Starting up a Community Advisory Board/Steering Committee: Things to consider

- This is the time to ensure you build the foundation of your healthy partnership.
- Get on the same page: Discuss questions like these during one of the first meetings. Taking the time to do this now will avoid issues later
    - o Expectations- what do you expect to get out of being part of this project?
    - o Agendas- why did you choose to get involved with this advisory group?
    - o Goals/outcomes- what are you expecting this group/project to accomplish?
    - o Roles/Responsibilities- what are you willing to contribute to this effort (e.g. expertise, connections, meeting space, refreshments, resources)? What are you assuming others will be doing to support this effort? Who will you approach if you have a question or issue?
    - o Representation- do members serve as individuals or representatives of an organization? How will new members be added/brought up to speed?
    - o Structure- How does this group connect to/interact with the PIs? Research team? Other study bodies/structures (e.g. scientific advisory board)?
    - o Decision making- who makes decisions in this group? Who gives input? What decisions do you want to be involved with? What decisions do you not want to be involved with? Does the group have a chair/co-chairs?
    - o Timeline- How much time are you expecting to put in this effort? When do you expect to be done? When do you expect the goals to be achieved by?
    - o Communication- what do you need to know that you don't know now? How do you want to be communicated with?
    - o Planning for conflict- before problems arise, discuss what these could be and how to address them- data ownership, unfulfilled responsibility, money, dissemination involvement/credit, interpersonal?
- What guidelines or agreements, if any, do you want to establish now around these shared understandings of the things above?
    - o Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)/Letter of Agreement
    - o Guidelines
    - o Nothing for now
- Allow time for the group to get to know each other. This will help to build a cohesive group that works well together.
    - o Consider assessing/sharing member interests/areas of expertise. Can help with networking within the group and highlight possible assets for research project.
    - o Even if the group will typically meet by phone/web conference, ensure that the initial meeting is in person and some meetings throughout the project are in person. Serve food!
- How will you continue to check in throughout the project to see that everyone has stayed on the same page and still feels good (partnership evaluation)? Informal/formal, verbal, survey, interview? How often will you check in?