



**Strengthening Oklahoma's Safety Net,
One Community At A Time**

Board Bulletin
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CHC Boards Working As A Team

The focus of Board Bulletins in 2003 was the roles and responsibilities of Community Health Center (CHC) Boards. The first 2004 issue demonstrates that the success of the health center is dependent on board teamwork -- with each member understanding his/her position on the team. Without effective teamwork, the Board will suffer, as will the health center and the community it serves.

Building a Team

- **Understand the Mission** - When each board member respects the mission and vows to uphold it, personal agendas tend to fade and the team focus becomes clearer. Perhaps the mission should be read as a group before each meeting to reinforce the 'team commitment' of each individual as they work collectively to make something good happen. High performance teams share a commitment to a common purpose.
- **Form Common Team Goals** - 'Healthy' CHC boards develop goals and objectives that will lead the health center to success. Most often, this is done at an annual retreat -- a time when board members can leave other obligations behind and focus on the task of governing the health center. Retreats should incorporate activities designed to help the board 'gel' as a team. Retreats should also be a time where board members can look at the 'bigger issues' at hand, engaging in strategic planning activities for long term success.
- **Envision Success** - A winning team does not enter into a game expecting loss. The health center board must have a vision that allows each member to see future success. It is also a good idea to celebrate success as a board -- keeping strong momentum to achieve goals no matter what challenges arise.
- **Have a Personal Goal to Advance the Team** - Each board member should conduct a self-assessment that includes questions such as: 1) Why am I a member of the team? 2) Am I willing to make the commitment to regularly attend board meetings? 3) Can I accept and support the group's decisions - even when they differ from my own? 4) Am I willing to study and receive training? and 5) Can I effectively perform my responsibilities without getting personally or emotionally involved? Don't let personal agendas cloud your judgment when it comes to governing a health center. *Remember:* A chain is only as strong as its weakest link.
- **Build Accountability Among Members** - Team members must hold one another accountable. The collective board must be willing to call their peers on behaviors that could harm the team. Not only is the accountability factor critical to the health center's success, it is imperative that each board member understand that only the Chairperson can speak on behalf of the entire Board. Board members other than the Chairperson who speak publicly about the health center or the Board expose all of the members to liability and possible litigation. Examples of 'personality types' that stifle effective groups include:
Blocker - may be negative and stubborn, resisting, disagreeing and opposing without reason
Dominator - tries to assert himself/herself by attempting to manipulate members of the team
Resistor - refuses to be put into a position of having to commit to anything
Aggressor or Criticizer - critical of everything and everyone (often to gain status)
Follower - goes along with anything - right or wrong
Recognition Seeker - works in various ways to call attention to himself/herself through boasting, unusual acts or reporting of personal accomplishments.

If you have questions or want further information, please contact OPCA by phone or e-mail jgrant@okpca.org.

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