDERING WHICH METHOD IS APPROPRIATE

There are a variety of factors to consider, when strategizing around which stakeholder engagement methods to use, including:

Is the state's primary goal to learn from stakeholders or share information with them?

How broad a reach does the State seek when engaging stakeholders?

Are there specific stakeholder segments that need to be engaged more intensively?

Is the state prepared to answer questions or respond to comment?

How deep does the state wish to go around an issue (*sometimes we know in advance our position is strong and seek to share information, as opposed to vetting it*)?

ACTIVE VS. PASSIVE METHODS

For the purposes of today's discussion – we have categorized engagement methods into two categories, *active* and *passive* engagement methods:

Active Stakeholder Engagement

Includes interactive communications between the State and stakeholders, including the exchange of ideas, concerns, and offering of immediate feedback.



Passive Stakeholder Engagement

Typically features a sequenced collection of stakeholder input that is reviewed, and responded to in a formal, controlled manner, offering little to no direct exchange.



COMMON ACTIVE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT METHODS: PROS AND CONS

Stakeholder Panels/Committees/Board Meetings

- Pros: staff already attend, you have access to key leaders, good “bang for your buck”
- Cons: limited audience, agenda is not set by the State, may be limited HCBS representation/understanding
- Key for Success: Think ahead, and maximize ownership of the agenda

Focus Groups/Listening Sessions

- Pros: conversational tone that offers depth of insight, easy to segment different stakeholder groups, good for relationship building
- Cons: takes staff away from the office and daily responsibilities, can be challenging to get stakeholders you need to hear from to attend, can be glorified complaint sessions if not well executed
- Key for Success: Consider your topics, and send the right facilitators

Targeted Interviews

- Pros: allows for deep insights with a single person or small group, great for relationship building, ideal for candid dialogue surrounding topics that may be sensitive
- Cons: limited audience, can be difficult to draw conclusions if limited number of interviews are held, interviewees will struggle with wide ranges of topics
- Key for Success: Have a focus, and interview the right people (including those who may say what you don't want to hear)

COMMON *PASSIVE* STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT METHODS: PROS AND CONS

Trainings

- **Pros:** Offers exposure to front line staff, allows for State to provide its perspective on a policy or program element
- **Cons:** State typically gets more questions than feedback, can be difficult to get stakeholders to participate
- **Key for Success:** Be prepared for Q&A, and offer training widely

Town Halls

- **Pros:** Strong method for providing information and perspective to stakeholders on a broad scale, easy to control the message using templates and scripts, offers opportunity for public testimony
- **Cons:** Tone of testimony can overshadow State perspective, limited ability to clarify or interact in “real time,” stakeholders sometimes feel detached
- **Key For Success:** Truly hone your message beforehand, and manage optics effectively

