



Our Leadership Role



Board of Trustees *Governance Manual*
NWT Health and Social Services Authorities

2005



Introduction

This manual is for Trustees of the Boards of the Health and Social Services Authorities in the NWT. The purpose of the manual is to provide information to Trustees so that they are able to carry out their important leadership and governance roles.

An effective Board of Trustees:

- ✓ Understands its governance role and the role of the CEO and staff
- ✓ Has values to guide its work
- ✓ Provides clear direction
- ✓ Serves the people within the area of the Authority
- ✓ Makes decisions
- ✓ Plans for the future
- ✓ Makes the most of opportunities and resources
- ✓ Has a vision of health and wellbeing in the area it serves and in the NWT

“A Board ... must keep its ear to the ground, its eyes on the horizon, its feet in motion, and its heart in the right place.”

(Cooke, Weaving Through the Community: Becoming a Responsive Board, 2001, page 50)



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People in the Northwest Territories are responsible for making their own decisions about their personal and their family's health and wellbeing. They also may need to access certain basic services provided by the Health and Social Services Authorities and other service providers.

Community and nonprofit organizations, businesses, aboriginal governments, and professional groups often partner with the eight Health and Social Services Authorities to provide programs, services, and information.

It is the role of the Board of Trustees to oversee the quality of facilities, programs, and services and public information that help people in the NWT make good decisions and improve their health and wellbeing.



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The NWT Health and Social Services Authorities

A Health and Social Services Authority includes the Board of Trustees, the professional staff, the programs and services, and the buildings, equipment, and other infrastructure in an area of the NWT.

The NWT has eight Health and Social Services Authorities.

- ✓ Deh Cho Health and Social Services Authority
- ✓ Tlicho Community Services Agency
- ✓ Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority
- ✓ Fort Smith Health and Social Services Authority
- ✓ Hay River Health and Social Services Authority
- ✓ Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Authority
- ✓ Stanton Territorial Health Authority
- ✓ Sahtu Health and Social Services Authority

As agents of the Department of Health and Social Services, Government of the Northwest Territories, each Authority oversees and delivers programs and services within their area.

The Minister of Health and Social Services has ultimate responsibility for the health and social services system. Each Authority reports to the Minister, and the Minister is a member the NWT Legislative Assembly.



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Health and Social Services Authorities provide many important programs and services that people need to maintain their health and well-being such as:

- ✓ Health care
- ✓ Hospital care
- ✓ Supports for families
- ✓ Child protection
- ✓ Foster parenting
- ✓ Midwifery
- ✓ Medical travel
- ✓ Supplementary benefits
- ✓ Supports for the elderly
- ✓ Prenatal care and information
- ✓ Home supports for people in need
- ✓ Information about healthy diets and lifestyles
- ✓ Counselling for addictions and mental health issues
- ✓ Independent living supports to people with disabilities

Authorities also oversee the operation of facilities such as:

- ✓ Medical clinics and health centres in communities
- ✓ Hospitals
- ✓ Long term care homes
- ✓ Homes for people with disabilities
- ✓ Alcohol and drug treatment centre
- ✓ Homes for children with mental health issues





The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees provides leadership and governance for their Health and Social Services Authority. Trustees are the ‘big picture’ thinkers.

The Minister of Health and Social Services appoints the Trustees of each Board in consultation with community councils, who recommend names of potential candidates.

- ✓ Each Board has at least five Trustees.
- ✓ Each Board has a Chairperson.
- ✓ Trustees represent the communities in the area their Authority serves.
- ✓ Trustees serve a three-year term.
- ✓ No Trustee serves more than three terms in a row.
- ✓ People can't be appointed to the Board of Trustees if they work for the Authority, or if they are a spouse or dependent of an Authority employee.

The Board of Trustees governs and leads the Health and Social Services Authority based on the vision and principles of the Department of Health and Social Services. A Board may also develop its own vision alongside the Department's vision. The Board of Trustees gives broad direction to the



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Authority's Chief Executive Officer to apply the vision and bring it into reality.

The Board of Trustees is appointed to serve in the area of the Authority. It serves the interests of the people that use the Authority's services and the staff, as well as the general public. While Trustees are often most aware of the important issues and needs in the community where they live, they must also serve the interests of all of the communities in the Authority's area.





Values to guide the Board of Trustees

Leaders choose values to guide their leadership and governance responsibilities. Values are principles or moral standards.

Each Board of Trustees may discuss and develop their own guiding values. Values form a foundation that Trustees refer to as they consider information and make decisions.

The **NWT Model of Trustee Leadership for the Health and Social Services System (MOTL)** identifies the following values:

- i) Trust
- ii) Respect
- iii) Open Communication
- iv) Commitment to serve in the best interest of the Authority, its employees, clients, and service area.

This section discusses details of these values. See **Appendix A** for the full text of the **MOTL**.



i) **Trust**

The word trustee comes from the word trust. Trust means people have faith or confidence that others are loyal, truthful, and reliable.

