
Family Health Teams

Advancing Family Health Care

Guide to Governance and Accountability

Updated July 2009
Version 3.0

Table of Contents

Purpose	3
Definitions	3
Introduction	3
Common Responsibilities of Family Health Team Governance and Accountability.....	3
1. Strategic Planning.....	3
2. Financial Management	4
3. Human Resource Management.....	4
4. Risk Management.....	4
5. Accountability	4
6. Dispute Resolution	5
Governance Frameworks.....	5
Community-based Family Health Team	5
Provider-based Family Health Team.....	5
Mix of Community- and Provider-based Family Health Team.....	6
Funding Assistance.....	6
Where to Get More Information.....	6
List of Resources	7
Appendix – Legal Arrangements & Governance Frameworks: Examples	9
Governing Your Family Health Team: A Checklist.....	10

Purpose

This guide will provide groups that are interested in forming Family Health Teams with basic information on the elements of governance and accountability that must be addressed when forming a Family Health Team.

The information in this document is intended only as a guide. Groups should obtain independent legal and financial advice, as necessary.

Definitions

- **Governance** is the way we organize ourselves to do our work, formally or informally, in any social or organizational environment. Governance refers to the authority and responsibility of making decisions and taking action. It is comprised of the structure and processes used to direct or “govern” the affairs of an organization. A governance structure defines the manner in which affairs of an organization are managed and supervised, and provides a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities.
- **Accountability** is the obligation to answer for results on matters you are responsible for. For Family Health Teams, this means internal accountability, meeting enrolment and service expectations, monitoring results achieved, and taking corrective action where necessary.

What is the relationship between governance and accountability?

Governance and accountability are related concepts. The governing body of an organization is accountable for the organization’s performance.

Introduction

The elements of effective governance and accountability are not unique to Family Health Teams – they are shared by all organizations, large and small.

Some Family Health Teams may be formed from existing organizations that may include provider groups already linked through partnership agreements, professional or non-profit corporations, or contracts of association – each with their own governance framework. Other Family Health Teams may be established by groups working together for the first time without any existing governance agreements. Regardless, each Family Health Team must establish a single non-profit corporation.

No single model will work for every Family Health Team. However, groups should adopt and adapt general guidelines for individual Family Health Teams to ensure that the six common responsibilities of governance and accountability described in the following section are addressed.

Common Responsibilities of Family Health Team Governance and Accountability

1. Strategic Planning

Philosophy and Approach to Services

Both provider- and community-based groups will need to consider how the vision and mandate of the Family Health Team will be addressed. Teams will have an obligation to ensure that all health care disciplines involved in a Family Health Team have a voice in its operation and that the Family Health Team as a whole is responsive to the health needs of its local community.

Selecting a Name for your Family Health Team

In choosing a name for your team, you should consider one that reflects the community that the team will serve. The name of the Family Health Team will be used in your communications to patients and other providers. The ministry requires that the name includes the following words “Family Health Team” in the non-profit corporation’s name. Please refer to the ministry’s Visual Identity Guidelines and *Guide to Communications* on our website.

2. Financial Management

Budgeting – Operating and One-time Funding

Follow the process for preparing and approving budgets for submission developed by the ministry, outlining projected one-time and operating expenses.

Internal Control

Develop a system to maintain documentation and information to support receipt of revenues and expenditures, including books of account and related records, and financial management control.

Audit

Submit audited financial statements, as required by your agreement with the ministry. As well, books of account, financial records, electronic transaction logs, and enrolment forms are all subject to audit by the ministry.

3. Human Resource Management

Establish mechanisms to address matters that include the addition, voluntary withdrawal and termination of health-care providers and staff.

4. Risk Management

Ensure that the appropriate risk management mechanisms, including appropriate insurance coverage, are in place in accordance with ministry requirements.

5. Accountability

Organizational Structure

Develop an organizational structure that defines the roles, responsibilities and reporting relationships within the Family Health Team.

