

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR: OUR BEST-KEPT SECRET! THE EXPERIENCE OF IMPLEMENTING HEALTH SYSTEM EFFECTIVENESS PRINCIPLES

CHA's Leadership on Health System Effectiveness

The Canadian Healthcare Association (CHA), a federation of provincial and territorial hospital and health organizations across Canada, believes in a well governed, well managed, and publicly accountable health system, where responsibility is shared among governments, trustees, and executives. An effective health system not only meets the needs of Canadians, but also has their confidence.

In January 2005, CHA and CCAF-FCVI Inc. (a national, non-profit research foundation focused on the areas of public sector accountability, governance, management, and audit) released *Excellence in Canada's Health System: Principles for Governance, Management, Accountability and Shared Responsibility*. The brief promotes eleven principles that provide the common ground needed for stakeholders to work successfully together to address mutual objectives. Through our principles framework, we propose that an effective health system requires 1) strategic direction and leadership, 2) public accountability and involvement, and 3) clear roles and responsibilities.

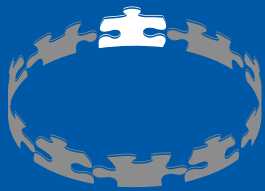
In the spring of 2005, CHA met one-on-one with key organizations and individuals from the health system to obtain feedback on how the principles might be adapted for use within the health system. We were pleased to note that most people expressed support for the principles. We were also encouraged to continue our work by validating them with a larger audience and describing how they could be applied.

As a result, CHA hosted a National Roundtable on Health System Effectiveness in December 2005, attended by federal, provincial, and territorial government representatives; chairs and CEOs of provincial and territorial health organizations, other key health stakeholders, and representatives of the business, auditing, and quality communities. Through constructive dialogue on the achievement of best practices in health system effectiveness and an exploration of current practices across Canada, the Roundtable revealed a real appetite among delegates to learn from experiences with implementing the principles and to work in partnership on this important and timely issue to build on current successes.

A cross-country session on efforts to implement the CHA-CCAF principles framework featured the experiences of provincial and territorial governments, trustees, and executives. Representatives from Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec, Canada's territories, and Manitoba reflected on health system effectiveness practices in their jurisdictions. In one presentation, John Abbott, Deputy Minister of Health and Community Services for Newfoundland and Labrador and Joan Dawe, President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Health Boards Association (NLHBA) presented their experiences with using the CHA-CCAF principles framework.

“CHA's agenda on health system effectiveness corresponds well with the role of the Health Council of Canada, as we are essentially an accountability tool for the public to assess health system performance”

Cathy Fooks, Executive Director of the Health Council of Canada and member of CHA's External Advisory Panel on Health System Effectiveness.



“ *The system is more focused on providing information to stakeholders internally within the system than externally to the public* ”

*David Stewart-Patterson,
Executive Vice-President and the
Canadian Council of Chief
Executives and member of CHA's
External Advisory Panel on Health
System Effectiveness*

Context of Health System Restructuring

A 2005 restructuring initiative saw Newfoundland and Labrador go from 14 Health and Community Service Boards to four Regional Integrated Health Authorities. These Boards are responsible for the full continuum of public health, community, institutional acute and long-term care.

The government appointed the members of the new Boards of Trustees. Seventy-five percent of trustees were new, providing a need for strong board orientation and development.

Trustees and CEOs contributed to the drafting of accountability letters and CEO performance contracts.

Strategy for Implementing Change

Using many of the principles contained in the CHA's framework from the start, the government and the regional authorities focused on accountability, public engagement, and collaboration to ensure sustainability based on a population health approach.

The Province has developed new legislation governing the authorities and delineating accountability relationships among the Minister, Boards, and CEOs. Accountability has been a priority for the government and they will proclaim a new Transparency and Accountability Act. The government has also committed to present the strategic plans developed by regional authorities to Newfoundland and Labrador's legislative assembly.

NLHBA President, Joan Dawe, noted, *“Throughout the restructuring, there has been strong ministerial engagement and regular meetings between the Deputy Minister and the CEOs of the Regional Integrated Health Authorities.”*

Results

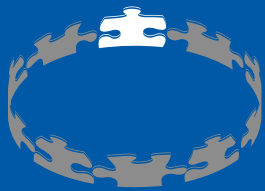
Newfoundland and Labrador is leading in its implementation of many health system effectiveness principles - particularly those related to strategic direction, public accountability and involvement. Mr. Abbott reported to roundtable participants that the department is within 85-90% of implementing the principles and *“it is the clear intent of the government to move in the direction outlined by the framework document.”*

Strategic Direction and Leadership: Full Compliance

- Government sets strategic direction in consultation with RIHAs.
- RIHAs use strategic directions to develop strategic plans.
- Strategic plans are outcome-focused, have reporting requirements, and are publicly available.
- There is strong governmental, departmental, and board leadership based on a collaborative approach.

Public Accountability and Involvement: Full Compliance

- Collaboration between the Department of Health and Community Services, RIHAs, and stakeholders is a normal, ongoing practice.
- Public engagement and reporting are key features of the system.



Clear Roles and Responsibilities: Full Compliance

- New accountability measures to clarify ambiguities
- Systems are in place to support responsibilities.
- Effective communications between parties is key and currently is excellent.

Number One Success Factor

Deputy Minister Abbott underscored a significant success factor related to sharing responsibility when he noted, *“there is ongoing collaboration concerning planning, priority-setting, finances, and legislation.”*

CHA’s Continued Leadership

While Newfoundland and Labrador has had tremendous success, CHA and its member organizations recognize that there are improvements to be made in provincial and territorial health systems across Canada.

Governance and accountability frameworks are not as robust as they need to be. We also recognize that leadership for strengthening governance and accountability is a shared responsibility.

Working in partnerships, CHA and its member organizations, including the Newfoundland and Labrador Health Boards Association will seek the support of governments, trustees, and executives to further adopt and implement the principles framework.


With our partners, CHA is determined to transform the health system.

In addition to short documents on the principles framework and experiences with implementing the framework, CHA will engage all provincial and territorial governments in a dialogue around achieving best practices in governance, management, accountability, and shared responsibility. CHA will be taking steps to meet one-on-one with deputy ministers of health and other public officials.

Finally, through our External Advisory Panel, CHA will work with the Health Council of Canada, the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation, Canadian businesses, governments, and others to promote the adoption of health system effectiveness principles and to achieve health system excellence in Canada.

“ CCHSA is enhancing our accreditation program. The principles framework developed by CHA and CCAF is compatible with the proposed new governance standards”

Wendy Nicklin, CEO of the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation and member of CHA’s External Advisory Panel on Health System Effectiveness.

1		2	Canadian Healthcare Association
9		0	Association canadienne des soins de santé
3		0	
1		6	75 years of service / 75 années de service

CHA is the federation of provincial and territorial hospital and health organizations across Canada. Through our members, CHA represents a broad continuum of care, including acute care, home and community care, long term care, public health, mental health, palliative care, addiction services, children, youth and family services, and housing services. These services are provided through regional health authorities, hospitals and other facilities and agencies that serve all Canadians and are governed by trustees who act in the public interest. CHA is a leader in developing, and advocating for, health policy solutions that meet the needs of Canadians and is the champion for a publicly funded health system that provides access to a continuum of comparable health services throughout Canada.