When Trustees are guided by the value of trust they do their best to understand the people the Authority serves, and the CEO and staff. The Trustees do their best to tell the truth, be reliable, and fulfill their roles and responsibilities to their Health and Social Services Authority.

- ✓ The Board of Trustees works hard to earn the trust of the people it represents.
- ✓ The Board of Trustees builds a relationship of trust between the board and the CEO.
- ✓ Trust comes with time. Trustees remain loyal to the Board and have patience and a positive attitude as they build trust.



ii) **Respect**

Respect means to be considerate of others and to treat them well.

When Trustees are guided by the value of respect they are polite to the people they serve, to their fellow Trustees, and to the Authority's staff. Trustees value the thoughts and ideas of others, and consider them when they make decisions.

- ✓ The Board of Trustees is open to different points of view. They listen carefully to the people they serve, the CEO, and other Authority staff. They understand and respect different points of view.
- ✓ Trustees work to resolve differences without confrontation and personal interest.
- ✓ Trustees work for the good of the Authority, their staff, and the people in the area they serve.
- ✓ Trustees support decisions they make as a Board, even if they disagree with the decision as an individual.
- ✓ Trustees respect the role of the Minister of Health and Social Services and the staff in the department.
- ✓ Trustees take their board responsibilities seriously and fulfill their position of leadership with dignity.



iii) **Open communication**

Open communication means information flows among and between people so that everyone can access, understand, and use the information.

When Trustees are guided by the value of open communication they provide clear information to the people they serve, in a timeframe that is helpful and useful. Trustees develop effective ways to receive information from the people in their area and act on it appropriately.

- ✓ Trustees make themselves available to discuss issues with people in their area. They listen carefully. Trustees communicate these matters to the CEO when they relate to things best dealt with by staff. Trustees openly communicate during board meetings about matters best dealt with by the Board.
- ✓ Trustees look for the best way to understand and deal fairly with the community issues which need to be dealt with by the board.
- ✓ Trustees give community members the information they need in a way they can effectively use it.
- ✓ Trustees openly state their personal opinions about any issues they discuss.
- ✓ Trustees support Board decisions and communicate them to the people they serve.
- ✓ Trustees keep private information about staff, clients, and other sensitive matters completely confidential.
- ✓ The Board of Trustees maintains open communication with the Minister of Health and Social Services, usually through the Chairperson.



- ✓ The Board of Trustees keeps other elected officials informed of its work when appropriate.

iv) **Commitment to serve in the best interests of the Authority and its employees, clients, and service area**

This value means that Trustees are committed to serve others . They do this by providing good governance, without prejudice or favour, for the Authority staff, for the people using the Authority’s services, and for the general public in the area of the Authority.

Robert Greenleaf used the term **servant leadership** to describe people who

“... have an inborn sense that they want to serve before all else. ... Do those served grow as persons? Do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, and more likely themselves to serve others? And what is the effect on the least privileged in society: will he benefit, or, at least, will he not be further deprived?” (from *The Servant as Leader*, 1991, page 7)

A value of commitment to serve means that Trustees bring vision and integrity to their leadership and governance role.

- ✓ Trustees plan how best to serve everyone’s needs.
- ✓ Trustees recognize the needs of the most disadvantaged.
- ✓ Trustees don’t use their position to favour their relatives or friends.



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- ✓ Trustees bring important community information to the table.
- ✓ Trustees listen to and consider information as it affects all communities.

Other guiding values

Other values may also be important to Trustees in their leadership role.

- ✓ Long term vision
- ✓ Fairness
- ✓ Courage
- ✓ Honesty
- ✓ Integrity
- ✓ Collaboration
- ✓ Compassion
- ✓ Optimism
- ✓ Openness
- ✓ Commitment to learning

A discussion of values helps the Board of Trustees fulfill their governance role. Trustees may identify values as part of a strategic planning exercise or at a board training session.





Legal authority of the Board of Trustees

Boards of Trustees get their legal status and authority from different federal and territorial laws and policies. This section briefly discusses a few main features of these laws and policies.

- i) ***Canada Health Act***
- ii) **Non-Insured Health Benefits**
- iii) ***Northwest Territories Act***
Transfer agreements 1982, 1986, 1988
NWT Health and Social Services Establishment Policy
- iv) ***Hospital Insurance and Health and Social Services Administration Act***
- v) **Job Description of a Board of Management**
- vi) **Model of Trustee leadership for the Health and Social Services System (MOTL)**
- vii) **Contribution Agreements between the territorial government and each Health and Social Services Authority.**

Other legislation, policies, regulations, memorandums of understanding, and directives also give authority to the territorial Department of Health and Social Services and to the Authorities.



i) ***Canada Health Act***

The Government of the Northwest Territories and the NWT Health and Social Services Authorities must follow the *Canada Health Act*. The *Act* states that the federal government is committed to a public health insurance system based on **five principles**. The Authorities must deliver health and social services according to these principles:

