



CCHSA'S ACCREDITATION PROGRAM 2008

STANDARDS

Governance

Accredited by ISQua



Canadian Council on Health
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CCHSA's Standards for Effective and Sustainable Governance were prepared in response to a growing demand for excellence in governance practice among Canadian health care organizations, system-wide changes in structures for health care delivery, and the increasing need for public accountability.

The standards have been written to address the five key functions of governance, as well as the two outputs of governance activities, as identified by Jean-Louis Denis et al (2006). In addition, the elements of the standards content will be measured by process and outcome measures.

The standards are grouped into five themes, each addressing one of the five key functions of governance. Each function represents a key responsibility of every governing body; the approach to addressing each function will differ according to the organization's size, structure, and mandate. The five themes include:

Building Knowledge through Information

- This subsection addresses the gathering and production of knowledge and information, as well as the assessment of information needs and the appropriateness of available information. It also addresses the dissemination of relevant information throughout the organization.

Developing a Clear Direction

- This subsection deals with the process for defining the *raison-d'être* of the organization and the long-term vision, including broad organizational goals and values.

Supporting the Achievement of the Direction

- This subsection addresses the supports that are needed to achieve the organization's goals and long-term vision. It contains two different ideas: the first addresses the internal development of the governing body itself; and, the second covers the development of the organization, including the relationships with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and senior management, broad policies, and resource allocation.

Maintaining Positive Relationships with External Stakeholders

- This subsection addresses identifying, managing, and communicating with external stakeholders, including partners and specific stakeholders such as governments.

Being Accountable and Achieving Sustainable Results

- This subsection deals with concepts of accountability and organizational performance, including the achievement of goals and objectives, in addition to elements of quality improvement, risk management, and financial planning and control.



Governance

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE THROUGH INFORMATION

1.0 The governing body regularly reviews and analyzes strategic information.



Efficiency

- 1.1 The governing body allocates sufficient resources for collecting information.

Guidelines

Resources are both financial and human.



Population Focus

- 1.2 The governing body receives and reviews information from a variety of sources.

Guidelines

Strategic information may include: the organization's strengths and opportunities for improvement; trends and changes in the environment; competitive threats; service or program evaluation reports; community health needs for additional services; measures of organizational performance; risk management reports; fiscal reports; outcomes-based reports; direction from government; and, feedback from clients, stakeholders, and the community.

The information should be from a variety of both internal and external sources such as expert knowledge, internal reports, and publications. It may also come from touring the facility and speaking directly with staff and service providers. In addition, members' background, experience, and reputation provide access to key strategic information.



Effectiveness

- 1.3 The information is accurate and in a format that is easy to understand.



Efficiency

- 1.4 The governing body receives the information in enough time to prepare for meetings and decisions.



Effectiveness

- 1.5 The governing body regularly reviews the available information to assess its appropriateness, and identifies information needs and existing gaps.



Population Focus

- 1.6 The governing body has access to the right information to make informed decisions and guide the organization's long-term direction.

Guidelines

The governing body may use the information to: define priorities; identify issues before they become problems; anticipate trends and new opportunities; and determine the organization's long-term goals and objectives.





Effectiveness

- 1.7 The governing body acts on this information in a timely way and can demonstrate follow-up on strategic issues and opportunities.

2.0 The governing body regularly shares key information throughout the organization and with its external stakeholders.



Effectiveness

- 2.1 The organization keeps and updates a record of the governing body's information, activities, and decisions that is easy to access and meets applicable legal requirements.

Guidelines

The record of activities and decisions maintains continuity and saves corporate memory.

The record should include a summary of discussions, including: rulings by the chair; motions; an overview of discussion points; results of votes taken; absences of directing during meetings; and, lists of documents referenced during meetings, including appended copies, as appropriate.

- 2.2 The governing body identifies and responds to the information needs of key decision-makers across the organization.



Population Focus

- 2.3 The governing body proactively shares information, including organizational performance data, with both internal and external audiences.



Population Focus

- 2.4 The governing body appropriately adapts the information for each audience.



Population Focus

Guidelines

The governing body may identify ways to adapt the information to improve knowledge transfer and ease of understanding.



DEVELOPING A CLEAR DIRECTION

3.0 The governing body develops the organization's mission.



Population Focus

- 3.1 When developing the mission, the governing body seeks input from within the organization and its external stakeholders.



Population Focus

- 3.2 The mission clearly describes the organization's purpose and philosophy, whom it serves, and its areas or scope of service.

