



Succession Planning PCN Boards

A PRACTICAL GUIDEBOOK AND APPROACH FOR
BOARD RENEWAL AND LEADERSHIP CONTINUITY

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	4
SUCCESSION PLANNING BASICS	5
What is it?.....	5
Why is it important?	5
SUCCESSION PLANNING FOR PCN BOARD CONTINUITY AND RENEWAL	7
Today’s challenge for PCNs	7
Who is responsible for succession planning.....	7
STAGE ONE: ASSESS NEEDS AND PLAN FOR RENEWAL.....	9
Setting the Stage.....	10
Develop a competency-based succession plan	11
Step 1: Identify critical positions	11
Step 2: Identify desired competencies in a board profile.....	12
Step 3: Define strategies to identify and develop future leaders	12
Step 4: Document the succession plan	15
STAGE TWO: ACTION THE PLAN	17
The Challenge of Board Renewal.....	18
Bringing New Members on Board.....	18
Step 1. Review profile of the current Board	18
Step 2. Communicate the process.....	19
Step 3. Develop a list of prospective candidates.....	19
Step 4. Establish contact with potential candidates.....	19
Step 5. Evaluate candidates	20
Step 6. Appointment or election of new members	21
STAGE THREE: TRANSITION AND DEVELOP NEW MEMBERS	23
Board Orientation	24
Ongoing training and learning	25
Ongoing engagement	25
Recognition of time and commitment	26
STAGE FOUR: ONGOING EVALUATION AND BOARD DEVELOPMENT	27
Review and refine the process	28
Board evaluation for continual improvement	28
Who should evaluate the Board?	29
What to do with your assessment results?	29
What is ongoing “board development”?	29
APPENDIX ONE: BOARD SKILLS COMPETENCY MATRIX	31
APPENDIX TWO: BOARD SUCCESSION PLANNING TEMPLATE	35



Introduction

About this Guidebook

For primary care networks (PCNs) to reach their full potential as vehicles to deliver and improve primary care in Alberta, they need strong and skilled leadership at the board, committee and executive levels.

Recruiting, developing and retaining appropriate individuals to serve in leadership roles is a difficult and requires substantial investment of time and effort but it is critical to the success of an organization in achieving its mission and vision.

Succession planning is the process by which an organization thoughtfully builds, sustains, develops and protects its leadership capacity in both the short-term and long-term. This includes planned renewal of its board and committee members and mitigation of the risks to organizational continuity due to the loss of key leaders.

The continuing leadership growth and renewal cycle for the lifespan of any organization includes:

1. Identifying the current and future leadership needs of the organization
2. Recruiting talented individuals that align with those needs.
3. Transitioning new leaders into their roles and continued leadership development.
4. Ongoing evaluation and improvement of the organization's leadership effectiveness.

To remain strong and credible in the future, PCNs must embrace a different approach around governance representation and board renewal.

This guidebook has been designed to provide guidance to all PCNs (whether Legal Model I or II) in each of the four stages as they continue to mature as organizations.

The implementation of the four-stage process proposed in this guidebook will make recruitment and talent development a year-round process.

Board/Committee vs. Executive Leadership Succession Planning

As part of good governance, there are a number of leadership positions which should be considered for succession planning. These may include all or some of the following: the Board of Directors, Joint Governance Committee, key PCN committees, Executive Director, Medical Director or other PCN senior management positions.

While at a high level the stages of succession planning are the same, **this guidebook focuses on succession planning for boards and committees.** A companion document for succession planning for key operational staff is also available for those PCNs interested.

Throughout the guidebook, the term “board” is used to refer to both board and committee structures within a PCN. While the degree of formality and legal requirements may differ between a board and a committee, the process for renewal is essentially the same.

A note about implementation

This guidebook is just that – a “guidebook” on best practice and it is not intended that all steps and processes need to be implemented immediately. To be successful, each PCN needs to build on its current practices and keep evolving as resources and time allow. This tool will serve as a guidepost on best practice.

A smaller PCN may approach succession planning with less formality, simplifying the activities to be appropriate for their context, however, the key stages and the process of reflection and strategic thought about Board function is relevant and of value for *all* PCNs.

“A good plan executed today is better than a perfect plan executed tomorrow.”

George Patton

Succession Planning Basics

What is it?

Succession planning is the process of identifying long-range future needs of the organization and finding, assessing and developing the human capital necessary to achieve the organization's strategy and provide continuity during times of transition – both planned and unplanned.

It is a vital component of good human resource planning and management. It acknowledges that any human resource will not be with an organization indefinitely and it provides a plan and process for addressing the departure in advance of its occurrence.

“Succession planning helps build the bench strength of an organization to ensure the long-term health, growth and stability.”

Teala Wilson

The tangible product is a succession plan document and policies and processes that support implementation of the plan but the hidden value is the process of succession planning which causes the organization to conduct an evaluation of where it is at and where it wants to go from a people perspective.



Why is it important?

Planning in advance for leadership change is part of good governance. It provides a valuable “insurance policy” as it reduces the organizations risk of losing continuity and momentum when a key leader leaves

Finally, succession planning involves the development of focused strategies to enable future strategic growth of the organization.

In the case of a representative board, a transparent and intentional process is also part of good member engagement and strengthening the credibility of the Board.

Benefits of good succession planning include:

- Ensuring that the business can continue to run when any key leadership position leaves unexpectedly
- Develops a “pipeline” of qualified, motivated people who are prepared to take over when key leaders leave
- Ensuring an alignment between the organization’s mandate and leadership continuity for the associated strategic priorities
- A commitment to developing (mentor) new leaders
- Creating a reputation that the organization invests in its people and provides opportunities and support for advancement

One person’s failure to plan eventually becomes someone else’s emergency.

If the PCN is to provide the level of representation and leadership to their member physicians and influence the future of primary care delivery in Alberta now and in the future, it is important for the Board to ensure that it is well-positioned to play that role effectively.

A society grows great
when old men plant trees
whose shade they know
they shall never sit in.

Greek Proverb

A Practical Approach to PCN Board Succession Planning

Assess and Plan

Lay the foundation
and assess skills
needed

Action the Plan

Recruit and
install candidates
via a clear process

Transition Successfully

Set new members
up for success and
support continued
growth and
development.

Evaluate and Renew

Foster continuous
Board development
and improvement



Succession Planning for PCN Board Continuity and Renewal

Today's challenge for PCNs

Having an engaged, effective board, committed to its purpose and guided by a compelling vision, is perhaps the greatest asset of any not-for-profit organization. Alberta's primary care networks (PCNs) are no different.

To ensure PCNs remain a credible voice for primary care delivery and innovation, PCNs need a strong leadership team that represents the diversity of its members and has the required skills and competencies to lead the way.

While many PCNs have had highly dedicated individuals who have worked tirelessly on behalf of their fellow physicians, many have been in place since the PCN's inception and board renewal is required to inject new ideas, energy and continue the momentum and life of PCNs.

For many, it has been an ongoing frustration attempting to recruit new physicians to get involved to share both the responsibility and investment in the future of primary health care. Particularly in an environment of change fatigue in primary care, apathy can set in and too often the few who step up to the plate get overcommitted and can become frustrated and tired, eventually opting out.

Furthermore, those who step up to the plate are often not well supported, getting little or no orientation, and often feel overwhelmed by the knowledge and time needed to master the complex issues they are asked to address

Filling board or committee positions "by chance" or resorting to informal recruitment strategies such as appointing like-minded friends or colleagues will not ensure that the organization has the right mix of diversity, skills and knowledge required. Failure to achieve this diversity and representation can have repercussions in terms of poor engagement by the broader physician membership and loss of credibility of the Board to be a representative authority.