- ✓ **Accessibility:** All insured Canadians must be able to get hospital and doctor's care regardless of their financial status or other barriers.
- ✓ **Universality:** All insured Canadians are entitled to public health insurance coverage on uniform terms and conditions.
- ✓ **Portability:** Health coverage must remain in place when an insured person moves or travels.
- ✓ **Comprehensiveness:** All medically necessary services must be insured.
- ✓ **Public administration:** A province or territory must use a non-profit, public authority to administer the health care insurance plan.

ii) **Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB)** provide additional services to all people of aboriginal descent in the Northwest Territories. The NIHB covers approved travel, approved dental service, eye exams and eyeglasses, and prescription drugs. Please refer to the bibliography at the end of this manual for the NHIB website address.



iii) **Health and Social Services Establishment Policy**

The Establishment Policy creates the Department of Health and Social Services. The Minister directs the Department.

The Establishment Policy identifies **seven principles** that apply to all health and social services in the Northwest Territories. Trustees use these principles to make decisions for their Authority.

1) **Universality**

- ✓ All NWT residents should have access to the services they need.
- ✓ All NWT residents should be treated equally and with respect.

2) **Personal responsibility**

- ✓ Individuals and families have a personal responsibility to address their own health and social needs.
- ✓ Individuals and families have a corresponding right to make their own decisions based on accurate health and social service information so that they can plan responsibly for their own wellness.

3) **Basic needs**

- ✓ Publicly funded programs and services should address basic health and social needs when an individual or family cannot meet these needs.



4) Sustainability

- ✓ The health and social service system should operate in a way that will maintain its ability to continue meeting basic health and social needs over the long term.

5) Continuum of care

- ✓ Programs and services should be as seamless as possible, fit together, and be integrated with other GNWT services.

6) Prevention-oriented system

- ✓ In addition to treating illness, injury, and acute social problems, the system should support the maintenance of physical, mental, and social health.

7) People-oriented system

- ✓ The needs of people should come first in every approach to service.



iv) ***Hospital Insurance and Health and Social Services Administration Act***

This *Act* gives the Minister the authority to establish Health and Social Services Authorities and to appoint the Boards of Trustees.

v) **Job Description of Trustee to a Board of Management**

The Job Description describes in detail the roles and responsibilities of all Authorities Boards of Trustees. Appendix B is a copy of the complete Trustee job description.

vi) **Model of Trustee Leadership for the Health and Social Services System (MOTL)**

In 2003 a Trustee focus group developed the **NWT Model of Trustee Leadership for the Health and Social Services System (MOTL)**. This document provides more details about Boards of Trustees' roles and responsibilities. Appendix A shows the complete text of MOTL.

vii) **Contribution Agreements**

A contribution agreement between each Authority and the Department defines the Board of Trustees financial and administrative responsibilities. The contribution agreement identifies, among other things:

- ✓ The Authority's budget
- ✓ Financial and accounting matters
- ✓ Insurance coverage that each Board and Authority needs
- ✓ Processes for dispute resolution





Roles and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees

The following sections discuss some details of these main roles and responsibilities of the Boards of Trustees.

- ✓ Understanding the role of the Board Chairperson
- ✓ Holding effective meetings.
- ✓ Developing a strategic plan. Reviewing and approving business and operational plans.
- ✓ Developing and implementing Board policies and bylaws.
- ✓ Reviewing, approving, and monitoring the Authority's annual budget.
- ✓ Selecting, managing, and evaluating the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
- ✓ Monitoring programs and services to ensure that they meet community needs and government standards.
- ✓ Communicating with the people and the agencies in the area the Board serves.
- ✓ Evaluating the Board and the way it works.
- ✓ Being accountable as a Board of Trustees.





Understanding the role of the Board Chairperson

The Board of Trustees recommends to the Minister who they choose as their Chairperson. The Minister makes the official appointment.

The Chairperson leads the Board of Trustees and is responsible to:

- ✓ Chair all Board meetings.
- ✓ Make sure the CEO focuses on the direction and the goals set out by the Board of Trustees.
- ✓ Be the public spokesperson for the Board, or clearly identify another person for this responsibility.
- ✓ Participate as their Board representative on the Joint Leadership Committee. See Section 18 for more information about the Joint Leadership Committee.





Holding effective Board meetings

Holding effective Board meetings is a Board responsibility. Trustees use board meetings to share information, exchange ideas, review challenges, find solutions, and make decisions. Trustees are responsible to attend Board meetings and to participate actively and respectfully.

The Board of Trustees can apply the following ideas for positive and effective meetings.

