Virginia Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWHAP)
Virginia Quality of Care Consumer Advisory Committee (VACAC) Manual

Table of Contents

2025

INTRODUCTION

The Virginia Quality of Care Advisory Committee (VACAC) Manual serves as a comprehensive guide for committee members, outlining the structure, responsibilities, and processes involved in their role. Regular updates and revisions to this manual may be necessary to adapt to changing circumstances and to ensure the committee's continued effectiveness in serving its mission and objectives.

Purpose of the Manual

This manual has been created to provide a clear and comprehensive guide to VACAC. It outlines the committee's structure, functions, responsibilities, and procedures. The purpose of this manual is to ensure that all members, both new and existing, have access to the information necessary to understand their roles, contribute effectively, and uphold the mission and objectives of VACAC.

Mission and Objectives of VACAC

The mission of VACAC is to establish a unique and sustainable partnership with providers to incorporate the experiential perspectives of people living with HIV/AIDS into the quality improvement process.

To achieve this mission, several key objectives are outlined, including but not limited to:

- To act as liaison between people with HIV (PWH) in Virginia, also referred to as consumers, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and service providers.
- To engage, educate, and bring together consumers through a variety of activities that support health promotion and quality of life.
- Assess challenges with linkage to care and identify quality of care best practices for implementation locally, regionally, and/or statewide.

COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

History and Background of VACAC

VACAC was established in 2017 by the Virginia Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWHAP) recipient, under the leadership of the Clinical Quality Management Team. As a subcommittee of the Virginia RWHAP Cross-Parts (A, B, C, D, and F) Quality Management Advisory Committee (QMAC), VACAC was created to serve as a dedicated consumer advisory body, ensuring that the voices and perspectives of people living with HIV are integral to the quality management processes within the program.

Committee Structure

The VACAC is structured to ensure representation and participation across the state. The committee is led by two co-chairs who provide overall direction and leadership. The leadership team is comprised of one representative from each region, ensuring that all areas of Virginia are represented in VACAC's initiatives. Each region also has a regional team, which includes both

regional executive members and volunteer non-voting members who assist with regional activities. General membership is open to any PWH in Virginia who has attended a VACAC event, allowing for broad and inclusive participation in the committee's efforts.

Co-chairs
VACAC is led by two co-chairs who are responsible for the overall direction and leadership of the committee. They preside over all meetings, ensuring an organized and inclusive environment for discussions and decision-making. Co-chairs collaborate with members and leadership to develop meeting agendas, prioritize community issues and program updates. Additionally, they provide guidance and support to other leaders and the general membership, ensuring the committee stays focused on its goals. The co-chairs also facilitate conflict resolution within the committee in an impartial and productive manner.

Leadership Team
VACAC leadership, composed of co-chairs and one representative from each region, supports the committee's vision and daily operations. The leadership team oversees regional projects, engages with communities to ensure responsiveness to their needs, and keep all members informed on updates and progress in outreach and advocacy efforts.

Executive Committee
Composed of co-chairs, leadership, and four members from each health region, is responsible for strategic planning, decision-making on VACAC operations, and ensuring compliance with policies and regulations. Members also hold voting authority on VACAC policies, initiatives, and membership.

Regional Team
The VACAC regional team is responsible for coordinating and implementing regional activities. They support the leadership team by communicating regional needs and insights. They also lead the planning and execution of events and projects, engage with local communities and stakeholders to recruit members and gather feedback, and ensure timely communication and reporting to the leadership team.

MEMBERSHIP

General Membership
The VACAC general membership is open and composed of individuals living with HIV in Virginia that have participated in meetings, discussions, and VACAC initiatives. Members contribute their perspectives and expertise to achieve the committee's goals by actively participating in VACAC meetings, discussions, and activities, advocating for the interests of those affected by HIV. General members collaborate with other members, regional representatives, and leadership to share insights and strengthen the committee's impact.