Who is responsible for succession planning?

While an Executive Director or Board Secretary may perform many of the administrative activities related to succession planning and assist the Board with the plan, the responsibility resides firmly with the Board itself.

The Alberta Medical Association's Practice Management Program (PMP) is available to provide guidance and advice to PCN Boards on succession planning.

A Four Stage Model for Succession Planning

Succession planning isn't a one-time activity that you can check off and forget. It requires an ongoing commitment to remain current and relevant. The four stage model for Board renewal presented in this guidebook is a cyclical process that emphasizes ongoing improvement and continual refinement.

Some of the activities relating to establishing initial structures, processes and documentation are most time intensive the first time through the cycle and, once in place, are reviewed regularly but not necessarily redone.

Let's get started!

Four Stage Model for PCN Board Succession Planning

Implement new policy or article changes to support board renewal processes

Establish a Nominations (Board Development) Committee

Develop board position descriptions

Identify critical positions for succession

Identify desired competencies and future board requirements

Define strategies to identify and develop future leaders

Document the succession plan

1
Assess
and Plan

Identify upcoming vacancies and review the Board Profile Matrix to assess gaps in the current board

Communicate the nomination and election processes

Develop list of prospective candidates

Establish contact with potential candidates

Evaluate candidates against the Board Profile Matrix

Conduct elections or appoint new members

2
Action
the Plan

4
Evaluate
and Renew

3
Transition
Successfully

Conduct board orientation sessions

Develop a Board Orientation Handbook

Provide opportunities for ongoing training and learning

Provide a means for ongoing engagement and two-way communication

Recognize board members' commitment and time investment

Review and adjust succession plan and processes

Conduct board assessment

Discuss assessment results and develop action plan for upcoming year

Engage in continued board development activities



Stage One

Assess and Plan

Key Activities

- Set the stage for succession planning activities:
 - Implement new policy or Article changes to support board renewal processes
 - Establish a Nominations (Board Development) Committee
 - Develop Board position descriptions
- Develop a competency based succession plan:
 - Identify critical positions for succession
 - Identify desired competencies and future board requirements in a Board Profile Matrix
 - Define strategies to identify and develop future leaders
 - Document the succession plan for planned and unexpected vacancies



Stage 1: Assess Needs and Plan for Renewal

Planning to ensure the right skills are in place for the future.

Setting the Stage

Take stock of your current situation

Creating a solid foundation is one of the most critical steps in effective succession planning and board renewal. Without a strong foundation and a solid reputation in place it will be hard to recruit and retain the best leadership prospects.

To start, the Board needs to understand where they are currently at in order to design an appropriate board renewal process and effective communication and recruiting strategies.

Some key questions to consider include:

1. Do PCN-participating physicians understand the role, purpose and value of the PCN and, more specifically, the PCN Board?
2. In what way is the PCN viewed by its members as relevant and valued?
3. What is the PCN's track record for addressing its members' needs effectively and efficiently?
4. What kind of reputation does the PCN currently have for supporting and valuing its current Board members?
5. Does the PCN have a clear understanding why physicians are choosing not to participate in PCN governance or choose other leadership opportunities?
6. What kind of structural framework does the PCN have in place for the operation of its board (e.g., are all job/position descriptions up-to-date, valid and informative)?
7. Is there a dedicated group within the board that is devoted to looking at how to attract and solicit new people—a Nominations Committee?
8. Do you fully support those who choose to participate through an orientation and ongoing learning and development?
9. What do your current By-laws and Articles say about board composition, election and appointment processes, terms, etc.?
10. What can we learn from past board members in terms of attraction and retention? If they left before their term was up, what caused them to leave and is it something that could be improved or addressed?

Align structure and policies to support board renewal processes

Ensure the building blocks to allow for development of a new board renewal process are in place.

Articles of the Organization

The Articles of Incorporation should spell out the function and authority of the Board and the roles and responsibilities of specific positions including parameters such as who is eligible on the Board, term limits and board size and composition.

Nominations Committee / Board Development Committee

As succession planning is an ongoing process, it requires an active committee to guide the process. This may require an article change or board discussion to establish a committee to oversee the board/committee recruitment and nominations. A Terms of Reference document should also clearly spell out the role and mandate of the Nominations Committee and outline how it is empowered by the organization's board with the responsibility to search for the best.

Position descriptions for all board/committee director/positions

A position description or job description spells out the responsibilities of each board directorship or member and should focus on the most critical roles (President, Treasurer, etc.). Reviewing job/ position descriptions needs to occur at frequent enough intervals to ensure the descriptions are still valid and contain the correct mix of responsibilities and obligations.

Develop a competency-based succession plan

Best practice organizations have moved towards competency-based succession planning. Such an approach will provide the PCN Board with a structure and intentional process for recruiting and developing mature leaders that the PCN requires.

Before you can start building a succession plan you need to assess current board members' qualities and contributions. Some questions that need to be discussed and answered are:

1. What skills, attitudes and values do current members bring to their roles?
2. Are current members able to fulfill their commitments?
3. How are current members representative of the overall primary care physician community?
4. When do the terms of current members end?
5. What qualities, experience, perspectives and connections to the primary care physician community will be missing when these members leave?
6. What is required to restore or maintain the balance of qualities, experience, and perspectives on the Board?
7. Is the PCNs existing election process optimal or could it be improved?
8. Who will coordinate the recruitment, onboarding and ongoing development of new board members?
9. When should the recruitment and development of new board members take place?
10. How does your organization attract and keep effective board members?
11. How will the Board ensure that it is effective and positioned to provide strong leadership to its members, evolving and improving primary care in Alberta?

These are just a few of the questions to be considered by a board and illustrates that succession planning requires considered thought and focus.



Useful Tip

Staggered terms for Board members are recommended to ensure turnover in any given year is limited. The goal is to bring in new members with fresh new ideas and perspective while maintaining a thread of continuity with longer serving members who understand historical context and rationale for past board decisions, direction and experience.

Step 1: Identify critical positions

Most succession plans focus on the most senior position, however, all key positions that are crucial for the operations of the business and fulfillment of its mandate should be considered.

It cannot be stressed strongly enough that the identification of critical positions for succession planning purposes does not mean that only certain positions are considered important or valued. Succession planning seeks to identify the positions that are likely to be most negatively impacted by a sudden departure and those areas and resources that pose the biggest risks to the PCN's continued success and growth.

Considerations in identifying key critical positions:

- Which positions, if left vacant, would cause major difficulties in the PCN achieving current and future business goals?
- Which positions, if left vacant, would be detrimental to the image and credibility of PCN?
- Which positions would be difficult to fill because they require particular expertise and/or the incumbents possess a wealth of corporate knowledge?
- Is there a current or projected shortage of physicians with certain necessary skills who are willing to step forward and contribute?
- By managing the most critical risks first, the PCN will ensure that leadership continuity is in place to sustain the achievement of business results and the fulfillment of the PCN's mission

Step 2: Identify desired competencies in a board profile

The challenge for every leadership group is to bring the right mix of skills and experience together to provide balanced representation of the wide and diverse group that consists within most Physician Not-for-Profit Corporations.

It is important to identify the competencies needed for the PCNs most key positions. This will be instrumental for guiding the selection of prospective future volunteers as well as for developing learning plans to assist in further developing the skills of current and future board members.