- ✓ Prepare for the meeting. Trustees should receive, read, and understand their information package to get ready for the meeting.
- ✓ Clearly understand the purpose of the meeting and provide input into the agenda of the meeting. What issues do Trustees need to look at? What decisions, if any, do they need to make?
- ✓ Understand and follow the basic rules of order. For example stay on topic, allow others to have equal time to speak, and listen carefully to what other Trustees and the CEO have to say.
- ✓ Consider decisions carefully. What will be the long-term impacts of Board decisions? How will Board decisions affect long-term benefits for all people in the area of the Authority?



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- ✓ Come with an open mind, rather than a fixed position. Listen to others. Leave hidden agendas behind. Work together to understand the issues and to make decisions.
- ✓ Give each Trustee the same chance to speak and to influence the decision-making. Share in making decisions and don't let one or two outspoken Trustees dominate.
- ✓ Allow each Trustee to contribute to the meeting's success. Trustees should feel free to raise questions or share an unusual idea without their colleagues judging them.
- ✓ Find and use different ways to make meetings engaging, interesting, and fun. Hold meetings in a different location, invite different people to make a presentation, or do team building exercises to help Trustees get to know each another better.
- ✓ Make sure Trustees have good back-up supports at the meeting. For example easy access to any necessary documents, good quality translation services, food and drinks, childcare services if needed, and a room that is comfortable and free from distractions.





Developing a strategic plan

Strategic planning is a Board responsibility. The Board of Trustees uses the strategic planning process to work with senior staff to plan for the future of their Authority.

To get ready for the planning process, Trustees need to decide the following four things:

- ✓ **Who will attend?** For example, what staff members, other than the CEO do the Trustees want to include? Do other people need to attend for different parts of the process?
- ✓ **What information do Trustees need for the planning process?** For example, Trustees need to refer to territorial documents such as the Minister's Action Plan for Health and Social Services 2002 – 2005 and the Integrated Planning and Reporting Model for the Health and Social Services System. Appendix C is the Integrated Planning and Reporting Model.

Trustees also need information about the needs of people in the area they serve. Trustees can gather this information from a needs assessment or focus group.



Who will facilitate the planning process? Identify an independent facilitator, if possible. With a facilitator to oversee the process Trustees and staff who participate are able to focus on the content of the plan.

- ✓ **When and where will the planning process take place?**
Plan for one to two days. Boards often organize a retreat so they can complete their strategic plan and not be interrupted with other matters.

People use different approaches to strategic planning, but each approach usually includes the following activities:

- i) Discuss and agree on values to guide the Authority
- ii) Discuss and agree on a vision statement
- iii) Review and possibly update the mission
- iv) Assess the environment
- v) Set goals and objectives for three to five years
- vi) Adopt the strategic plan
- vii) Communicate with the public
- viii) Develop business and operational plans
- ix) Monitor the progress of the strategic plan

This section discusses some details for each of these activities.



i) **Discuss and agree on values to guide the Board of Trustees**

Trustees may define and list their values as discussed in Section 2 of this manual. Or Trustees may want to write a value statement such as the one below.

The NWT Human Rights Commission Value Statement

The NWT Human Rights Commission

- ✓ **Respects the dignity of all people;**
- ✓ **Works with integrity and fairness; and**
- ✓ **Is innovative, progressive, and continuously learning.**

(September 2004)

Once Trustees agree on their values they can talk about ways to apply them. Over time, Trustees may also add new values to guide their work or adjust values they already have.



ii) **Discuss and agree on a vision statement**

A vision statement is a broad image of what the Authority works towards. If the Board of Trustees already has a vision, they may want to review it during strategic planning sessions. Here is a sample vision statement.

We envision a North at peace with its diversity where everyone is safe, confident, and respected in their journey.

NWT Human Rights Commission
(September 2004)

Robert Greenleaf defines vision as:

... “the big dream, the visionary concept, the world we want but may never quite achieve. This vision excites the imagination and challenges people to work for something they do not yet have, something they can be proud of as they move towards it.” (from *The Power of Servant Leadership*, edited by Larry C. Spears, 1998)

The Health and Social Services Authorities Boards of Trustees also need to be aware of and stay focused on the Department’s vision.

Our children will be born healthy and raised in a safe family and community environment which supports them in leading long, productive and happy lives.

Department of Health and Social Services, GNWT
(June 1998)



iii) **Review the mission**

The mission describes the purpose of the Authority. The mission should answer two basic questions:

- ✓ What is this organization for?
- ✓ How will the world be different as a result of our being in business?

Smith's Landing First Nation Mission Statement

We, the Thebati Dene Sùliné, have been sovereign since time immemorial.

Together, we will continue our journey in harmony with the environment to sustain a healthy and self-sufficient lifestyle for future generations.

To honour our Creator and ancestors, we will protect and nurture the integrity of our Dene Ch'anié.

iv) **Assess the environment**

The environment relates to the people the Authority serves, including what services and information they need. The environment includes the economic and social environment of the area and how these affect the way the Authority does its work.

It is very helpful if the Board has research information about the services that people need. Trustees may also find a SWOT analysis useful. This analysis identifies the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that affect the Authority and its work.