Guidelines

The mission is sometimes referred to as the statement of purpose. It should be easy to understand and simply written.



Efficiency

- 3.3 The governing body communicates the mission throughout the organization.



Effectiveness

- 3.4 The governing body regularly reviews the mission and revises it as necessary.

4.0 The governing body leads a strategic planning process to define the organization's vision, and sets the strategic goals and objectives.



Effectiveness

- 4.1 When defining the vision and strategic objectives, the governing body uses its information and knowledge.

Guidelines

For example, when defining the vision and strategic objectives, the governing body relies heavily on the strategic information it receives and reviews regularly.



Population Focus

- 4.2 The governing body collaborates with senior management, and consults with key internal and external stakeholders, including government as applicable.



Effectiveness

- 4.3 The governing body sets measurable and realistic strategic goals and objectives.

Guidelines

The organization's strategic goals and objectives should be few in number, realistic to achieve, time-specific, brief, and measurable. They should: be consistent with the mission and values; anticipate and respond to the community's changing needs and health status; not be inconsistent with priorities set by the region, province or territory, or at the federal level, as applicable; and, contribute to improving service results and the performance of the organization.



- 4.4 The governing body provides a rationale for the strategic goals and objectives, and defines the impact on the organization's long-term position.



- 4.5 The governing body identifies estimated timeframes for taking action and achieving desired results.



- 4.6 The governing body selects a concise set of indicators to monitor whether the goals and objectives are being achieved.

Guidelines

The set of indicators chosen should be balanced among areas of performance including customer satisfaction, clinical and financial outcomes, and internal processes, as appropriate.



- 4.7 The governing body regularly reviews its strategic goals and objectives, and revises them as needed.

- 5.0 The governing body defines a set of organizational values, and educates its members, staff, service providers, and stakeholders about them.



- 5.1 The governing body seeks input from staff and service providers to define the organization's values.



- 5.2 The governing body demonstrates and communicates the organization's values throughout the organization.



- 5.3 The organization's values are reflected in the workplace culture, decision-making, and how services are delivered.

- 6.0 The governing body develops, and regularly reviews and updates the organization's policies on ethics-related issues.





Worklife

- 6.1 The organization has a written ethics framework to guide ethical behaviour throughout the organization.

Guidelines

The ethical behaviour may include the following: maintaining confidentiality; protecting and properly using the organization's assets; complying with laws, rules, and regulations; and the reporting of any illegal or unethical behaviour.



Accessibility

- 6.2 The ethics framework is publicly accessible.



Effectiveness

- 6.3 The ethics framework meets legal requirements, as applicable.



Effectiveness

- 6.4 The organization has a process to address ethics-related issues.

Guidelines

The ethics process is integrated, and applies to all types of ethics issues, including organizational, research, clinical, and bio-ethics. This should include mechanisms for members of the governing body to understand, identify, declare and resolve conflicts of interest.



Worklife

- 6.5 The process includes ways for anyone in the organization to confidentially report suspected or potential breaches of the ethics framework.

Guidelines

This may include, for example, an organizational whistleblower policy.



SUPPORTING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE DIRECTION

7.0 The governing body proactively addresses changes in its membership, including recruitment, as applicable.



7.1 The governing body has a process to recruit and select new members.

Guidelines

If the governing body does not itself select members, the governing body takes a proactive role in identifying any skill gaps in its membership, identifying potential members, and making recommendations to the appropriate body, for example, government.



7.2 New members are recruited based on explicit criteria.



7.3 The governing body actively monitors its renewal cycle to ensure continuity.



7.4 The governing body's composition is sufficiently varied and balanced, meets stakeholders' expectations, and reflects the diversity of the community it serves.

Guidelines

The combined background, experience, and reputation of the governing body's members contribute to building expertise and the governing body's ability to effectively govern.

Diversity may include the demographic, linguistic, cultural, socio-economic, geographic, gender, ethnic and social characteristics of the communities and populations served by the organization.



7.5 The governing body has written policies on the term lengths and limits, including compensation, if applicable.

8.0 The governing body clearly defines its roles and responsibilities.



8.1 The governing body has a clearly defined and documented scope of authority, roles, and responsibilities.

Guidelines

Applicable legislation is considered when defining the scope of authority, roles and responsibilities.

In situations where there are several levels of governance, the roles and responsibilities at each level should be well defined and understood, information flows smoothly and consistently between levels, and the governing body coordinates and integrates its work with each level.