Definition of Competencies

For the purposes of this guide, competencies consist of knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs).

This guide defines these terms as follows:

- Knowledge/Expertise is a body of information that allows a person to perform a task successfully (e.g., budgeting and accounting principles for someone serving as a Treasurer)
- Experience/Skill is an individual's level of proficiency in performing a specific task (e.g., statistical data manipulation in predicting outcomes for fee allocation changes)
- Personal Characteristics/Ability is more general than skill and refers to an enduring trait or capability in performing tasks (e.g., the ability to analyze, critically think, problem solve, etc.)

Competency profiles facilitate the alignment of succession planning and management with activities like recruitment and performance management, by using a common framework and language.

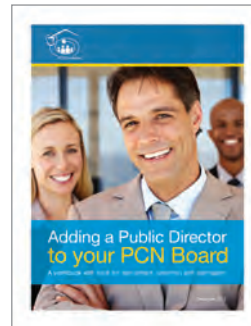
The existing and future competencies are documented through the Board Profile Matrix to identify where the current board has gaps and guides future recruiting activities.



BOARD PROFILE MATRIX TOOL IS LOCATED IN APPENDIX ONE

To assist PCNs assess existing capabilities/competencies and identify current and future gaps, a “Board Profile Matrix/Risk Assessment Tool” has been developed and is located in Appendix One. This tool needs to be continually evolved and updated with new skills and knowledge areas as the goals or activities of PCN change. The “tool” should also be applied at regular intervals (once each year) to ensure it is current and provides direction for recruitment efforts.

Keep in mind that some of the required competencies and skills required for the board may fall outside the competencies normally found within the physician community. This is where inclusion of a public board member can be very valuable. It must be stressed that as a non-clinician their role is not to represent the patient voice or the community but to bring a required competency to the board that is currently lacking.



A separate guidebook titled: “Adding a Public Director to your PCN Board” is available to assist PCNs with the process of identifying and recruiting a non-physician Board Director.

Step 3: Define strategies to identify and develop future leaders

Succession planning is more than just replacement planning. It encompasses proactively developing future leaders.

Once critical positions have been identified and profiled for competencies, the next step is to employ talent management strategies to identify and develop potential leadership candidates.

Succession planning is more than just replacement planning!

Talent management is an integrated means of identifying, selecting, developing and retaining top talent within the organization which is required for long term planning. Talent management provides a means of:

- Identifying internal talent pools and transferring knowledge.
- Accelerating the process by which physicians who have an interest in management/leadership can be supported by identifying opportunities for mentorship, knowledge transfer and developing the competencies required for critical positions in tomorrow's leaders.

These efforts are supported through building of a positive reputation for the PCN which aids in attracting and recruiting talent.

Talent Identification

Talent pools are groups of high-potential future physician leaders who are being developed to meet the competency/position requirements for critical positions in the future. One good example of a "talent pool" is looking at those individuals who already, as a medical student or resident, have volunteered to represent their student body or colleagues in some capacity.

Possible sources of prospective new recruits include:

- Looking within for those individuals who are already volunteering but perhaps in a smaller way or in a lesser demanding manner (e.g., someone who may have participated in the PCN on a time-limited committee). The advantage of this source is you are looking at possible recruits who may already be known to the PCN and have an understanding of the PCNs role and mandate.
- Asking for suggestions from existing board/committee members.
- Asking affiliated groups (ACFP, PCN Leads Executive) for any possible recommendations.
- Approaching PARA and related groups to attract medical students or residents who will soon be practicing and may be interested in building their leadership and management skills
- References from affiliated organizations such as Alberta Health Services who may be aware of promising recruits.
- Attending events and conferences that appeal to primary care physicians and promoting the PCN as a great place to learn and grow as a professional.

Some organizations use talent review meetings to identify the capabilities required for leadership and assess the potential possible pool of people to fill future positions and find out what further development a potential candidate may need. Effective talent meetings encourage open and frank input from a variety of sources that identifies potential new talent.



Useful Tip

Get potential new talent participating in informal committees or working groups to introduce them to how the PCN and its governance work. If they've had positive experiences they are more likely to be willing to take on the increased responsibility as a board member.

Knowledge Transfer and Mentorship

Talent pools are groups of high-potential future physician leaders who are being developed to meet the competency/position requirements for critical positions in the future. One good example of a "talent pool" is looking at those individuals who already, as a medical student or resident, have volunteered to represent their student body or colleagues in some capacity.

On the other hand, tacit knowledge, which makes up 80 to 85 percent of an organization's knowledge assets, encompasses people's insight, judgement and know-how. It requires strategies that rely on interpersonal interactions such as coaching, mentoring and job shadowing.



Mentorship of Future Leaders



The goal of mentorship is simple – enable today’s leaders to skillfully guide upcoming leaders to reach their leadership potential and serve as champions for charting the future of PCNs and primary health care in Alberta.

Here are some of the characteristics of a successful mentoring relationship:

Commitment – both mentor and mentee must prioritize the relationship to provide opportunities to be available to interact.

Principle-based – mentoring is not about creating a list of “To do’s” or “Don’t do’s” but about imparting principles that can be applied to whatever specific situations arise.

Inspiration not Imitation – the point of mentoring is not to create carbon copies but to learn from positive traits and behaviors and adapt them to work for the person being mentored.

Balanced – a good mentor will encourage and provide you with positive feedback but will also point out potential pitfalls to enable you to navigate your own “humanness”. Having good self-awareness is a critical component to success in all avenues of life.

Been there; Done that – the premise of the relationship is that the mentor has already been down the path you are embarking on and has gained practical experience and insight from their journey.

Chemistry and Compatibility – A critical part of mentoring is chemistry and compatibility. On paper the mentor may look perfect however you won’t get the most out of mentoring if you don’t have the right chemistry. Ideally, if both the mentor and mentee have a connection, then there is greater success in the mentoring process.

Strategies for learning, training and development of tacit knowledge include:

- Stretch “assignments” allow someone new to “stretch” beyond their current abilities. Some examples include allowing a new physician to chair a committee (when appropriate), leading a special project or being assigned a challenging new task.
- Offering appropriate development opportunities gives new physician volunteers the experience they need to assume more senior or different positions.
- Acting assignments can be a good opportunity for a physician to get experience at a more senior level by temporarily taking over another physician’s responsibilities while they are absent.
- Mentoring and coaching provide opportunities for new and young physicians to obtain ongoing guidance and support from more experienced physicians.

Effective recruiting takes considerable time and energy and needs to be an ongoing process.

Build a positive reputation through engagement and promotion

If the PCN is to effectively attract and retain physicians interested in leading primary care improvement through PCNs, it needs to find ways to better engage their physician members.

Physicians are extremely busy and have many possible opportunities or options to consider in how and where they can grow their skills, knowledge and experience. The PCN should aspire to a goal of being one of the “go-to places” that primary care physicians would instinctively think of first to gain leadership and management skills.

Another means of building a good reputation is to invest in continuous development to become a high-functioning board (see Stage Four Board Development Section for further details).

People inherently are drawn to be part of something that is well-run and successful.

Understanding how to connect with physicians and create an environment that physicians understand the “what’s in it for them” is key. Recognizing and rewarding those who step forward and contribute, discussed in Stage Three, is also critical. Financial compensation for time spent in meetings is just one component of rewarding physicians and is rarely a driver of why a physician steps forward to assume a leadership role.

Step 4: Document the Succession Plan

The last step in this Stage is to document the plan and the strategies.