Eligibility and Qualifications

To become a member of VACAC, individuals must meet certain eligibility criteria and possess specific qualifications. These criteria typically include:

- Members should reside in the state of Virginia.
- Members must be individuals living with HIV.
- Members should be committed to actively participating in VACAC activities and initiatives.
- Members must have a strong passion for advocating consumer rights.

Application Process

Prospective members interested in joining VACAC must complete and submit either digital or physical application forms to their VACAC regional rep or VACAC Co-chair. This form requests demographic information, qualifications, and a statement of interest that outlines the applicant's motivation for joining the committee.

Member Selection

The selection of new executive members is carried out by the VACAC executive team and may involve a review of applications and interviews. The goal of the selection process is to identify individuals who will contribute to the committee's expertise, and capacity to fulfill its mission.

Terms of Service

Members of VACAC serve for a minimum two-year term. Every member is free to leave the Committee after serving three consecutive terms or a total of six years. Terms can be extended at the discretion of the VDH Clinical and Data Administration Manager to maintain organizational continuity and stability. These terms are outlined in the committee's bylaws and serve to ensure a rotation of perspectives and fresh ideas among committee members. A member may resign from the VACAC providing written notification to the Chairs of VACAC or to VDH Clinical Data Administration Manager.

Expectations of Members

VACAC executive members are expected to actively participate in committee activities, attend meetings regularly, and contribute to the achievement of the committee's mission and objectives. This includes attending executive committee meetings, QMAC meetings and subcommittees, participating in training sessions, representing VACAC in external meetings, and adhering to the committee's code of conduct and ethical standards.

VACAC members may have their membership terminated for cause, including but not limited to the following:

- Failure to attend five (5) total in-person and/or virtual meetings within a grant year without prior communication regarding planned or unplanned absences to the Co-Chairs. Meetings include, but are not limited to, VACAC Statewide Trainings, VACAC Executive Meetings, QMAC Quarterly Meetings, the QM Summit, VACAC Regional Meetings/Events, and QMAC Subcommittee Meetings. Extenuating circumstances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

- A documented pattern of excused absences that demonstrates inconsistent participation in VACAC meetings and activities.
- Conduct that is inconsistent with the mission, principles, goals, and objectives of the VACAC.
- Significant and/or consistent failure to fulfill VACAC member responsibilities.

MEETINGS

VACAC Meetings and Participation

The VACAC committee engages in a variety of recurring activities essential to its operations and community impact. These activities include, but are not limited to:

- Monthly VACAC Executive Meetings: The Executive Committee meets monthly to oversee VACAC's strategic direction, make critical decisions, and ensure alignment with the committee's goals.
- Statewide Activities and Planning: VACAC plans and facilitates statewide trainings and presentations quarterly on various topics related to HIV.
- QMAC/QM Summit Meetings: QMAC holds quarterly meetings, including an annual Quality Management Summit, to review initiatives, guide program improvements, and build capacity among Ryan White Providers and consumers. Monthly subcommittee meetings focus on specific quality management areas.
- Monthly Regional Meetings: Each VACAC region holds monthly meetings to discuss local issues, plan regional events, and coordinate activities with the statewide committee.
- Engagement and Recruitment: VACAC ensures regular communication and collaboration with partnering agencies, holds regional Listening Sessions to gather community feedback, and actively recruits new members to maintain a diverse and representative committee.
- Participation in Ad Hoc Committee Meetings: Executive members are expected to participate in ad hoc committees, such as those focused on planning the VACAC Summit or preparing abstracts for HIV conferences.

Scheduling and Frequency

VACAC holds regular executive committee meetings to conduct its business, share updates, and discuss important matters related to its mission. The scheduling and frequency of these meetings are typically outlined in the committee's bylaws. Common considerations include:

- Executive Committee Meeting Dates**:** Monthly meetings comprised of VACAC Executive Committee members, VDH staff, and established VDH contractual partner representatives.
- Meeting Times**:** Generally, one- and one- half hours in length unless otherwise stated
- Meeting Locations**:** Meetings will be held in person and/or virtually throughout the grant year

- Meeting Notices: Meeting agendas will be distributed to members prior to executive meetings. Meeting minutes will be distributed to executive members within two weeks of the executive committee meeting.