8.2 The governing body and its members clearly understand the division of responsibility between the governing body and the senior management team, and the governing body and government, as applicable.



8.3 The governing body has a process to set bylaws and corporate policies, and operates according to those it sets.

Guidelines

Bylaws and corporate policies govern the internal management of the organization, including ethics-related issues.



8.4 The governing body regularly reviews its roles and responsibilities, including scope of authority, bylaws and policies, and makes changes as necessary.

Guidelines

The review should focus on whether the governing body's roles and responsibilities, scope of authority, and bylaws and corporate policies are current and applicable, given the ever-changing health care environment.

9.0 **The governing body has processes in place to effectively carry out its roles and responsibilities.**



9.1 The organization effectively orients members of the governing body.

Guidelines

The orientation should cover, for example: the governing body's roles and responsibilities; the organization's mission, vision, and values; and, basic elements of quality improvement, patient safety, and workforce.



9.2 The governing body receives ongoing education to help it fulfill its roles and responsibilities.

Guidelines

Opportunities for orientation and ongoing education contribute to the development of member and collective expertise.



9.3 The governing body has processes to declare and resolve conflicts, make group decisions, and analyze past and potential decisions.



9.4 The members are actively involved in carrying out their roles and responsibilities.

Guidelines

For example, the governing body has regular meetings to fulfill its obligations; members consistently attend and follow through on their commitments between meetings.

10.0 **The governing body regularly evaluates its own performance.**



- 10.1 The governing body has a process or framework to regularly evaluate its performance.

Guidelines

The governing body may assess its performance against set standards, indicators and goals for the strategic direction and overall performance.

The framework or process should include mechanisms to review leading practices in governance and compare its processes or performance with leading practices and other similar organizations, i.e. benchmarking.



- 10.2 The evaluation includes an assessment of the governing body's own structure.



- 10.3 The governing body reviews the contribution of its members and how it functions as a team.

Guidelines

This may include reviewing such things as whether the members attend meetings, the effectiveness of each meeting, or whether the members follow through on their obligations in between meetings, e.g. participation in committee work.



- 10.4 The governing body has a formal mechanism to recognize its achievements.

Guidelines

The governing body provides an annual, formal statement of its achievements.



- 10.5 The governing body identifies and takes action to address opportunities for improvement in a timely way.

Guidelines

Examples of opportunities for improvement may include: developing procedures to ensure smooth functioning such as limiting the length of meetings; managing agendas to reduce time on reporting items; and, improving the way the governing body operates as a team.

- 11.0 The governing body recruits, selects, and monitors the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).



- 11.1 The governing body oversees the recruitment and selection process of the CEO, as applicable.

Guidelines

The CEO may also be called the executive director, chief executive director, or administrator.

In the case of privately owned and operated organizations, as well as in the case where the CEO is appointed by an external body, the governing body should still play a proactive role in identifying potential candidates and in the screening and selection process.



- 11.2 The recruitment process includes a policy on CEO compensation.





Effectiveness

- 11.3 Performance objectives for the CEO are set in partnership with the CEO and revised annually.

Guidelines

The objectives should clearly define the CEO's roles and responsibilities as separate from those of the governing body, and should be tied to the organization's strategic goals and objectives.



Worklife

- 11.4 The governing body supports the ongoing development of the CEO and the senior management.



Effectiveness

- 11.5 The governing body has a process to evaluate the CEO's performance, and executes this evaluation regularly.

Guidelines

The process includes working with government to evaluate the CEO's performance in the case where the CEO reports to government officials rather than the governing body. It may also include seeking input from senior management as well as external stakeholders or partners.



Effectiveness

- 11.6 The governing body, with senior management, actively manage the CEO's succession.

12.0 The governing body guides the organization to achieve the strategic goals and objectives, and improve its performance.



Effectiveness

- 12.1 The governing body defines, reviews, and regularly updates a set of policy statements that are consistent with the organization's strategic goals and objectives.



Effectiveness

- 12.2 The governing body provides strategic advice to the CEO and senior management on the achievement of goals and objectives and mechanisms to improve performance.

Guidelines

The governing body may provide advice on things such as the appropriateness of the organization's structure, managerial systems, recruitment and retention strategies, and/or operational plans.

In terms of the organization's structure, the governing body may provide guidance about whether the structure is in line with strategic direction, as well as on the overall integration of services both within and outside the organization.