A specific succession roadmap should be developed for each critical position in a Succession Plan document. The roadmap documents the specific succession planning strategies chosen for that critical position and to prepare for future vacancies. Each strategy is supported by assigned responsibilities and time frames.

The succession plan should include plans in the event of an unplanned or sudden absence/ departure as well as planned renewal.

Quick Tip

The AMA can provide a template that can be used to start developing your PCN Succession Plan in tandem with this workbook. See Appendix Two: Board Succession Planning Template, Sample Guide on page 33.

“One of the things we often miss in succession planning is that it should be gradual and thoughtful, with lots of sharing of information and knowledge and perspective, so that it’s almost a non-event when it happens.”

Anne M. Mulcahy

PROMOTING THE PCN AS A LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY



Various “marketing tools” need to be available to make physicians aware of opportunities where they can contribute and the value they will gain when they step forward. The PCN should have posters, displays and a variety of material at all events where GPs gather. The focus should not just be to promote what the PCN does but also what physicians gain by volunteering for PCN opportunities.

Personal Invitation and Invitation Letters: Once promising candidates have been identified, invitation letters from the Board are sent to physicians outlining why and how they could contribute. Making the letters personal and delivery in person by a board member can go a long way in making a physician feel valued and respected for what they can offer.

Meeting Package Portfolios: Developing a portfolio that can be given to someone can be a useful tool to help reinforce the opportunity available and provide critical information (position profile, history of the PCN, what someone gains from volunteering, etc.). The portfolio would be useful to use when first meeting with a prospective candidate. Having well-written and designed material also conveys to a person that the PCN is professional, well-organized and serious about what it does.

Question & Answer Guide: The PCN should anticipate every question that may be raised by a physician possibly considering stepping forward to run for office or sit on a committee. Typical questions like: “Do I get paid to attend meetings?” or “When do meetings happen?” and “What support can I expect?” should have well-designed responses that can be used by all in recruiting. This will ensure consistency in what people say and avoid misunderstandings.

Unique Value Proposition of the PCN: Communicate the uniqueness of the PCN structure and the opportunity to shape primary care in a very real way in your community. There aren’t that many opportunities where primary care physicians can have such direct input and influence on care delivery and be involved in transforming our health system.

NOTES

Stage Two

Action the Plan

Key Activities

- Identify upcoming vacancies and review the Board Profile Matrix to assess gaps in the current board
- Communicate the nomination, selection and election or appointment processes
- Develop a list prospective candidates
- Establish contact with potential candidates
- Evaluate candidates against the Board Profile Matrix
- Appoint or conduct elections in accordance with the Articles of Association and approved governance policies



Stage 2: Action the Plan

Following an effective process to get the right people on your Board.

You have prepared and planned for a vacancy on your Board. Now the vacancy occurs, and the succession plan and past leadership development is leveraged to fill the vacancy.

The Challenge of Board Renewal

Nothing is more important to the health and sustainability of an organization than getting highly qualified and enthusiastic people to serve on the board. Despite the importance, many organizations find immense struggle to identify the right leaders and get people interested.

What makes recruitment so challenging is that done well the job of building a board is about more than just filling slots. It is about finding leaders who have skill sets and perspectives that align with and can further your organization's strategies, goals, and needs — not just now, but into the future.

And it's not just about recruiting one great individual; it's about having the right blend of skill sets, expertise, community connections, and diverse perspectives and spheres of influence across the board as a whole — which takes some discipline and planning to determine.

Challenges to effective succession planning include:

- Competing opportunities: those physicians interested in building their competency in leadership and management have many opportunities (within the AMA, ACFP, AHS, etc.). The PCN needs to cut through those competing interests to make physicians aware that the PCN is an excellent opportunity to grow, mature and learn while making a positive impact on primary health care in their community.
- Poor communication around the succession plan can result in confusion and turmoil as people speculate about its purpose and intent.
- If a plan does not engage people in a timely-fashion, some potential successors may seek opportunities elsewhere, depleting the pool the PCN could pick from.
- Past experiences on other committees and working groups may prejudice potential candidates as to whether it is worth investment of their valuable time.

Bringing New Members on Board

One of the most important components of succession planning and board renewal is a clear and transparent board recruitment and nomination process that is followed and well communicated.

Many board performance and membership confidence issues can be traced to the casual or ad hoc way that some organizations go about recruiting, selecting and electing board directors.

Step 1. Review profile of the current Board

The Board Profile Matrix developed in Stage 1 needs to be reviewed and updated at regular intervals (usually once per year) such that the PCN can clearly understand where it is at risk from a skills/experience/knowledge perspective and ensure recruitment efforts are focused on shoring up those potential gaps.

Identify upcoming vacancies well in advance and review your current Board complement against the Board Profile Matrix to guide what competencies you are looking for in potential new candidates for the Board.

In addition to ensuring the board has the right mix of skills and requisite knowledge to face the challenges ahead, the Board also needs to make sure it strives for diversity and that all members of the PCN feel represented as much as possible. Part of ensuring diversity on a Board is not just understanding and tracking potential candidates' skills, but also their community and member contacts and sphere of influence.



Step 2. Communicate the process

Transparency is one of the key principles of good governance and legitimacy of the Board, as a representative body depends on it. Thus, it is critical that the nominations, selection and election processes are clearly communicated to all participating physician members using multiple communication modes and channels.

This includes communicating any deadlines well in advance and in accordance with the PCN's articles of incorporation to allow all interested physicians to participate.

It is also important to ensure the communications provide potential candidates access to information about what the expectations of the role are and what competencies the Board is looking for. The process should identify how interested parties can get more information, eligibility criteria and how to communicate interest in serving on the Board.

Useful Tip

Establish a standardized method to express interest /nomination such as a nominee's statement.

Step 3. Develop a List of Prospective Candidates

The process involves an assessment of the current "Board Profile Matrix" against the desired "Board Profile Matrix" as well as input from all relevant stakeholders. The goal is to develop an initial list of prospective board/committee members including those who have expressed interest and/or have been nominated. This list outlines those individuals who best fit the criteria and the needs identified. It is important to cast a wide net and consider a number of potential board recruits greater than the number of projected vacancies.

After identifying this initial list of prospective board directors, the Board Development Committee/ Nominations Committee should then examine the individuals more closely in light of the recruiting priorities and gaps in the current board composition. Based on this review, the board can rank the individuals within the initial list.

Transparency is one of the key principles of good governance and legitimacy of a Board as a representative body depends on it.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RECRUITMENT AND NOMINATION?

In a healthy governance environment there are generally two paths that feed into the generation of a list of prospective candidates: Nomination and Recruitment. The following is only "food for thought" and each PCN should use a process that works well for them reflective of the PCN's history, environment and size.

Recruitment is generally initiated by the Board or by a key leader within the organization. This involves an active reaching out to individuals or groups of individuals encouraging them to stand for election and often includes a longer term investment in developing the individual in preparation for the role.

Nomination is often initiated from outside the Board and involves someone from the general membership proposing a name they feel would be a good addition to the Board. With the consent of the candidate, this individual is reviewed by the Nominations Committee and, meeting its requirements, stands for election.

The nominating process is important from the perspective of identifying interest, and the Board, being unaware, follows the democratic principle of a representational Board.