Meeting Agenda

The meeting agenda should follow Robert's Rules of Order:

- Call to Order: Officially start the meeting.
- Roll Call: Record attendance to establish a quorum.
- Approval of Minutes: Review and approve the minutes from the previous meeting.
- Old Business: Discuss ongoing matters or unfinished business from prior meetings.
- New Business: Introduce and discuss new topics, proposals, or initiatives.
- Guest Speakers/Presentations (optional): Allocate time for guest speakers or presentations relevant to VACAC's mission.
- Committee Reports: Receive updates from subcommittees or working groups.
- Announcements and Open Forum: Allow for member announcements or open discussions on relevant topics.
- Adjournment: Officially end the meeting.

Quorum Requirements

To conduct official business, including updating bylaws or changing VACAC policies, VACAC Executive Committee must establish a quorum, which is defined as at least one Co-Chair present and 50% plus one of the committee members. Quorum requirements are defined in the committee's bylaws. Ensuring a quorum is essential for making decisions, passing motions, and taking official actions during meetings.

Meeting Protocols

VACAC meetings follow established protocols to maintain order and facilitate effective communication. These protocols include Robert's Rules of Order rules of order, speaking procedures, and guidelines for respectful discussion. Members should be familiar with these protocols to ensure productive and respectful meetings.

Minutes and Documentation

Detailed minutes should be recorded during each VACAC meeting. These minutes serve as an official record of discussions, decisions, and action items. They should be distributed to members for review and approval (14) fourteen days from meeting date.

COMMITTEE OPERATIONS

Committee operations ensure that the committee functions effectively in pursuit of its mission. This section outlines key aspects of how VACAC operates.

Ad Hoc Committees

VACAC may establish Ad Hoc committees to focus on specific areas or projects related to its mission. These committees serve as working groups to research, plan, and execute initiatives.

Members can volunteer to participate in committees based on their interests and expertise. The Executive Team typically oversees and coordinates the work of these committees.

Decision-Making Processes

VACAC makes decisions through a collaborative process that encourages diverse perspectives and ensures fairness. The decision-making process typically includes:

- Proposal**:** Any member can propose an idea, project, or motion.
- Discussion: Members discuss the proposal, ask questions and sharing insights.
- Voting: In some cases, a formal vote may be taken to make decisions.
- Consensus Building**:** The committee seeks consensus whenever possible, aiming to find solutions that align with the majority's views.

Major decisions, such as changes to the bylaws or significant budget allocations, may require formal votes, while routine decisions can often be made by consensus.

Communication Channels

Effective communication is essential for committee operations. VACAC uses various communication channels to facilitate collaboration, including:

- Email: For announcements, updates, and information sharing.
- Meetings: Regular meetings provide opportunities for in-depth discussions.
- Collaborative Tools**:** Text messaging, shared document platforms and project management tools aid in collaboration.
- Subcommittees/ad hoc**:** Each committee or subcommittee may have its own communication channels.

Members are encouraged to actively engage in these communication channels to stay informed and contribute to committee activities.

Conflict Resolution

VACAC is committed to resolving conflicts in a respectful and constructive manner. A conflict resolution typically involves:

- Open Communication**:** Encourage members to express their concerns and viewpoints.
- Mediation**:** Appoint a mediator or use a neutral party to facilitate resolution.
- Consensus Seeking**:** Strive to find common ground and reach mutually acceptable solutions.
- Escalation**:** If conflicts persist, they may be escalated to the executive team for resolution. The aim is to maintain a positive and collaborative atmosphere within VACAC, where differences of opinion are valued and addressed constructively.

Budget and Funding

VACAC does not receive direct funding from VDH. Instead, VDH provides funding to a third-party entity to support VACAC-planned activities. The contract is monitored by the VDH-assigned service coordinator. The committee’s responsibilities include:

- Ensuring all funded activities are used in alignment with the committee's mission and objectives, and that Ryan White Program funds are strictly utilized in accordance with the program's guidelines.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

VACAC represents the voices and needs of people with HIV (PWH) across the state. VACAC's primary responsibilities include advising on RWHAP policy and programmatic decisions, coordinating regional and statewide activities, and fostering community engagement. Through its leadership and membership structure, VACAC works collaboratively to ensure that the perspectives of PWH are central to the development and implementation of HIV-related initiatives in Virginia.