Trustees also need to consider the Authority's current and possible future partnerships when they assess the environment.



Set goals and objectives for three to five years

Goals describe what the Authority wants to achieve in the next three to five years. Sometimes goals are referred to as the end results.

Objectives describe what work the Authority needs to do to bring the goals into reality.

During strategic planning, Trustees also identify key outcome measures to evaluate or measure whether or not the Authority has reached its goals.

Here is an example from Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority (YHSSA) Strategic Plan 2005 – 2009.

Goal: Critical Success Factor 4

YHSSA communicates in an open, transparent, and accountable manner.

Key Outcome Measures:

- ✓ Starting in 2006 and onward, all clients will be aware of their rights and responsibilities.
- ✓ The public will be better informed about YHSSA programs, services and new initiatives, as well as those of our partners.
- ✓ Through open dialogue with aboriginal leaders, community agencies and residents, YHSSA ensures public accountability and community visibility.



v) **Adopt the strategic plan**

The CEO or facilitator is responsible to write up the strategic plan after the Trustees complete the planning process. The Board of Trustees officially adopts their strategic plan at a board meeting. Then the Board submits it to the Minister of Health and Social Services for final approval.

vi) **Communicate the plan with the public**

It's important for the Board of Trustees to share the details of their strategic plan with the people in their area. Trustees may hold a public meeting or appoint a Board spokesperson, often the Chairperson, to communicate key messages to the public.

vii) **Develop business and operational plans**

The CEO and other staff develop the business and operational plans that bring the strategic plan into the daily operations of the Authority. After Trustees approve these plans they submit them to the Minister for final approval.



viii) **Monitor the progress of the strategic plan**

Boards of Trustees need to find out whether or not the Authority's work helps move them towards their goals. To help Trustees monitor progress the CEO reports about the budget and operational plans at board meetings.

In the budget report, the CEO indicates if the budget is on target or if there are variances. Variances include more spending or less spending than the budget predicted for that time period.

Business and operational plans include actions the Authority takes to work towards the goals in the strategic plan. Trustees may look at and review these actions during board meetings.

For example, the agenda for board meetings may include a regular item for Trustees to ask questions about progress of the strategic plan.

Here is an example of questions that Trustees could ask based on the YHSSA Strategic Plan Goal- Critical Success Factor 4.

Key Outcome Measure:

Starting in 2006 and onward, all clients will be aware of their rights and responsibilities.

Possible Trustee questions:

- ✓ Has the YHSSA developed a document that outlines the rights and responsibilities of clients we serve?
- ✓ Will this document be translated into the aboriginal language(s) of our clients?





Developing and implementing Board policies and bylaws

Developing policies and bylaws is a Board responsibility.

The Department of Health and Social Services has developed sample by-laws that the Boards may use as a model for by-laws that they develop. The by-laws provide information about membership of the Board, scheduling of meetings, responsibilities of the Board, Board minutes and correspondence. Some Authority Boards are registered under the *NWT Societies Act* and need to develop bylaws as part of their legal obligations. The Board of Trustees develops, implements, reviews, and updates the bylaws to make sure they properly reflect the way the Board operates.

Policies give the Board of Trustees some guidance for their leadership role. Policies clearly identify the different expectations of the Board and Trustees. Policies help the Board of Trustees provide good leadership and consistent governance.

This section discusses the following common board policies:

- i) Board of Trustees Code of Conduct
- ii) Statements to the public and the media
- iii) Complaints Policy
- iv) Roles of the CEO and the Board of Trustees



i) **Board of Trustees Code of Conduct**

Each Board of Trustees is responsible to develop its own Code of Conduct. One example Trustees can follow is the Code of Conduct the Financial Management Board Secretariat (FMBS) developed in February 2005 for employees of the Government of the NWT. Appendix F has the full text for the FMBS Code of Conduct.

A Code of Conduct deals with issues such as the following:

- ✓ Conflict of interest
- ✓ Dealings with family, friends, and relatives
- ✓ Discipline
- ✓ Confidentiality
- ✓ Professional ethics

Conflict of Interest

The FMBS Code of Conduct Section 17 defines conflict of interest in this way:

“A conflict of interest exists where there is an actual or perceived incompatibility between an employee's duties and responsibilities of office and the private interests of the employee or an immediate family member which can include, but is not limited to, pecuniary interests including investments and business involvements; outside employment; service, whether voluntary or otherwise, on a board, council or committee or other organization; and personal relationships, including immediate family or spouse.”

The FMBS Code of Conduct Section 78 also states:



“Employees must conduct themselves in a manner that promotes confidence in an unbiased, professional public service. It is therefore important that employees not be seen to be taking actions to further the private interests of their immediate family, friends, or relatives.”

Dealings with family, friends, and relatives

The FMBS Code of Conduct prohibits GNWT employees from doing certain things. For example, employees can't use their position to influence another person's decision in a way that brings any financial benefits to the employee, their immediate family, another relative, or a friend.