Useful Tip

There are pros and cons to allowing nominations from the floor. While some view it as being more democratic, there is a risk that a nomination from the floor can result from a hot-button topic that arises at the Annual General Meeting and can result in an emotion-driven election vs. one based on a more objective evaluation against thoughtful criteria considering the needs of the organization and its future direction. If the nominations process is well-communicated with ample notice, there should not be a need to allow nominations from the floor.

Step 4. Establish contact with potential candidates

The Board Development Committee is now ready to initiate personal contacts with the individuals at the top of the prospect list. These contacts can be made using a variety of methods.

Ideally, first contact is made by means of a personal letter mailed to the prospect. The personalized letter should inform the prospect of the board's interest in them, provide a brief description of the recruitment and nominations process, the role or opportunity they are being considered for and ask if they would like to be considered for board directorship.

The second step would be to follow-up very quickly with the prospective recruit, if some interest is shown through an in-person meeting. Having a portfolio folder that can be left with the recruit will be a useful aid to highlight the PCN, its history, goals, strategic plan etc.

The third step would be to follow-up with the potential recruit and secure their interest through completion of a nomination form or letter of interest.

Some Board use an interview process to meet the prospective candidate to get to know them and their motivation as well as communicate the culture and expectations of the Board directly to potential candidates.

Step 5. Evaluate Candidates

After all informational sessions/exchanges with prospective board/committee members have been held, the Board Development/ Nomination Committee meets to review all of the individuals who have shown interest. It will be important for the committee to check back on their recruiting priorities set earlier in the process.

In evaluating the prospective recruits, the Board Development Committee should ask the following questions:

1. Does the prospect appear to be committed to the PCN's mission and philosophy?
2. Can the prospect contribute the time necessary to be an effective board/executive committee director?
3. Does the prospect possess some of the key skills, knowledge and other assets that match the required recruiting priorities that have been identified?
4. Does it appear that the prospect can place the organization's purposes and interests above their own professional and personal interests when making decisions as a board director/committee member?

TIPS FOR RECRUITING BOARD MEMBERS



Plan ahead. Recruiting new board members is an ongoing process that should never stop and should always be well thought out and planned.

Personal requests work best. General calls may work but personally seeking out someone and making them feel wanted and desired is far better.

Keep an active list of potential candidates. Start compiling names and thinking about potential candidates and the skills they offer well in advance of when you actually plan to recruit. This will give you plenty of time to consider individual skills and contributions. This allows for time to give potential candidates time to prepare for their new opportunities.

A well-known candidate is not always the best choice. A well-known physician leader, while a great addition to your board, may not have the necessary time to commit to your PCN. Candidates who can make a commitment will serve you better than a person who wants to help but is too busy to come to meetings or follow-up on action items.

Be honest about the commitment. Be upfront about how much time and work commitment will be required. Misrepresenting the commitment could result in a resignation or an unexpected departure of a valued contributor.

It's all in the attitude. Be positive when you approach potential board members. The new recruit should feel it is an honor to be part of the PCN!

Match interests and need. Strike a balance between people who are passionate about volunteering versus those who you really need from a skills, knowledge and experience perspective.

Think about potential conflicts of interest. Be aware of a recruit's other interests so they do not conflict with the PCN's.

Diversity is important. A room full of people with similar backgrounds, education and careers may come up with great ideas but you can rest assured those ideas will all be similar. The PCN needs to consider the diversity of its members and this should be reflected in any board or committee make-up.

Step 6. Appointment or election of new members

Whether a candidate has been identified through the Board's recruiting efforts or has presented themselves as part of a nominating process, profiles or biographies should be made available to the voting membership in advance of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) to allow them to make their decision with some understanding of what the candidate can bring to the Board and effectively represent the membership. The process should mirror that which is stipulated or defined in the Articles of Association of your PCN. It should also not be more onerous than that which a PCN resources can support (do not make it more complicated than needed!).

Elections are generally conducted at the NPC's AGM using a secret ballot and, as a general rule, committee members are appointed by the Board or the Nominations Committee as defined by the articles. The Articles of Association generally also make provision for filling mid-term vacancies such as giving the Board the authority to appoint a replacement member until the next AGM.

In either case, whether through election process or by board selections, new members then take their place on the Board.

The following (pages 19-20) has been excerpted and adapted from the Alberta Muttart Foundation's Board Developing Resource workbook titled: "Board Building Recruiting and Developing Effective Board Members for Not-for-Profit Organizations."

Why Do Board/Committee Members Say Yes?

There are two parts to the equation:

- What a board requires from its members
- What a board can offer in return

The concept of fair exchange is a principle which applies to board recruitment. Board members are asked to commit time and skills to govern, and sometimes to manage, the organization. Consider: "What satisfaction can prospective board members hope to receive from our organization in return for their commitment?"

To recruit successfully and to retain board volunteers, the organization must understand what motivates them. Each prospective board member is unique. He or she may choose to join your board for a variety of reasons. Some of these reasons are publicly stated, and other reasons are less visible so you must identify other benefits that might attract them.

Successful board recruiters can identify and communicate the benefits as well as the responsibilities of the job. Consider the possible needs of prospective board members and both the concrete and the less tangible benefits that the organization can offer. These might include:

- Opportunities to contribute to the welfare of the physician and broader community
- Effective use of the prospective board member's skills and time
- Networking possibilities

An individual's initial motivation to join a board may change over time. Many boards lose valuable members because they fail to understand the developing needs and interests that motivate individuals. Failure to offer new roles and opportunities usually leads to high turnover of board members.

Many issues influence the likelihood of a person becoming a board member however the two most influential are the desire to serve and the desire for mutual benefits.

"How we recruit and develop board members, by identifying, interesting, involving and inspiring individuals, has a great deal to do with whether members serve or sit."

Board Development Information Bulletin

The Desire to Serve

Altruism is the ability to give unselfishly and to benefit the welfare of others. This is a strong motivator for most volunteers. An individual's altruism may be enhanced by the desire to voluntarily enrich an organization or community that has benefited the individual, his or her family, or perhaps a business. Consider the diversity of motivations related to prospective board members.

The Desire for Mutual Benefits

Many people hope to contribute their time and skills in exchange for opportunities that benefit them, while also complementing the needs of the organization. The following are a few worth highlighting.

To further the individual's and the organization's values and ideals

Organizational leadership allows board members to actively support an organization that promotes values and activities that are important to them.

To explore career development opportunities

Many individuals find that volunteering on a board is a valuable way to research prospective career paths and to gain experience within a not-for-profit organization.

To participate in democracy

Many individuals believe that their responsibility as a citizen is to take a leadership role in an organization that works for the good of the community. These people consider serving on a board to be part of the democratic process. They see board involvement as both a right and a privilege.

To apply one's expertise and experience

Many individuals are looking for opportunities to use their skills and knowledge in a meaningful way.

To add work-life balance

If the format or content of an individual's paid work does not allow for diverse opportunities, they may seek the opportunity to add variety or challenge by becoming a volunteer board member in another setting.

To feel personally fulfilled

Many individuals find that freely-chosen and satisfying volunteer roles provide the ultimate opportunity to fulfill themselves personally. Many board roles provide such rewards.

An individual's initial motivation to join a board may change over time. Many boards lose valuable members because they fail to understand the developing needs and interests that motivate individuals. Failure to offer new roles and opportunities usually leads to high turnover of board members.



Stage Three

Transition Successfully

Key Activities

- Develop a Board Orientation Handbook
- Conduct Board Orientation sessions
- Provide opportunities for ongoing board training and learning
- Provide a means for ongoing engagement and two-way communication with all board/committee members
- Recognize board members' commitment and time investment



Stage 3: Transition and Develop New Members

Supporting Board members to be successful.