Co-chairs

VACAC is led by two co-chairs who share the responsibilities. The co-chairs' role is to ensure the committee's success. Their responsibilities include:

- Leadership & Strategic Direction: Guide VACAC in fulfilling its mission through strong leadership and collaborative strategic planning
- Meeting Oversight: Preside over meetings, collaborate with VACAC members and leadership to develop meeting agendas, prioritizing community issues, program updates, and other relevant topics.
- Participation & Representation: Adhere to VACAC meeting requirements, including attending Quality Management Advisory Committee (QMAC) meetings, subcommittee meetings, ad hoc meetings, and capacity-building training. Discuss community issues and program updates with stakeholders
- Decision-Making: Encourage open discussion, build consensus, and lead formal voting when necessary.
- Committee & Compliance Oversight: Ensure effective functioning of all committees and adherence to VACAC policies and regulations.
- Conflict Resolution: Address internal conflicts and foster a respectful, solution-focused environment.

Leadership Committee

The VACAC Leadership Committee is composed of one representative from each region. The Leadership Committee is responsible for guiding the strategic direction of VACAC, ensuring effective communication, decision-making, and the successful implementation of the committee's mission and objectives. Their responsibilities include:

- Strategic Leadership & Decision-Making: Provide guidance to the committee in alignment with VACAC's mission, goals, and actively participate in decisions that shape committee activities and represent regional perspectives.

- Communication & Advocacy: Foster communication among regional representatives, the Executive Committee, and stakeholders while promoting VACAC's initiatives at regional and state levels.
- Meeting & Reporting Coordination: Assist in planning and facilitating effective meetings and provide regular updates on regional activities, challenges, and successes.
- Capacity Building: Identify training needs and support member development by connecting the committee with relevant resources and learning opportunities.
- Accountability: Ensure that all committee activities are conducted in a manner that upholds the committee's code of conduct, ethical standards, and aligns with the VACAC's mission.

Executive Committee Members

The executive committee consists of four members from each region, with the option to include one alternate member. The executive committee's responsibilities include:

- Active Engagement: Consistently participate in executive, QMAC, subcommittee, ad hoc meetings, and capacity-building training, notifying the Executive Committee of any absences.
- Meeting & Event Support: Assist in planning and facilitating regional meetings, as well as coordinating regional and statewide events.
- Strategic & Project Planning: Contribute to regional project planning and implementation aligned with VACAC goals.
- Training & Development: Create and deliver training materials and presentations to support members and community education.
- Committee Representation: Share relevant insights and represent VACAC through involvement in local HIV community groups and advocacy efforts.

Regional Committee Members

The regional committee ensures that regional needs, concerns, and perspectives are communicated to the VACAC leadership and executive committees. Assist in the planning and execution of regional projects. Their roles include:

- Engagement: Actively participate in regional and statewide VACAC meetings, discussions, and initiatives, contributing to the achievement of the committee's mission and objectives.
- Communication: Facilitate the flow of information between regional stakeholders and the broader VACAC community, ensuring transparency and collaboration.
- Regional Advocacy & Support: Advocate for regional needs within VACAC and in external forums, while assisting with the planning and execution of regional projects and events to strengthen local impact.
- Ethical Conduct: Uphold VACAC's code of conduct and ethical standards, ensuring that all actions align with the committee's mission.

General Members

Contribute their unique perspectives and expertise to achieve the committee's goals by participating in VACAC activities. Responsibilities include:

- Active Participation: Engage at any point in VACAC meetings, discussions, and activities, contributing to the achievement of the committee's mission and goals.
- Collaboration: Work collaboratively with other VACAC members, regional representatives, and leadership to share insights, ideas, and resources that strengthen the committee's impact.