13.0 The governing body works effectively with the CEO, senior management, and clinical leadership.



Population Focus

- 13.1 The governing body seeks guidance and input from the organization's senior leaders to inform decision-making.

Guidelines

The flow of guidance and input between the governing body and senior management should be two-way and based on open communication.





Effectiveness

- 13.2 The governing body clearly delegates authority and in a manner that supports the best interests of the organization.

Guidelines

For example, the delegation of authority should be linked to the strategic objectives.



Worklife

- 13.3 The governing body has a process to manage disagreements between it and senior leaders or amongst senior leaders.



Worklife

- 13.4 The governing body, through its senior leaders, communicates with staff and internal stakeholders.

- 14.0 The governing body works with the senior management to obtain and allocate appropriate resources.



Population Focus

- 14.1 The governing body regularly reviews the strategic priorities, and promptly responds to changing needs and priorities.



Population Focus

- 14.2 The governing body compares the resources available to those required to meet needs and achieve the goals and objectives.

Guidelines

If the available resources are not sufficient to meet identified needs, the governing body proactively seeks solutions. This may include, for example, exploring ways of sharing resources with other organizations.



Population Focus

- 14.3 With the CEO, the governing body gathers input from and negotiates with the funding authority, as applicable.



Population Focus

- 14.4 The governing body uses its information and knowledge to guide resource allocation decisions.



Population Focus

- 14.5 When making allocation decisions, the governing body considers ethics, values, and social costs and benefits.

Guidelines

Resources should be fairly distributed across populations, geographic regions served, and the continuum of service.





Efficiency

14.6 The governing body assesses and anticipates the financial impact of changing the level of service, and plans accordingly.



Efficiency

14.7 The governing body makes resource allocation part of its regular planning cycle.

Guidelines

This should include ongoing risk identification and assessment to guide the allocation of resources, as well as ongoing oversight of management's resource allocation decisions.



MAINTAINING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

15.0 The governing body successfully interacts with a broad network of external stakeholders.



Population Focus

- 15.1 The governing body works with senior management to identify key stakeholders and their characteristics.**

Guidelines

The external stakeholders may include governments, foundations, unions, clients and families, shareholders as applicable, other organizations, interest and/or volunteer groups, marginalized populations, and/or the community as a whole. The governing body's network of stakeholders will vary depending on the organization's model of governance, the type of organization, whether the organization is private or public, and the organization's position in the environment, i.e. the social and political context.

Stakeholder characteristics may include, for example, power and influence, authority, nature, and urgency of their interests.

Senior management, in partnership with the governing body, identifies key stakeholders and their characteristics, and manages the relationships with stakeholders over time.

- 15.2 With senior management, the governing body anticipates and assesses stakeholders' interests and demands, and identifies priorities.**

Guidelines

The stakeholder groups can differ in their ability to influence the organization and their claim on the organization and its activities. For example, the governing body distinguishes accountability relationships, i.e. relationships with governments, from all others. The way the organization manages stakeholder interests and identifies its priorities depends largely on its model of governance.

- 15.3 The governing body has an effective strategy for balancing demands on the organization and managing stakeholder issues and competing interests.**



Effectiveness

16.0 The governing body regularly and consistently communicates with its external stakeholders and the community to build the organization's credibility, inspire commitment, and create support for the organization.



Population Focus

- 16.1 The governing body sets communication goals and monitors the implementation of a communication plan.**

- 16.2 The governing body develops a variety of effective strategies for communication with different groups.**



Population Focus

Guidelines
Although different communication strategies may be used to target different groups, key messages to stakeholders and the community should be clear and consistent.





Effectiveness

- 16.3 The governing body promotes the organization and the value of its services to influential groups.

Guidelines

For example, the governing body and senior management actively promote the organization's achievements and demonstrate its performance in key areas to its stakeholders, elected officials, and the community as a whole.



Population Focus

- 16.4 The governing body plays an advocacy role in the community, as appropriate.



Population Focus

- 16.5 The governing body regularly consults with and encourages input from its external stakeholders and the community.



Effectiveness

- 16.6 The governing body regularly evaluates its communication strategies, and makes improvements, as required.



BEING ACCOUNTABLE AND ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE RESULTS

17.0 The governing body regularly monitors and evaluates the organization's performance.



Efficiency

17.1 The governing body provides enough resources to collect and monitor information about performance.



Effectiveness

17.2 The governing body regularly sets goals and objectives for organization performance.

Guidelines

Goals and objectives for organization performance should be tied to the strategic direction.