Roles and Responsibilities

Develop, document and communicate roles and responsibilities to all team members. These include:

- a. *Signing Authority*
Select signing authorities for banking and other items, including reports to the government.
- b. *Information Technology Management*
Utilize electronic medical records and enhanced decision support tools (see the *Guide to Information Technology*) and develop policies to address Information Technology (IT) management and responsibility.
- c. *Patient Record Management*
The Family Health Team must establish policies regarding their management of patient health information as well as safekeeping and disposal of patient records. All Family Health Team providers, staff and their agents should be aware of privacy legislation, including the applicability of the *Personal Health Information Protection Act* (PHIPA). For more information on the PHIPA legislation, providers should contact their professional association/college and/or visit the ministry’s website at:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/legislation/bill_31/personal_info.html .

For more information on the roles of health professionals within a Family Health Team, please refer to the *Guide to Interdisciplinary Team Roles and Responsibilities*.

Monitoring and Adjusting Procedures

The ministry holds funding recipients accountable for applying funds received in accordance with the terms and conditions of their funding agreements, including accurate and timely reporting. Effective accountability requires that there be reporting on, and monitoring of, performance in relation to the services that are being funded. Some adjustments may be required to ensure consistency with the Family Health Team proposal, its annual budget, or pursuant to ministry direction.

6. Dispute Resolution

The Family Health Team will need to adopt a process for dispute resolution that may arise among members of the Family Health Team with respect to the Family Health Team's internal management. The ministry accepts no role or responsibility in your Family Health Team's human resource and internal management dispute issues. It is important that you establish sound mechanisms, with the assistance of your legal counsel, to avoid or mitigate possible complications.

Governance Frameworks

Family Health Teams may establish themselves as community-based, provider-based or a mix of community- and provider-based groups (see Appendix – Figure 1). Each Family Health Team must be a registered non-profit corporation governed by a Board of Directors.

Community-based Family Health Team

Community-based Family Health Teams will include local community representation.

A Family Health Team may find it helpful to establish a community advisory committee to assist their Board of Directors.

Hospitals may participate in a community-based Family Health Team and be represented on the Board of the Family Health Team but should not have a direct or indirect controlling interest on the Family Health Team Board. By nature of their incorporation, the Family Health Team and sponsoring hospital will have separate, distinct, business operations.

However, under certain exceptional circumstances, hospital-sponsored Family Health Teams in small, single, hospital-provider communities that demonstrate that there is no other alternative governance option available in the community may have the option to allow the hospital Board to play a more direct role in the governance of the Family Health Team. Eligible groups that are interested in this option will be required to meet enhanced accountability requirements with respect to Family Health Team resources, community and provider representation, patient access, and compliance with applicable legislation prior to ministry approval of this governance arrangement. Groups considering this option should ensure that the physicians participating in their Family Health Team are aware of the proposed governance structure and are in agreement with this arrangement. Family Health Teams that are interested in this community hospital-based governance option should consult with their ministry contact for more information.

Provider-based Family Health Team

Provider-based Family Health Teams are comprised of a Board of Directors, typically from the same profession governed by the *Regulated Health Professions Act* (RHPA).

Provider groups may consider the option of establishing a community advisory committee to provide advice as needed.

Mix of Community- and Provider-based Family Health Team

A mix of community and provider-based groups may establish a Family Health Team. These groups must come together as a non-profit corporation, governed by a Board of Directors.

Some mixed community and provider-based Family Health Teams may choose to consider the option of establishing a community advisory committee to provide advice as needed.

Each group will determine which governance structure best suits its needs. All governance structures share the requirement to develop processes for dealing with the six common responsibilities of governance and accountability described in the previous section, “Common Responsibilities of Family Health Team Governance and Accountability.”

Funding Assistance

Developmental funding, as appropriate, will be available to assist eligible groups that are interested in forming a Family Health Team (see the *Guide for Development Grant Application*). This funding will be available for such things as program planning, developing a business case, and establishing a governance structure.

Where to Get More Information

Groups interested in forming a Family Health Team may find it helpful to talk to each other, as well as those involved in existing primary care models or Family Health Teams approved earlier and that are now operational.