Discipline

The FMBS Code of Conduct Section 2 includes information about what happens if an employee breaks the code.

“The Code of Conduct respecting Conflict of Interest and Oath of Office and Secrecy is a condition of employment with the GNWT. Employees who fail to comply with these standards may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.”

Confidentiality

The Board's Code of Conduct may include a section about confidentiality. Trustees must keep confidential any private information they become aware of through their position with the Authority. This includes all information about clients, families, staff, or other private or sensitive matters. The Board may decide to ask each Trustee to sign an Oath of Confidentiality when they first join the board.



Professional Ethics

The Board's Code of Conduct may also include a section on professional ethics. Professional ethics may include statements or guidelines with expectations about things such as:

- ✓ Sobriety
- ✓ The importance of Trustees as role models for others
- ✓ Working professionally as a team, putting aside personal differences

ii) **Statements to the public and the media**

Boards often have a policy about talking to the public and media that identifies:

- ✓ The person or people who will speak for the Board
- ✓ The need for Trustees to speak with one voice and publicly support Board decisions

iii) **Complaints Policy**

Trustees may receive various complaints about the work the Authority does or about the Board itself. The Board needs to develop a Complaints Policy to ensure the Authority uses a consistent, fair, and professional response to each and every complaint.

A Complaints Policy commonly identifies the following things:

- ✓ The types of complaints that the CEO and staff deal with and the types of complaints the Trustees deal with.



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- ✓ An outline of what happens when the Authority receives a complaint. This includes details about who takes what actions and when.
- ✓ The mandate of a Complaints Committee. For example, how and when it is formed, who can be a member, and how it reports back to the Board.
- ✓ How the Board of Trustees communicates with people who have complained and, if it applies, the people they complained about.



iv) **Roles of the CEO and the Board of Trustees**

The Board of Trustees' role is leadership and governance. Trustees should not interfere with the CEO's role which is the day-to-day management and operation of the Authority. Recruiting staff, the payroll, contracting, day-to-day programs and services, and confidential client issues are not the Board's business.

Trustees may decide to have a workshop with their CEO to clearly define and confirm their separate roles. The workshop may start with a detailed list of tasks. Trustees and the CEO can discuss and decide who is responsible, including any shared responsibilities.

The Model of Trustee Leadership for the Health and Social Services System (MOTL) provides a chart on the Roles of the Board of Trustees and the CEO. Look in Appendix A for the full text of the MOTL.

Other Board Policies

Trustees may also develop policies for things such as:

- ✓ Travel
- ✓ Honoraria
- ✓ Minimum number of meetings to hold per year
- ✓ In-camera meetings
- ✓ General rules of order to follow during Board meetings

Each Board of Trustees is responsible to ensure they have the necessary policies to provide good leadership and governance for the Authority.





Reviewing, approving, and monitoring the Authority's budget

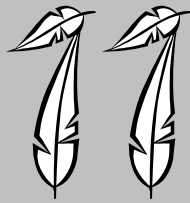
Reviewing, approving, and monitoring the Authority's annual operating and capital budget is a Board responsibility. The capital budget identifies spending for things such as buildings, equipment, and other assets. The operating budget identifies spending for things such as payroll, contracts for programs and services, rent, and other operating expenses.

The CEO develops the budget, based on funding the Authority receives from the Department of Health and Social Services. The CEO presents regular financial reports at board meetings so the Trustees can review and monitor the Authority's spending.

The Board of Trustees:

- ✓ Ensures that the budget supports the goals in the Authority's strategic and business plans.
- ✓ Notes any changes in financial and staffing areas from the previous year's budget.
- ✓ Ensures that any new or enhanced programs or services are in line with the Authority's and Department's strategic plans.
- ✓ Ensures that the strategic plan requires the capital spending outlined in the capital budget.
- ✓ Submits the annual budget to the Minister for final approval.
- ✓ Reviews and approves annual audited financial statements.





Selecting, managing, and evaluating the Chief Executive Officer

Selecting, managing, and evaluating the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is a Board responsibility. The Board of Trustees oversees the work of only one staff in the Authority – the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). They have a direct relationship only with the CEO.

The Board of Trustees is responsible to:

- ✓ Recruit and select the CEO. The CEO is responsible for selecting, managing, and evaluating all other Authority staff. The CEO also oversees all contracts and other agreements the Authority uses to provide programs and services.
- ✓ Appoint the CEO under the Public Service Act as the chief staff responsible for the Authority's day-to-day operations and management.
- ✓ Provide clear direction on what work the CEO is responsible for and what work the Board of Trustees is responsible for.
- ✓ Evaluate the CEO's performance every year. The Chairperson and two or three other Trustees form a personnel or evaluation committee. This committee defines and applies a fair and positive process to evaluate the CEO, including how to deal with challenges or problems. Appendix D has a sample CEO evaluation form from the Workers' Compensation Board.
- ✓ Develop a fair and open process to discipline the CEO and apply the process as and when needed.