Public Comment Inbox/Comment Periods

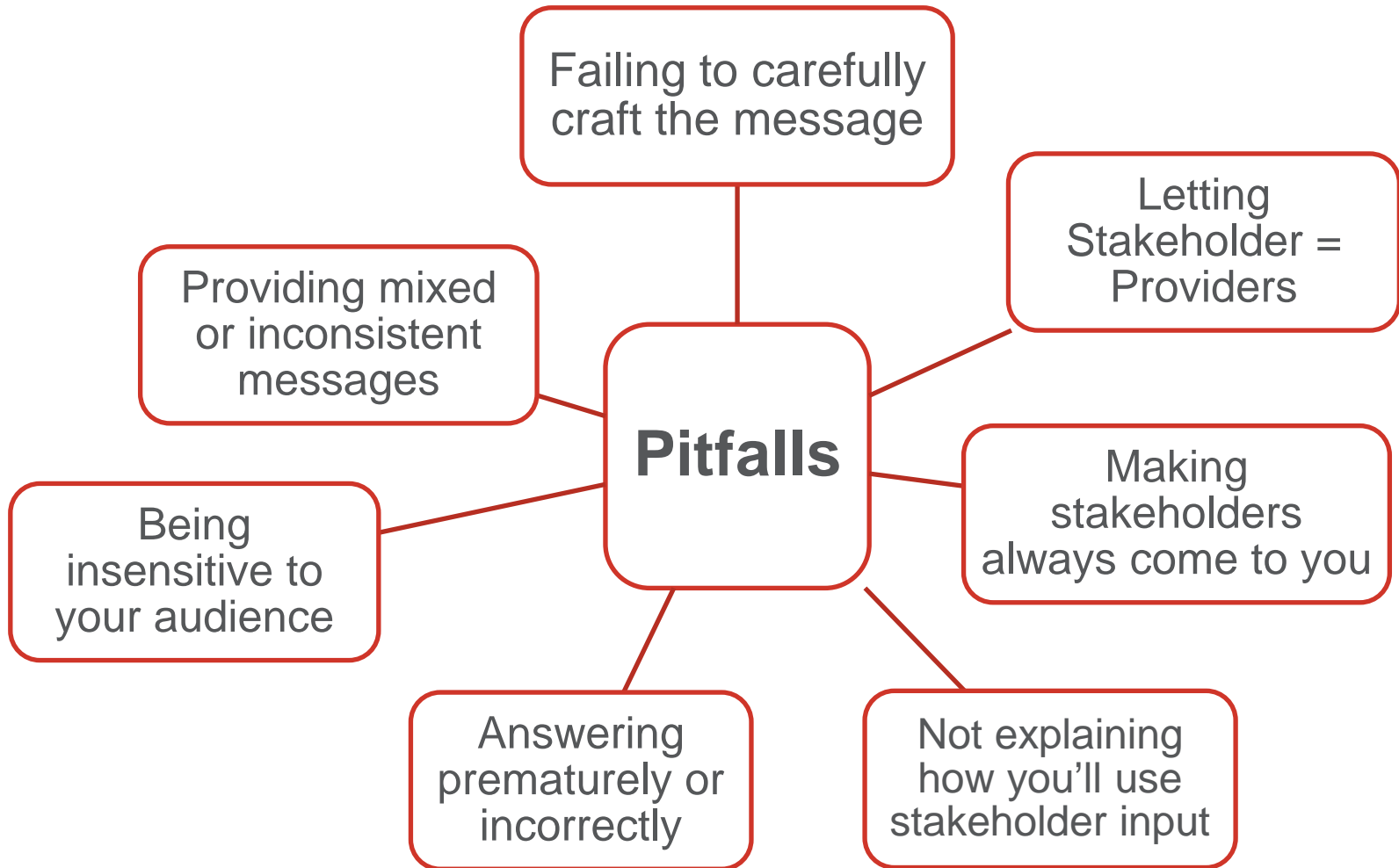
- **Pros:** Provides stakeholders a mechanism to submit input without public speaking, attending a meeting, or commenting during business hours, easy to for State to manage
- **Cons:** Comments and input can be difficult to understand, high-risk for stakeholder perception that comments were ignored or misinterpreted
- **Key for Success:** Be transparent about what was submitted, and how it was used in program design or operations

Surveys

- **Pros:** Great way to get a quantitation of stakeholder input, offers wide-reach, easy for the State to tailor questions to obtain targeted input.
- **Cons:** Can be challenging to distribute and you cannot control survey adoption, resource-demanding to compile results, especially if the State uses free-text response options
- **Key for Success:** Partner with a third-party with experience in honing this method and the survey tool

BEST PRACTICES WHEN CONDUCTING STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

COMMON PITFALLS TO AVOID



HALLMARKS OF STRONG STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



PANEL EXPERIENCES

ALABAMA

10 statewide town halls to share proposed Integrated Care Network Concept statewide (Spring 2016)

20 statewide focus groups with participants, caregivers and providers to discuss HCBS (Fall 2016)

Conducted ICN initiative specific LTC workgroup, which met at least once quarterly