Additional information pertaining to governance may be available through your professional college or association (refer to “List of Resources” on page 7).

All potential Family Health Teams who have received conditional approval to proceed to the Formative Stage, will be assigned a ministry contact. This ministry contact will be your guide to assist you to work through the details and options of establishing a Family Health Team.

If you have not yet been assigned a ministry contact, please refer to the ministry’s website at: www.health.gov.on.ca/familyhealthteams for contact information. Additional information on Family Health Teams, in general, is also available at this website.

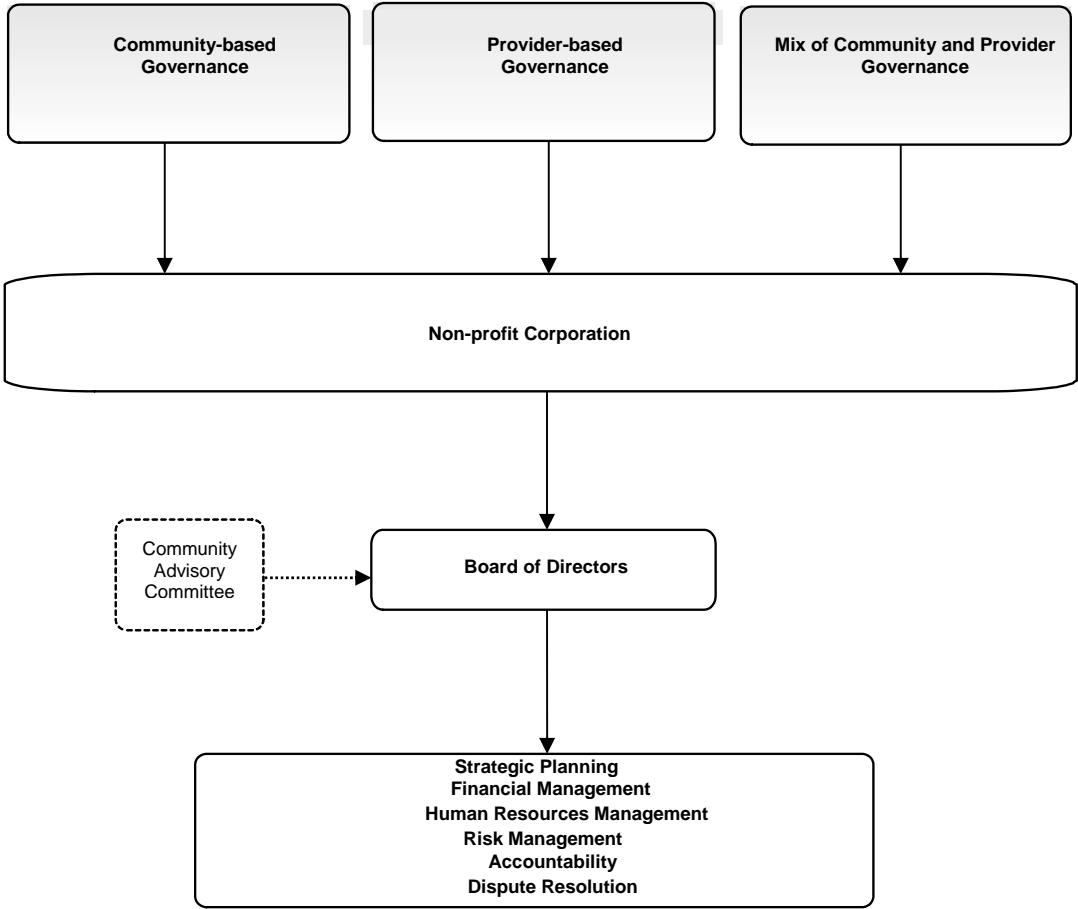
List of Resources

Providers	Professional Associations	Regulatory Colleges
Physicians	<p>Ontario Medical Association T: 416-599-2580 or 1-800-268-7215 http://www.oma.org</p> <p>Canadian Medical Association T: 1-800-457-4205 http://www.cma.ca</p>	<p>Ontario College of Family Physicians T: 416-867-9646 http://www.ocfp.on.ca</p> <p>College of Family Physicians of Canada T: 905-629-0900 http://www.cfpc.ca</p> <p>College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario T: 416-967-2603 or 1-800-268-7096 x 603 http://www.cpsso.on.ca/</p>
Nurses	<p>Canadian Nurses Association T: 613-237-2133 or 1-800-361-8404 http://www.cna-nurses.ca</p> <p>Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario T: 905-602-4664 http://www.rpnao.org</p>	<p>College of Nurses of Ontario T: 416-928-0900 or 1-800-387-5526 http://www.cno.org</p>
Dietitians / Nutritionists	<p>Dietitians of Canada T: 416-596-0857 http://www.dietitians.ca</p>	<p>College of Dietitians of Ontario T: 416-598-1725 or 1-800-668-4990 http://www.cdo.on.ca</p>
Pharmacists	<p>Ontario Pharmacists Association T: 416-441-0788 or 1-877-341-0788 http://www.opatoday.com</p> <p>Canadian Pharmacists Association T: 613-523-7877 or 1-800-917-9489 http://www.pharmacists.ca</p>	<p>Ontario College of Pharmacists T: 416-962-4861 or 1-800-220-1921 http://www.ocpinfo.com</p>
Social Workers	<p>Ontario Association of Social Workers T: 416-923-4848 http://www.oasw.org</p>	<p>Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers T: 416-972-9882 or 1-877-828-9380 http://www.ocswssw.org</p>

Providers	Professional Associations	Regulatory Colleges