Monitoring programs

Monitoring programs is a Board responsibility. Monitoring is a way for Boards to get information so that they more fully understand how a program of the Authority is working. Monitoring is part of evaluation, which assesses the quality of programs and services and measures how effectively they are achieving their goals and expected outcomes.

By monitoring the Board of Trustees ensures that the Authority delivers high quality programs and services and that they meet government standards. In this role the Boards of all Authorities work collaboratively sharing information that has been collected about the effectiveness of health and social service programs in the NWT. During meetings of the Joint Leadership Council (see chapter 16) the Chairs of each Board of Trustees are able to discuss this evaluation and reporting information.

Trustees and the CEO use various tools and information to monitor the Authority's programs and services.

- ✓ Know and understand the Department's standards for the programs and services the Authority offers.
- ✓ Contract a specialist to evaluate a specific program or service.
- ✓ Develop questions Trustees can use to interview clients about a specific program or service. Randomly choose clients for interviews. Identify Trustees to interview clients.



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- ✓ Organize and carry out a focus group to discuss a program or service. Trustees or an independent facilitator can lead the focus group.
- ✓ Contract a specialist to research best practices for specific programs and services. Compare the best practices with the Authority's current practices.
- ✓ Set up a monitoring committee to oversee regular monitoring and evaluation.
- ✓ Share all information from monitoring and evaluation among all Trustees.





Communicating with the people and agencies the Board serves

Communicating is a very important Board responsibility. Communicating means the Board both gives and receives information. The Board of Trustees needs to communicate with the people who live in their area, with their CEO and through the CEO with other staff, and with the Minister of Health and Social Services and other elected officials.

The people who live in their area need clear information about the programs and services the Authority offers including any new ones. People need to know what major trends and issues the Authority faces.

Public meetings

The Board of Trustees can use a public meeting to communicate with people. To organize a public meeting Trustees need to decide:

- ✓ What is the purpose of the meeting? What do people want or need to know? What do the Trustees want or need to know? For example, the purpose might be to share information about a certain type of health or social service such as midwifery.
- ✓ What is the agenda? Will there be a presentation? For example, from a staff person, a community group, or other people? What else needs to happen at the meeting to achieve the purpose?
- ✓ When and where will the meeting take place? How long will the meeting be?



- ✓ Who will facilitate or chair the meeting? Does the Board want or need an independent facilitator?
- ✓ How will the Board advertise the meeting? Do they need to invite certain people or groups of people?
- ✓ What translation services are needed? How can Trustees help to make sure that elders attend the meeting? What food and drinks should be provided?
- ✓ How will the Board share information with people about the meeting after it happens?

Reports and other documents

The Board of Trustees can use reports and other documents to communicate with the public. For example, the Board publishes an Annual Report that includes financial information and an outline of the year's activities. Or the Board may publish a research report, the strategic plan, short biographies of Trustees and the CEO, or brochures about new programs.

The Board may also use a document to raise issues in the community and to ask people for their ideas and input.

Bringing issues from the community to the Authority

Trustees have an important role to ask questions and listen to the people in the area they serve. Trustees are responsible to accurately communicate the public's point of view. Sometimes people raise issues that the CEO or other staff needs to deal with. Trustees must pass the information along



and not interfere. Sometimes people raise issues that the Board needs to talk about at a board meeting.

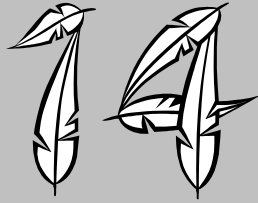
Trustees gather information informally because they see and talk to people in the communities where they live and work. Trustees may also decide to organize a more formal way to listen to people - for example through focus groups, interviews, or other research.

Communicating with the Minister and other elected officials

The Board of Trustees may develop a policy about communicating with the Minister of Health and Social Services. Some Boards use the Chairperson as the sole contact between the Board and the Minister. Other Boards select specific Trustees to meet with the Minister about specific issues after they discuss things together.

Trustees need to be loyal, support decisions made by the Board, and speak with one voice when they communicate with the Minister.





Evaluating the Board of Trustees

Evaluating the Board or self-evaluation is a Board responsibility. An annual self-evaluation gives Trustees a chance to think carefully about their leadership and governance. It is an opportunity to honestly assess how well the Board of Trustees fulfills their roles and responsibilities and how they can do it better.

Trustees have a complex and demanding job. Self-evaluation helps Trustees learn more about their roles and responsibilities, and looks for positive ways to challenge them to become more effective.

The Board self-evaluation can include questions and ratings such as the ones in the chart on the next two pages. Trustees can rate these questions and use the information to identify what actions to take to become more effective.