COMMITTEE PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

Project Development and Approval

Ensuring projects align with VACAC's mission and gain necessary approvals.

1. Identify community needs or opportunities for impact.
2. Prepare detailed project proposals, including objectives, target population, outcomes, and budget.
3. Present proposals to the Virginia Department of Health for approval.
4. Ensure projects align with VDH strategic goals and compliance requirements.

Project implementation involves coordinating and managing the execution of approved projects to ensure their successful completion. This includes continuous monitoring and evaluation to track progress and assess project outcomes. Additionally, thorough reporting and documentation are essential to maintain detailed records and uphold accountability throughout the project lifecycle.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

VACAC recognizes the importance of forming strategic partnerships and collaborations to advance its mission and objectives. This section outlines the committee's approach to partnerships and the collaborative efforts it engages in:

Stakeholder Engagement

Engaging with various stakeholders is fundamental to VACAC's advocacy efforts. Stakeholders may include Ryan White providers, RWHAP recipients, Community HIV Planning Group (CHPG), Ryan White Planning Councils and patient advocacy groups including National organizations such as The Reunion Project, the working Positive Coalition, and the Positive Women's Network (PWN). Responsibilities and considerations for stakeholder engagement include:

- Advocacy Forums: Participate in forums, meetings, and conferences where stakeholders convene to discuss healthcare policies and issues such as regional events like the regional housing summit, Ask the doctor and other regional events.

- Information Sharing: Share consumer perspectives and feedback with stakeholders to influence decision-making.
- Collaborative Dialogue: Foster open and collaborative dialogue with stakeholders to address consumer concerns and advocate for improvements.
- Community Outreach: Engage with the community to raise awareness of VACAC's mission and encourage consumer participation in healthcare decision-making.

Advocacy Efforts

VACAC is committed to advocating for changes that positively impact consumers' healthcare experiences. Responsibilities and considerations for advocacy efforts include:

- Awareness Campaigns: Review public awareness campaigns to educate consumers about their rights and healthcare options.
- Collaborative Advocacy: Collaborate with partner organizations, advocacy groups, and stakeholders to amplify advocacy efforts.
- Data Collection: Collect and analyze data related to healthcare issues to support evidence-based advocacy.
- Communication: Effectively communicate advocacy messages to the public and healthcare providers.

Community Outreach

Engaging with the community is essential to ensure that VACAC addresses the needs and concerns of consumers. Responsibilities and considerations for community outreach include:

- Public Education: Organize educational events and workshops to inform consumers about topics related to HIV.
- Consumer Engagement: Encourage community members to actively participate in VACAC's activities and initiatives.
- Listening Sessions: Conduct listening sessions and surveys to gather input from consumers regarding their experiences with Ryan White services and providers.
- Participation Opportunities: Provide opportunities for community members to join VACAC or attend committee meetings as observers.
- Feedback Channels: Establish accessible channels for community members to provide feedback and share concerns.

EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

VACAC is committed to continuous improvement in its operations and endeavors to ensure that its members can provide feedback and evaluate the committee's performance. This section outlines the processes and considerations for evaluation and feedback:

Performance Evaluation
VACAC conducts periodic evaluations to assess the performance of committee projects and events. The purpose of performance evaluation is to recognize achievements, identify areas for improvement, and support professional development. Key components of performance evaluation include:

Member Feedback
VACAC values the perspectives and feedback of its members as an essential component of its continuous improvement efforts. Key aspects of member feedback include:

- Open Forums: Periodically host open forums or listening sessions where members can openly share their feedback and concerns.
- Feedback Surveys: Administer surveys to gather member input on various aspects of committee operations, including meetings, communication, and initiatives.
- Committee Evaluations: Members evaluate the committee's effectiveness in fulfilling its mission and objectives by evaluating the planning process of the VACAC during quarterly statewide initiatives through attendee evaluations

Continuous Improvement
VACAC is committed to using feedback and evaluation results to drive continuous improvement. This includes:

- Action Plans: Develop action plans based on evaluation findings to address areas of improvement and capitalize on strengths.
- Strategic Adjustments: Modify strategies, goals, and initiatives as needed to align with member feedback and committee evaluations.
- Transparency: Communicate the results of evaluations and actions taken to address feedback to members to maintain transparency and accountability.
- Learning and Development: Use evaluation insights to inform training and development opportunities for members.