Monthly meetings with AAA directors

Monthly meetings with Alabama Nursing Home Association

Voting member: Alabama Interagency for the Prevention of Elder Abuse

Presented at following conferences recently: Annual DHR Adult Protective Services Conference, Alabama Gerontology Society annual meeting, Alabama Association of Regional Councils annual conference, Dothan-Area Long Term Care Conference

ALABAMA PERSPECTIVE AND LESSONS LEARNED

- **Not knowing an answer to a question is acceptable**, acknowledge the origin of it and advise you can provide and answer later
- **Know there are territorial groups** all competing to be heard. Don't alienate one specific group, you'll need all of them in the future
- **Consider methods that don't require participant travel.** It can be difficult for older and disabled population to get out period, much less during a business day. Aside from case management driven surveys, we would like to use other options.
- **Understand your role as a state representative:** allow venting of non-related to the situation for discussion. Don't derail the entire session, but allow individuals to vent concerns even if they aren't totally related to the subject. This is maybe the only opportunity a person has had to speak to "someone from the state" in person. Having another colleague to pass folks off to is helpful.
- **Do not schedule anything around meal time.** Once the pitchers of Sweet Tea and Lemonade come out of the back, you've lost your audience.

SAMPLE OF RECENT COLORADO ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

4 Regional Forum meetings and one webinar to present recommendations for changes for the HCBS-DD waiver waiting list (Spring 2017)

7 statewide meetings and one webinar to present the new level of care determination and assessment process for LTSS (Spring 2017)

4 Regional Forum meetings and one webinar to present proposed qualifications for Case Management Agency and Case Manager (Fall 2017)

8 Regional Forum meetings and two webinars to present revised proposed qualifications for Case Management Agency and Case Manager (Spring 2018)

4 Regional Forum meetings and one webinar to present the new Support Plan document and development process (Spring 2018)

Regular meetings with: Case Management agencies and Alliance Colorado

COLORADO PERSPECTIVE AND LESSONS LEARNED

- **Remain neutral** – sometimes heated/varying opinions are expressed during a meeting and it's important to handle those tactfully.
- **Encourage attendees who are less vocal/likely to speak up.**
- **Think before speaking/answering questions** - speaking off the cuff can get you into trouble. It's okay to say, "I'm not sure" or "I need to do some research before we answer your question."
- **Have another colleague with you** - sometimes things said in meetings can trigger something for yourself and having someone who can step in for you during those moments is a lifesaver, it also provides another set of eyes and ears to interpret feedback, and help you avoid the "spin zone" when someone misunderstands or misinterprets what is said.
- **Don't take it personally** – anticipate that stakeholders will criticize you, even though it may feel personal, it's not – and it's important as professionals to remember the stresses and need among the people we serve.

SAMPLE OF RECENT KENTUCKY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

1 statewide town hall and webinar to present 1915(c) assessment (Spring, 2017)

40 focus groups with participants, caregivers, direct support professionals and provider managers/owners (Fall, 2017)

10 statewide town halls to present post-assessment preliminary recommendations (Spring, 2018)

Ongoing public comment inbox

Regular meetings with:

- Medicaid Advisory Committee
- I/DD Technical Assistance Committee
- Home Health Technical Assistance Committee
- Various legislative and governor appointed committees

Monthly meetings with key provider associations

KENTUCKY PERSPECTIVE AND LESSONS LEARNED

- **Know *all* of your stakeholders** - Identify who your stakeholders are and anticipate their challenges in order to engage and involve them. It is important to address groups that typically are less represented and strategize ways to engage them.
- **Make it meaningful** - Promote an environment where stakeholders are free to express their thoughts and don't feel overshadowed or "boxed out" by others. It is essential that individuals feel heard and considered, and know how their feedback will be used in decision-making.
- **Use multiple methods** – Some stakeholders may not feel comfortable speaking out in a public setting. Some are unable to attend meetings. Provide multiple lines of communication that allow for ongoing input.
- **Stakeholders are not only external** – Your staff and other state agency staff are essential and important agents for change. They often see themselves as outside the "decision-making loop" and need to be empowered to contribute their thoughts and ideas.

QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD



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