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Statements	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Not applicable
1) The Board has documents that explain the Trustees' roles and responsibilities.				
2) The Board has developed by-laws and policies that provide direction for Trustees about a code of conduct, conflict of interest, complaints, statements to the media and public, number of meetings per year.				
3) Trustees and the CEO follow procedures to effectively follow-up the decisions they make at a board meeting.				
4) Trustees understand the values, vision, and mission of the Authority.				
5) Trustees reviewed the Authority's values, vision, and mission within the last three years.				
6) The Board has a strategic plan in place and follows it.				
7) The Board monitors the progress of the strategic plan.				
8) The Board regularly monitors programs and services to ensure they meet government quality standards.				



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Statements	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Not applicable
9) Trustees follow through on their commitments.				
10) Trustees get effective input from the people in their area.				
11) Trustees are aware of how the Authority deals with community information and complaints.				
12) The Board regularly communicates with the public about the Authority's mission, programs, and services.				
13) The Board regularly reviews financial reports and the Authority's financial position.				
14) The Board is confident that the CEO has the controls, procedures, and resources to manage financial risks.				
15) The Board of Trustees ensures the Authority follows labour standards, human rights legislation, and workplace safety standards.				





Being accountable as a Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees has a legal and moral duty to report to the Minister of Health and Social Services and to the people in the area they serve.

The Board of Trustees reports to the Minister about the following:

- ✓ The strategic plan
- ✓ Business and operational plans
- ✓ The annual budget
- ✓ Evaluations of programs and services
- ✓ Needs and priorities of their area

The Boards of Trustees communicates with the public in a way they can understand and use the information, about the following:

- ✓ Programs and services
- ✓ The strategic plan
- ✓ Progress on the achievement of the goals identified in the strategic plan
- ✓ New initiatives
- ✓ Issues and challenges

See Appendix E, the NWT Health and Social Services System Accountability Framework, for more details on accountability.





The Joint Leadership Committee and Joint Senior Management Committee

Joint Leadership Committee

The Joint Leadership Committee (JLC) includes the Deputy Minister and the Minister of Health and Social Services, and the Chairperson of each Authority. The Minister formed the JLC to support a shared approach to managing the NWT health and social services system (HSS).

The Joint Leadership Committee's mandate is to:

- ✓ Describe a vision to develop and operate a sustainable health and social services system.
- ✓ Oversee the implementation of any major reforms to the HSS system.
- ✓ Set a direction to plan for system-wide initiatives and issues.
- ✓ Review and recommend approval of any system-wide plans, activity reports, and results information.
- ✓ Provide advice to the Minister on matters related to health and social services.
- ✓ Direct the development and implementation of cooperative initiatives.
- ✓ Share information on health and social services issues, concerns, and best practices.



- ✓ Provide direction the Joint Senior Management Committee (JSMC).
- ✓ Direct the development, review, and recommended approval of JSMC reports.

Each Chairperson communicates with their Trustees, before and after JLC meetings, about the things they discussed and decisions they made.

Joint Senior Management Committee

The Joint Senior Management Committee (JSMC) includes the Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services, members of the Department's Executive Committee, and the CEO of each Authority.

The Joint Senior Management Committee's mandate is to:

- ✓ Ensure the health and social services system operates effectively as a single, integrated delivery system.
- ✓ Provide a forum to plan collectively, to analyze issues, and to develop action plans and recommendations.
- ✓ Coordinate system-wide activities, including service delivery approaches, business and operational planning, and administrative support.
- ✓ Provide analytical and planning support to the Joint Leadership Council.
- ✓ Share relevant information about the health and social services system.
- ✓ Coordinate and liaise with other HSS stakeholders at the national and territorial levels.





Trustees' professional development

Professional development helps Trustees carry out their roles and responsibilities to the best of their abilities. Trustees have a complex and demanding job. Most people have good skills in some areas and lack skills in other areas. Professional development offers Trustees a chance to develop new skills and build on skills they already have.

Some common professional development areas are:

- ✓ Governance
- ✓ Team building
- ✓ Legislation that governs programs and services the Authority delivers, such as the Child and Family Services Act and the Mental Health Act
- ✓ Information about best practices to deliver a program or service
- ✓ Information about different options to deliver a program or service, such as addictions services
- ✓ How to connect with the communities the Authority serves

Some professional development sessions involve all Trustees on the Board, other sessions may involve just part of the Board. Individual Trustees may also do training to develop a specific skill.



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Spears, Larry C. (editor). 1998. *The Power of Servant Leadership*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publisher, Inc.

NWT Non-insured Health Benefits website:
www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca/Features/Programs_and_Services/nihb/nhib.htm





“A Board ... must keep its ear to the ground, its eyes on the horizon, its feet in motion, and its heart in the right place.”

*(from Weaving Through the Community:
Becoming a Responsive Board)*

**Our children will be born healthy,
and raised in a safe family and
community environment that
supports them to lead long,
productive, and happy lives.**

*The Vision Statement of the Department of Health and Social
Services, Government of the NWT*