	Canadian Association of Social Workers T: 613-729-6668 http://www.casw-acts.ca	
Psychologists	Ontario Psychological Association T: 416-961-5552 http://www.psych.on.ca Canadian Psychological Association T: 613-237-2144 or 1-888-472-0657 http://cpa.ca	College of Psychologists of Ontario T: 416-961-8817 or 1-800-489-8388 http://www.cpo.on.ca
Addictions Counsellors	Canadian Addiction Counsellors Certification Federation / Federation Canadienne D'agrément des Conseillers en Toxicomanie T: 519-772-0533 or 1-866-624-1911 http://www.caccb.ca Canadian Problem Gambling Certification Board T: 519-739-2465 or 1-877-421-1181 http://www.cpgcb.ca Centre for Addiction and Mental Health T: 416-535-8501 or 1-800-463-6273 http://www.camh.net	
Community Mental Health Workers	Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario T: 416-977-5580 or 1-800-875-6213 http://www.ontario.cmha.ca/index.asp	
Quality Improvement and Innovation Partnership	Quality Improvement and Innovation Partnership T: 905-667-0770 www.qiip.ca	
Ontario Health Centres	Association of Ontario Health Centres T: 416-236-2539 http://www.aohc.org	

Appendix – Legal Arrangements & Governance Frameworks: Examples

Figure 1: Examples of Possible Legal Arrangements and Governance Frameworks for Family Health Teams



Governing Your Family Health Team: A Checklist

Determine the type of Family Health Team

- a. Community-based group;
- b. Provider-based group; or
- c. Mix of Community- and Provider-based groups.

Who can participate?

- *Community groups*: local community-based service organizations, hospitals, provincial charities, municipalities and municipal-level agencies, or any combination;
- *Provider groups*: professions governed by the RHPA; and
- *Mixed groups*: mix of community- and provider-based groups

Incorporate as a registered non-profit corporation

Determine your governance framework

- a. Board of Directors; and
- b. Community Advisory Committee (optional).

Ensure that governance responsibilities are addressed

- a. Strategic Planning;
- b. Financial Management;
- c. Human Resource Management
- d. Risk Management
- e. Accountability; and
- f. Dispute Resolution.

Where can I get more information?

Please consult with your ministry contact, link into the ministry's website at:

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/familyhealthteams> or contact your professional college or association.