Effectiveness

17.3 The governing body selects and monitors a balanced set of performance measures.

Guidelines

The selection of performance measures may be done in collaboration with, or delegated to, the CEO and senior management; however, it is the governing body's responsibility to understand and accept the rationale for the selection.



Effectiveness

17.4 The governing body receives and analyses performance data and information trended over time.



Effectiveness

17.5 The governing body obtains feedback from clients, staff, service providers, key stakeholders, and the community.



Effectiveness

17.6 The governing body monitors performance against goals and objectives, identifies opportunities for improvement, and takes actions to address them.

18.0 The governing body demonstrates accountability to its stakeholders.



Effectiveness

18.1 The governing body has a set of criteria to guide accountability discussions and decision-making.

Guidelines

The criteria should include mechanisms to manage multiple or complex accountability relationships, as applicable.





- 18.2 The governing body, with senior management, identifies areas of shared decision-making with external authorities.



- 18.3 The governing body is transparent with its stakeholders in terms of organization performance and decision-making.

19.0 The governing body works with the senior management to identify risks to the organization and promote ongoing quality improvement.



- 19.1 The governing body integrates risk management into the strategic directions.

Guidelines

Adequate systems are in place to identify and manage risks. Risks may include client or staff risks such as safety or quality of services, as well as organizational risks such as insurance protection, budget and capital planning processes, emergencies and/or disasters, and contract management.



- 19.2 The governing body reviews the frequency and severity of adverse events.



- 19.3 The governing body analyses incidents and new or increased risks to identify trends and opportunities for improvement.

Guidelines

The governing body takes responsibility for managing and reducing identified risks.



- 19.4 The governing body promotes the ongoing search for leading practices and benchmarking opportunities.



- 19.5 The governing body provides leadership for quality improvement and fosters a quality improvement culture throughout the organization.

Guidelines

The governing body may foster and support a quality improvement culture by: taking a leadership role in setting the quality agenda; making quality improvement a sustainable strategic focus; working with senior management to coach and mentor staff, volunteers, and students about quality improvement; promoting the measurement of results and making changes accordingly; removing barriers to improving performance; demonstrating a commitment to the accreditation process; recognizing staff, volunteers, and students for their quality improvement work; and, carrying out its own quality improvement activities.

- 20.0 The governing body fosters and supports a client safety culture throughout the organization.**





Safety

- 20.1 The governing body sets clear expectations, goals, and objectives to reduce harm and improve client safety.

Guidelines

Goals and objectives for client safety should be specific and measurable.



Safety

- 20.2 The governing body makes client safety part of the governance and strategic planning process.

Guidelines

Making client safety part of the governing body's processes means including the organization's client safety initiatives as standing items on the meeting agendas, or selecting and reviewing cases of clients who experience an adverse event in the organization.

Client safety is a strategic priority or strategic goal within the organization.

Senior management sets the culture and is the key to most successful efforts to change and strengthen organizational culture.



Worklife

- 20.3 The governing body encourages open communication and a blame-free dialogue about client safety issues, incidents, and potential problems.

Guidelines

Open communication and blame-free dialogue includes learning from risk information and mistakes.



Safety

- 20.4 The governing body monitors system-level measures of client safety.

Guidelines

System-level measures of client safety may include organization-wide infection rates or data on medication reconciliation.



Safety

- 20.5 The governing body supports organization-wide client safety initiatives.

Guidelines

Organization-wide client safety initiatives may include risk rounds, education, and training, or forums to discuss lessons learned.

- 21.0 The governing body has an effective system of financial planning and control.



Efficiency

- 21.1 The organization has clear financial policies and procedures.

Guidelines

The financial policies include generally accepted accounting principles.



Effectiveness

- 21.2 The governing body anticipates financial needs and potential risks, including any shifts or trends in funding, and develops contingency plans, as appropriate.

Guidelines

Financial risks may include having enough of the right types of insurance coverage. The governing body assesses the organization's insurance needs and secures insurance as needed.





Efficiency

21.3 The governing body receives regular reports on financial performance, and coordinates its review with other activities such as utilization management.



Effectiveness

21.4 The organization meets legal requirements for managing financial resources and financial reporting, i.e. audit, as applicable.



Effectiveness

21.5 The governing body responds to recommendations it receives from reports and input from senior management and other sources.