Having identified and elected/appointed quality candidates, it is imperative that there is an intentional transition to give new members the knowledge and tools required to perform their duties effectively.

In fact, to be successful the entire Board should engage in continual learning and development opportunities as the board evolves.

Activities in this stage can include:

- Development of a board orientation/reference manual
- Orientation session for all new recruits/elected officials
- Ongoing training opportunities (both individually and as a group)
- Recognition of commitment and involvement

Board Orientation

New board members benefit from a thorough orientation to the organization no matter how much experience they have either with the PCN or serving on other boards.

An effective orientation will help new PCN board/committee members to understand the mandate of PCNs in general and the specific PCN, its major activities and issues, how it works with other health stakeholders including Alberta Health, Alberta Health Services, Alberta Medical Association, community and non-profit health and social programs.

Fortunately PCNs now have the option of sending new board members to both the Essentials and Advanced level training sessions offered throughout the year by the AMA and AHS. While these sessions will provide a solid orientation of many of the elements a new board member must know they are not a complete substitute for a PCN-specific orientation which focuses on the unique aspects of a PCN such as its culture, Business/Service Plan and organizational structure.

One of the most compelling reason for formal board orientation is to accelerate the learning curve and to ensure all board members have a common point of reference and basic knowledge for decision-making. This is an important factor in preventing future conflicts arising from a lack of common understanding of board fundamentals and governance.

Some recommended topics for the PCN-specific orientation that you should consider include:

- Responsibilities, liability and expectations of board members
- Board communication, procedures and meeting norms
- Additional roles/responsibilities of the officers
- Key policies of the PCN
- An overview of the business plan key initiatives and how and why those were chosen
- Strategic direction of the PCN
- Key values the PCN has adopted that guide its decision making

While some view this as an activity for new members only, portions of the board orientation are valuable to all board members. In addition to serving as an introduction to each other on a personal level, a group orientation session can serve as a good reminder to all board members key information that can useful to foster more productive board meetings.

Effective board orientation enables all board members to make decisions starting from a common point of reference and understanding of basic information about PCN and the board's function.

Experience demonstrates that revisiting basic concepts is valuable as components become more relevant depending on the age/maturity of the board and the actual experience and challenges the board has faced.

The value of a Group Board Orientation Meeting:

- Opportunity for personal introductions among new and experienced board members
- More formal introduction of new board members by the nominating committee, highlighting background and credentials for new members

- Valuable refresher for longer serving board members of some of the fundamentals of PCN governance
- Open-ended opportunity for questions from new board members
- Brief explanation of upcoming significant decisions or events

In addition, all PCNs are now required to have a board manual (or online repository) that describes the purpose and operations of the organization. This Board Orientation Handbook should be user friendly, updated regularly (each year) and given to each board member while serving on a board or committee of the PCN. This may include the Articles of Incorporations, the current business plan, FAQ's, board policies, past minutes/records of decisions, etc.

This is helpful for new board members but also serves as a reference tool for all board members

Ongoing Training & Learning

As board members gain experience and face new challenges, additional training opportunities for individuals should be made available both as individuals but also for the larger group as a collective whole. Stage Four of this guidebook discusses board development as a whole.

Opportunities for individual board member training and development may consider include the following:

- Educational or Information sessions at board meetings (bring in a guest speaker to speak on a key governance competency)
- In-service training and workshops (e.g., AMA-AHS Essentials Course, Advanced Course or Expert Series)
- Provide opportunities for PCN Board/committee members to attend external workshops and conferences that would be of benefit
- Provide books, audiovisual materials, or good articles on topical issues and discuss them as a group in meetings



Useful Tip

Use of President-Elect or Past-President positions allows for board continuity and the transfer of tacit knowledge. Another method is to formalize the vice-chair position as a training ground for developing key skills.

On-going Engagement

PCNs across the province represent several thousand physicians and are asked by numerous organizations to represent and provide a representative "voice" for all PCN physicians. In response, PCNs often appoint or elect physicians into roles where they are asked to be that voice. For practical reasons (distribution of workload), the PCN may look beyond its board members for representatives.

There is significant value in developing an intentional mechanism or process to ensure that the people selected to represent PCNs are actually espousing the views and values of the PCN and are aware of emerging issues.

Consider a variety of mechanisms to ensure that people who represent the broader base of participating members are knowledgeable on hot issues and the PCNs objectives as well as keeping the PCN organization and the Board aware of emerging issues that have PCN implications which representatives discover through their roles.

A few possible suggestions include:

- A regular communique to that summarizes key/hot issues and provides a summation of action taken or the PCN board's position
- Implement periodic teleconference information sessions to ensure more frequent opportunities to discuss issues or challenges. These do not need to be long and if kept fast-paced a lot of ground can be covered.
- Ensure either a written or (preferably) a short in-person report is provided to ensure a two-way dialogue occurs on the activities of a PCN representative on a committee.



Recognition of time and commitment

Recognition is a critical aspect of board development and retention. Board members need to be recognized and receive feedback on their performance. Recognition measures effort and success. Use ongoing and timely recognition to encourage and sustain board involvement.

The PCN must make recognition a priority. It must take the time and effort to recognize contributions on a regular basis and when doing so, make sure that the recognition is sincere, specific and appropriate to the individual and his or her contribution. In doing so, it is important to respect the spending policies of the PCN and public perception of use of funds.



The Alberta Muttart Foundation, which works with multiple not-for-profit boards in Alberta, suggests the following recognition tools could be considered:

- Thank you letters for specific actions, as well as broader involvement
- Verbal recognition at board, committee and annual general meetings
- Board member special events and social opportunities
- Opportunities to share accomplishments of their board work with each other and with their peers
- Communicate the board member's unique qualities and contributions to them. Show them why they are appreciated within the board
- Recognition certificates or plaques
- Naming an event or award after a board member
- Nominate appropriate board members for community awards

NOTE: Any recognition provided should be consistent with both PCN and provincial policy standards.



Stage Four

Evaluate and Renew

Key Activities

- Review the succession plan document and board renewal processes and adjust as necessary
- Conduct board assessment using a standardized survey tool
- Discuss assessment results and develop action plan for upcoming year
- Engage in continual board development activities



Stage 4: Ongoing Evaluation and Board Development

The ongoing pursuit of good governance and a high-functioning board.

There are three components of evaluation and renewal in this stage which should occur annually.

1. A review of how well the process worked for recruiting, nomination, election/appointment and orientation for new board members
2. A revision or an update to the succession plan document based on changing needs of the board and the PCN
3. An evaluation of the board itself and whether it is functioning optimally and the development of a corrective Action Plan

Review and Refine the Process

To ensure success, it is important to systematically evaluate and monitor your succession planning and management efforts and make adjustments as needed. This section suggests some possible indicators and methods that assess effectiveness, as well as questions to consider in evaluating the effectiveness of the succession planning process.

Assessing the results of succession planning and management also helps to determine future priorities and decide on the allocation of resources.

The following can be used to measure progress:

- The number of vacant key positions
- Average days elapsed for each key position vacancy
- Absence of conflict or controversy among board members or general membership
- The ratio of key positions for which no internal replacement can be found relative to the total number of key positions (otherwise known as “bench strength”)
- The level of awareness within the general membership that the PCN has opportunities available and has a clear understanding of how to get involved
- The level of representation that reflects and represents the diversity of physicians and practices within the PCN; and levels of satisfaction of existing representative volunteers (through board evaluation or exit interviews)



Useful Tip

Review your Strategic Plan, especially after a new strategic plan has been developed, when it is important to review the strategic plan to determine if there are any implications for governance that will have bearing on board director recruitment.

