

	Policy/Procedure Name:	Board Orientation and Education
Manual: Governance	Number:	
Section: Board Effectiveness	Effective Date:	01 SEPT 2011
Pages: 1 of 5	Revision Date:	13 FEB 2025

Purpose

To provide a Board orientation program and ongoing education for Directors to ensure effective governance and to foster continuous governance improvement.

Scope

The policy pertains to Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare (MAHC) Board of Directors and Committee Appointee Members.

Orientation

The Corporation shall dedicate appropriate resources in order to orient new Directors and Committee Appointee Members to the Corporation, current health care issues, and their respective roles .

Each new Director and Committee Appointee Member will participate in the orientation program. The Governance Committee shall be responsible for the orientation of new Directors and Committee Appointee Members.

The orientation program will be initiated as soon as possible after the appointment of a Director or Committee Appointee Member and will include at a minimum:

- **Reference Manual:** Content will include legal documents, information on the Corporation including Board policies and Ministry of Health information. The manual will be updated annually.
- **Mentoring:** The Board Chair, consultation with the Nominations Committee, will pair each new Director with a mentor on the Board. The mentor may attend orientation sessions with their mentees, sit with them at Board meetings, ask if the information presented was clear, and answer any questions they may have about the meeting. In the event a mentor cannot be identified, the board chair or vice chair shall assume such role. **Tours:** of the Corporation’s Hospital sites with the President and Chief Executive Officer or their designate;
- **Orientation Session(s):** In-person interactive session(s) are to be scheduled following the first regular Board of Directors meeting in a regular cycle. The sessions will outline information including:
 - an introduction to the Corporation;

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- an overview of governance roles and responsibilities and the Board/staff relationship;
- an overview of the Corporation’s by-laws and applicable law;
- an overview of performance status and future challenges with regards to funding, quality and utilization, benchmarking, and performance indicators and accreditation; and
- an overview of the Corporation’s relationships with health system partners.

The chair of each Committee is expected to take an active role in the orientation session(s), specifically with respect to the mandate and the Terms of Reference of the Committee for which they chair. Incumbent Directors will also be invited and encouraged to attend.

The orientation program may also include additional internal and external resources and expertise that may be made available to support the program (e.g. the Corporation’s staff to present and provide an introduction to issues in their area, external speakers, attendance at Corporation sponsored events, etc.)

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- **Internal and External Resources:** Additional resources and expertise may be made available to support the orientation program (e.g. the Corporation’s staff to present and provide an introduction to issues in their area, external speakers, attendance at Corporation sponsored events, etc.)

Participants will evaluate the orientation program on completion using a standard form (Schedule “A”).

Education

The Board recognizes that the continuing education of its Directors is an important requirement of effective governance and that it is essential that Directors be fully informed with respect to the background and context of the issues they are called upon to address. A firm commitment to continuing education is the responsibility of each Director and a factor to be considered in the election or re-election of a Director.

An ongoing Board education program will be established each year that is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Board for that year. It is expected that each Director will participate in the ongoing education process.

Components of the ongoing education process may include:

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- **Assessment of Development Needs:** The Governance Committee will annually canvas Directors to identify their development needs. Mechanisms to identify those needs may include: survey of Directors; feedback on previous education sessions; questionnaires; feedback from Directors’ self-evaluations; and general discussion.
- **Presentations at Board Meetings:** The Governance Committee, which includes involvement of the President and Chief Executive Officer, will develop an annual program of information/education presentations which may be included as part of the Board’s regular meetings or presented at scheduled times as the Board may direct.
- **External Education Sessions and Programs:** Directors are encouraged to participate in educational opportunities offered by the Ontario Hospital Association or other organizations with prior approval of the Board Chair. Reasonable expenses of attending and/or participating in such events will be reimbursed according to established policy.
- **Knowledge Reporting:** Directors are required to report back at the appropriate Board or Committee meeting to share information and best practices learned at external education sessions.
- **Annual Board Retreat:** The annual Board retreat shall be coordinated through the Governance Committee. At each retreat, the Corporation’s strategic plan will be reviewed to ensure that progress is being made toward its achievement. Additionally, the retreat should focus on other relevant areas within the Board roles and responsibilities, reflecting the Board’s annual work plan. The retreat should be conducted at a reasonable cost, and with clear deliverables.

Monitoring of Director and Committee Appointee Member participation at both internal and external education sessions and programs will be kept through a record of meeting attendance. This record will be provided to the Governance Committee for performance evaluations and to the Nominations Committee to consider when recommending incumbent Directors for re-election.

Cross References

Evaluations, Board of Directors Policy

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Notes

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Appendices

Schedule A – Orientation Program Evaluation

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Schedule A – Orientation Program Evaluation

This evaluation will be provided to all Directors and Committee Appointee Members participating in the program at the Orientation session.

Indicator	Yes	No	Comments
1. The information provided during the session regarding the Board’s governance role and responsibilities was appropriate.			
2. The information provided during the session regarding MAHC’s operations, organizational chart and strategic directions was appropriate.			
3. The information provided during the session regarding MAHC’s partnerships was appropriate.			
4. The information provided during the session regarding the health care industry was appropriate.			
5. The orientation was effective in preparing you to become engaged as a Director as quickly as possible.			
6. Are there any specific topics that would have valuable to have been covered, but were not during the orientation process.			
7. Have you been given the opportunity to meet with your assigned mentor.			
8. Do you have any suggestions for changes to the mentorship program.			
Please provide comments and feedback regarding the key strengths and weaknesses of the orientation process as well as any further feedback to improve the orientation program.			

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