

Governance Fundamentals

Stakeholder Relations

Table of Contents

- 1 Stakeholder Relations.....1**
- 1.1 Engagement 1**
- 1.1.1 The board’s role in helping to identify stakeholders..... 2
- 1.1.2 The board’s role in reaching out to stakeholders..... 2
- 1.1.3 The board’s role in monitoring stakeholder relationships 3
- 1.1.4 The board’s role in reporting to stakeholders..... 3

 in this section indicate that this governance practice is assessed under the [Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care’s Accountability Reform requirements](#) for expanded budget flexibility.

1 Stakeholder Relations

1.1 Engagement

Your organization’s success depends heavily on the relationships it develops within your community. Those people, agencies, businesses, and funders that have an interest in your organization are your external stakeholders (employees are also stakeholders, but the focus of this section is on external stakeholders). Your organization’s ability to engage with and relate positively to these groups and individuals is critical to the achievement of your mission. It is also an important element in establishing and maintaining a good reputation within your community.

There is an expectation by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care that Family Health Teams and Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics will establish and maintain strong partnerships with community stakeholders. As providers of primary health care services, FHTs and NPLCs have an important role to play in improving patient care by participating in integrated solutions such as Health Links initiatives that focus on care for complex

patients. Many FHTs and NPLCs, particularly those in rural and northern communities, are part of “health hubs” that connect a number of providers to support comprehensive care. The various providers in these hubs are important stakeholders for FHTs and NPLCs. FHTs are required to report annually to the Ministry on the status of their community partnerships and efforts to improve the integration and coordination of patient care.

Taking care of stakeholders and managing those relationships is a combined board and staff role. The board is responsible for identifying key stakeholders as well as nurturing and monitoring relationships with stakeholders. And remember that different issues have different stakeholders

In this section you will find information on:

- The board’s role in helping to identify stakeholders
- The board’s role in reaching out to stakeholders
- The board’s role in monitoring stakeholder relationships
- The board’s role in reporting to stakeholders

1.1.1 The board’s role in helping to identify stakeholders

Stakeholders are the people who have an interest in your organization successfully achieving your mission – those who are directly affected by your work. This includes your patients/clients, other agencies and professionals with whom you partner to deliver care, community leaders, the local hospital, your bank, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, your suppliers, the LHIN etc. The perspective, concerns and positive participation of these external stakeholders are important to the viability of your organization.

The board should identify and focus on priority stakeholders – those with the greatest importance to the organization, those with the most influence within the community, and those with the greatest access to your organization.

The LHIN, with its mandate for integration, and the evolution of Health Links and Primary Care Networks, is an increasingly important stakeholder for your FHT/NPLC to connect with.

1.1.2 The board’s role in reaching out to stakeholders

The board should ensure that the organization has a strategy for communicating with and engaging its stakeholders. Board members also play a role in direct outreach to stakeholders through community forums, presentations, and personal contact. Boards

that are community or mixed in composition may have an advantage in this regard, as their community board members can serve as valuable conduits of information ([see Dr. Rob Annis interview](#)). It can be a good idea for an organization to have a policy on stakeholder engagement, even if it is a simple one, as it will help clarify the responsibilities of the board, especially the chair, relative to the executive director.

1.1.3 The board's role in monitoring stakeholder relationships

The board has a role to play in regularly monitoring stakeholder relationships. The board should consider whether the priority stakeholders are satisfied with the work of the organizations. To effectively monitor relationships and manage any risks to reputation, the board will want to ensure that there are processes in place to identify potential risks, evaluate satisfaction, and receive and resolve complaints. The board should regularly receive and review reports from the executive director on satisfaction and complaints and oversee the development of strategies for dealing with issues that arise.

1.1.4 The board's role in reporting to stakeholders

Keeping your stakeholders informed about your organization's activities and priorities is an important aspect of engagement. There are several ways you can do this. Consider posting regular updates and news on your website, distribute your annual report broadly to stakeholders, use community forums as opportunities to talk about your organization, keep copies of your annual report in the waiting room. Your board may also want to consider holding open board meetings that your stakeholders can attend, and/or posting your board minutes on your web site. Increased transparency is a leading governance practice that helps your FHT/NPLC to communicate with its partners and that creates confidence in your board and organization.



Resources and references

[Stakeholder and community relations](#)- interview with Dr. Joseph Lee



Questions to consider

1. Who do you see as the key stakeholders for your FHT or NPLC? What are the ways in which you engage these stakeholders? How do you communicate or meet with them to understand their views on current issues and priorities?

2. As Family Health Teams and NPLCs are developing and maturing, many are beginning to look outside of their own organizations, to work in partnership with community agencies and providers. What do you see as the benefits and risks of this transition? As a Board do you feel confident in your ability to oversee stakeholder relations?
3. As your FHT/NPLC becomes more involved in partnerships and collaboration with diverse stakeholders, what does that mean for the Board and the organization? Does it require more openness, greater transparency, more public reporting? Does your Board and your organization have the capacity to manage this?