Board evaluation for continual improvement

With most PCNs no longer in an organizational state of infancy and raised expectations to function at a more sophisticated level, there is greater interest in board evaluation.

An annual board evaluation is an accountability process that demonstrates the commitment of a PCN and its board to carrying out the work of the organization effectively. While there is now a Policy requirement for board evaluation, this shouldn't be the motivator for this activity. Instead, a progressive board should want to know how well its functioning and how it can improve. This is essentially for board renewal. A dysfunctional board can be the single biggest killer to generate future board member interest. People have an affinity towards success and towards organizations that are progressive, highly functional and that create value. To ensure your PCN is viewed this way, knowing where corrective action should be taken not only helps those on your board now but helps you find future board members.

There are some compelling reasons to embrace board evaluation including:

1. Greater accountability is expected by general membership within the PCN and by Alberta Health, the Auditor General and the public
2. Stricter enforcement of governance law in general and an increase in legal actions against boards of directors
3. Missteps made by the Board that could impact not just a single PCN but the PCN model in general

The benefits of board evaluation include the following:

- Provides a chance for ongoing group reflection, dialogue and assessment of the board's areas of strength and weakness
- Creates an invaluable "yardstick" by which the board can plan a roadmap and prioritize activities to address gaps or weaknesses for the future
- Emphasizes the importance the role, and the commitment that board members make
- Provides opportunities for recognition that motivate and retain board members
- Provides opportunities for improvement of board dialogue to address issues/problems that might actually deter people from sustaining their interest or involvement



Who should evaluate the Board?

There are many possible options each with their pros and cons. Currently, Alberta Health policy requires all PCNs to use the tool provided by Health Standards Organization (HSO) also formerly known as Accreditation Canada.

Compelling reason to embrace board self-evaluation: Missteps made by the Board could impact, not just a single PCN but, the PCN model in general.

What to do with your assessment results?

Board evaluation generally starts with an assessment survey to gather input on the board's performance on a number of standardized dimensions. As part of the process with HSO, PCNs will receive a report indicating where any deficiencies or gaps may exist within board function. AMA Program support is available to assist PCNs in understanding the HSO report, provide 3rd party facilitation of the findings and help the PCN formulate a proactive Action Plan for corrective action.

In undertaking any Board assessment the following principles should be followed:

- **No fault, no blame:** The assessment results should not be used to "grade" anyone or find fault. The results should be interpreted non-defensively with the goals of reflection and learning. A review of the results provides an objective starting point for discussion of what's working well and what can be improved.
- **Assess and learn:** The process should enable the board to deepen its understanding of governance principles and desired best practice and help identify specific opportunities to enhance performance.
- **It's everybody's game:** The entire board should be involved and the facilitated meeting should be held at a time that maximizes attendance and participation.
- **Freedom to speak and be candid:** Discussion should be open, frank and honest but in a context of no blame. All ideas for improvements should be sought in a creative atmosphere. To ensure this occurs an outside facilitator would be most ideal.
- **Do unto others:** Mutual respect both in words and actions is important. The emphasis should be on learning, growth and renewal.
- **Develop a consensus:** The board needs to reach a consensus and develop a clear action plan.

At the conclusion of the evaluation process the board should have a list of resulting action items for improvements and a board development plan for the coming year.

What is ongoing “board development”?

Board development is an ongoing process and an investment in:

- The individual board members
- The Board as a whole group
- The PCN and its ability to represent the member physicians in progressing primary care for the patients in that geographic region

A high-functioning board is a recruitment tool. People are inherently drawn to be part of something that is well-run and successful.

Board development activities assist the PCN by providing:

- A common frame of reference by which everyone will operate
- The basic or fundamental knowledge and understanding needed to be effective board members
- The motivation to reflect, critically think and generate new ideas
- Skills to make informed decisions, and to be creative and innovative
- An environment which fosters attitudes necessary for mutual support and respect
- Support to develop confidence for new physicians to be strong advocates and representatives for their profession

Effective board development is an ongoing process as different aspects of board functioning will become more prominent and salient as the board dynamics change, the organization matures and PCNs face changing conditions and challenges. For example, a conflict of interest policy doesn't really become real until the board faces an actual conflict of interest situation. Often the board development priorities will be based on the outcome of the board evaluation.

One of the earliest board development opportunities that new members encounter have already been discussed in this guidebook; that is Board orientation sessions and the Board Orientation Handbook.

Some ways to further board development include:

- Reserve time in some meetings just for reflection and frank discussions on the functions of the group itself
- Develop strategies for the board to focus on addressing any deficiency areas for the next year.
- Bring in an external facilitator to explore assessment results and identify practical action plans to focus on improvement areas.
- Consult governance content expertise where necessary.

Regular evaluation of the performance of individual board members, and of the board as a whole, helps to reinforce activities that are going well, and to focus or to initiate future actions. From a thorough evaluation of itself and its operations, the PCN can ensure it keeps “renewing” itself and make the necessary adjustment or changes when needed.

If this process is done regularly, PCN board governance will remain healthy, vibrant and can have a greater focus on tackling issues and providing PCN services that matter most to its members, patients and the community in general.



Appendix One

Board Profile Matrix

Board Skills Competency Matrix



Board Profile Matrix

Board Skills Competency Matrix

The Board Profile Matrix is designed to help boards assess their knowledge/skills along with their group's personal characteristics and attributes. It is the combination of assessing the board's competency and the priority areas which is the foundation of a superior board performance over time.

This tool will aim to focus the discussion among board members around succession planning by identifying which areas the board may be weak in from a competency perspective.

The matrix grid helps the Nominations Committee in their selection of new members to match expertise with purpose, mandate and key initiatives identified.

Matrix Instructions:

Rank yourself and your fellow board members by using the following scale:

- No proficiency in this area (1)
- Some proficiency in this area (2)
- Very proficient in this area (3)

Example:

Knowledge and Expertise		(name) Dr. Jane	(name) Dr. Joe	(name) Dr. Bob	(name)	(name)	(name)	Total	
Advocacy	Ability to communicate a position to the intended audience (i.e. patient care advisory).	2	2	3				7/9	

Personal Characteristics/Attributes		(name)	(name)	(name)	(name)	(name)	(name)	Total	PCN Board requires new members who: (✓ all those which apply)
Available to participate in board meetings and committees	Has sufficient availability to prepare for and attend meetings.								
Collegial	Able to work well with others, able to provide critique in a respectful manner, able to listen to those whose opinions differ from one's own.								
Committed to continuous improvement	Knowledgeable about the principles of change management (i.e. ADKAR); experience with business transformation (i.e. LEAN, AIM, evaluation management, etc.). Focused on outcomes.								
Committed to the success of the board and the general practitioners	Knowledgeable about and dedicated to the board's purpose and mandate.								
Consensus builder	Able to see different perspectives and assist in identifying the common ground.								
Creative	Able to discern and propose responses or approaches to issues that are different from those already identified.								
Demonstrated continuous learning	Has and continues to show commitment to lifelong learning.								
Effective communicator	Intentional or unintentional information sharing, which is interpreted between multiple entities and acted on in a desired way. This effect also ensures that messages are not distorted during the communication process.								
Integrity	Ability to act consistently in accordance with the board value system.								
Leader/Motivator	Experience enabling a group to meet its objectives.								
Respects and relates well to people of diverse backgrounds	Demonstrated ability to act appropriately with people from different perspectives, backgrounds, sectors, education levels, etc.								
Sound Judgement	Demonstrates analytical ability applied appropriately in a variety of situations.								
Strategist	Displays a strategic understanding of the economy, trends and broad business issues, including developments in healthcare; particularly in the area of family medicine.								
Visibly takes ownership of and supports decisions of the Board	External to board meetings, speaks and acts in support of the actions taken by the board, even when not in agreement with the specific decision.								
Sphere of influence within the physician community	Understanding of what each person or groups of individuals contribute in regards to community and political affiliations.								