Performance Recognition
VACAC recognizes and celebrates the achievements and contributions of its members. Recognition may include:

- Awards and Certificates: Present awards or certificates to members who have made significant contributions to the committee.
- Acknowledgments: Publicly acknowledge members' accomplishments, efforts, and dedication during meetings or in committee communications.
- Leadership Opportunities: Offer leadership opportunities to members who have demonstrated excellence and commitment.

RESOURCES

VACAC provides members with access to a variety of resources to support their advocacy efforts, enhance their knowledge, and facilitate their engagement in committee activities. This section outlines the resources available to VACAC members:

Relevant Legislation and Regulations

To effectively advocate for consumer rights in healthcare, members should be familiar with relevant Ryan White Program state and federal legislation and regulations. Resources in this category include:

- Ryan White Program Service Utilization: Information on Ryan White Program service utilization and updates are shared with VACAC executive members during quarterly QMAC meetings.
- Healthcare Policies: Policies and initiatives related to HIV that impact people living with HIV are communicated to VACAC members through various channels.

Contacts and Support

VACAC maintains a network of contacts within and outside the committee to provide support and guidance to its members. Resources in this category include:

- Committee Contacts: A directory of committee members, leaders, and subcommittee chairs for easy communication.
- External Contacts: Contact information for relevant stakeholders, partner organizations, and agencies involved in healthcare and consumer advocacy.

Training and Educational Materials

To support ongoing learning and development, VACAC provides training and educational materials. Resources in this category include:

- Training Manuals: Quality Management manuals, handbooks, or guides on consumer advocacy, committee operations, and relevant skills development.
- Online Courses: Access to online courses, webinars, and workshops that enhance members' HIV care knowledge, advocacy and leadership skills.
- Educational Videos: Video resources covering capacity building initiatives

Professional Organizations and Conferences

VACAC encourages members to engage with professional organizations and attend conferences and events related to HIV and consumer advocacy. Resources in this category include:

- Professional Organization Memberships: Information on relevant professional organizations where members can connect with peers and access additional resources.
- Conference Announcements: Updates on upcoming conferences, seminars, and events related to healthcare advocacy and policy.

Peer Mentorship and Networking

Peer mentorship and networking opportunities are essential for members to connect, share experiences, and learn from one another. Resources in this category include:

- Mentorship Programs: Information on mentorship opportunities within VACAC, where experienced members provide guidance and support to newer members.
- Networking Events: Notices of networking events, meetings, and social gatherings organized by VACAC or partner organizations.

APPENDICES:

Application

The VACAC Application can be found using the link below: https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/10/2025/04/VACAC-Membership-Application-Form.pdf

Resource Links:

- HIPAA Compliant VACAC Engagement Form: https://bit.ly/JOINVACAC

Virginia Department of Health Resources

- VDH HIV Care Services Site: https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/disease-prevention/disease-prevention/hiv-care-services/
- Resource Connections (Virginia's Ryan White Part B Service Provider list) https://bit.ly/vdhconnections

Target HIV

- Guide to Patient Involvement in Quality Improvement: Building Meaningful Partnerships to Improve HIV Care : https://targethiv.org/cqii/guide-patient-involvement-quality-improvement-building-meaningful-partnerships-improve-hiv
- Guide to Consumer Involvement: Improving the Quality of HIV Ambulatory Programs: https://targethiv.org/library/guide-consumer-involvement-improving-quality-ambulatory-hiv-programs

Capacity Building

- Microsoft 365 training video series: https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/microsoft-365-basics-video-training-396b8d9e-e118-42d0-8a0d-87d1f2f055fb
- Committee Bylaws: https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/10/2021/11/VACAC-Bylaw.pdf