Current Board Snapshot

Personal Characteristics/Attributes		(name)	(name)	(name)	(name)	(name)	(name)	Total
Length of time serving PCN	How many years have you been on the PCN Board?							
Date of end of term, if applicable	When are you finished your term?							
Geographic location	What city/town do you live in? (When relevant)							

Appendix Two

Board Succession Planning Template

Sample Guide



Board Succession Planning Template

Sample Guide

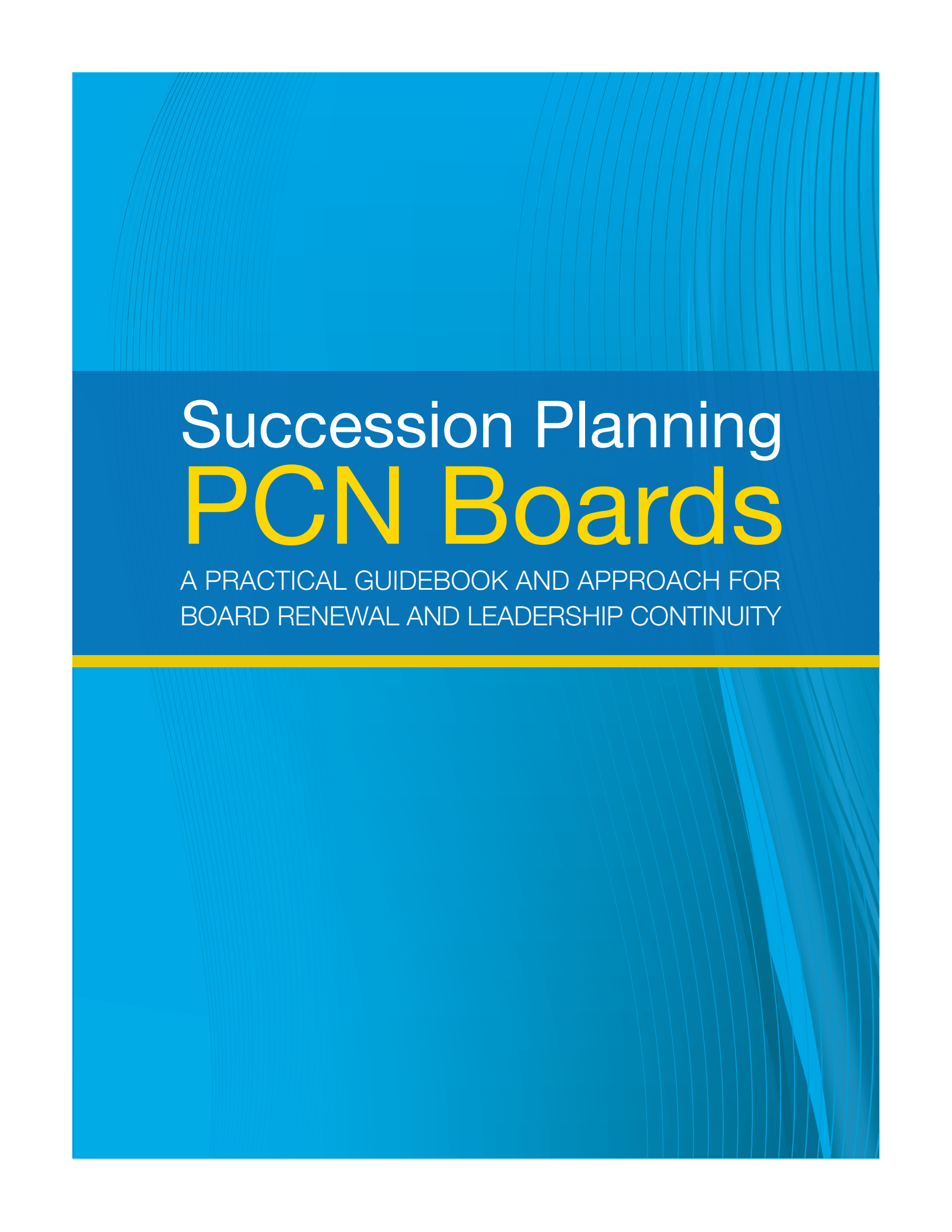
This tool can assist in developing a succession planning process that can be further customized to fit the specific needs of boards.

Succession planning is an ongoing human resources management activity that boards should continually assess to ensure good governance as well as present and future operational effectiveness.

		✓ Good ✗ Action needed	Plans for Improvement, Designated Lead and Timeline
Prepare: Take Stock of the Current Situation			
Previous Board Self-Assessment	Provides awareness of issues, and opportunities relating to board composition and performance.		
Perceptions of the board's role	Are internal (organization) and external (stakeholders, interest groups) beliefs accurate? Is there work to do?		
Composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large enough to offer diversity of views yet manageable and efficient. • Does the current board expertise meet present and future needs? 		
Recruitment: Design an Effective Process			
Goals, Objectives, Strategies, Tactics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align plan with board vision and values, responsibilities, projects and priorities. • Set a strategic direction for ongoing and specific recruitment efforts. 		
Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment, travel reimbursement, and initial training costs (e.g., advertising, HR consulting and testing, background checks). 		
Structure and policies	Do existing ones support board renewal processes? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articles including term limits and reappointments. • Nominations and Board Development committees. • Position descriptions valid and up to date. 		
Recruitment Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a competency-based process that will meet organizational and strategic needs. • Identify positions requiring recruitment. • Map plans for succession into executive and senior positions. Review regularly. • Review board member term limits, if applicable. • Include long-range plan to strengthen board composition (i.e., representatives from other industries, different perspectives and skill sets). 		

		✓ Good ✗ Action needed	Plans for Improvement, Designated Lead and Timeline
Candidate Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse, qualified, dedicated people enhance board performance. • Verify credentials. • Background check using AMA, police, or reputable third-party sources (e.g., BackCheck). • Probe for compatible vision and values (e.g., collaborative, open to change and diversity). 		
Compensation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research local benchmarks to attract and retain best talent. 		
Performance Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set specific goals, especially if deliverables expected. 		
Orientation and On-Boarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design a process for new board members. • Performance and retention improves when candidates are integrated and prepared to start. 		
Continuous Improvement: Assessment and Future Planning			
Assessment of board as a whole and of each board member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create evaluation and feedback forms. • Schedule regularly (e.g., annual, quarterly, depending on situation). 		
Long range plans – strategic directions, action plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor emergent areas of expertise due to technology advancement and trends. Adjust the recruitment plan if necessary. • Assess need for new board core competencies. 		
Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify opportunities for better candidate attraction, training and retention. • Create an annual action plan for Nominations/Board Development committees. 		

NOTES



Succession Planning PCN Boards

A PRACTICAL GUIDEBOOK AND APPROACH FOR
BOARD RENEWAL AND LEADERSHIP CONTINUITY