



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

Board Bulletin

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Effective CHCs Require Reflective Leadership

As the governing body, community health center (CHC) boards set the tone for the organization. CHC boards that routinely assess their own performance will inspire staff to do the same. Ralph Waldo Emerson is noted for saying, "Who you are speaks so loudly I can't hear what you're saying." It is much better to show by example than to tell someone what to do. Effective organizations must have leadership that purposefully demonstrates a desire to improve performance by first looking inward. By routinely evaluating its own performance, a board has more credibility when instructing staff to engage in effective organizational assessment.

Focus Areas for Assessment

The following focus areas critical to governing success serve as a foundation for developing a board assessment tool that can easily target deficiencies and highlight strengths on which to build:

- **Mission, Vision & Purpose** – Do all board members clearly understand the mission? Is the mission statement prominently displayed and considered at board meetings? Is the CHC achieving its mission? Does the board actively seek ways to further the mission? Is the mission central to developing plans, programs and services?
- **Compliance & Operational Efficiency** – Section 330 CHCs have strict guidelines by which they must operate. Board size must be at least 9 members and not more than 25. CHCs require a patient majority board that represents the population served. Not more than half of the non-patient board members can derive more than 10% of their total income from the health industry. In Oklahoma, CHC boards must adhere to the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act. Is the board compliant with 330 grant regulations, other federal regulations and state laws? Does board membership reflect the patient population served? Is the board using committees effectively? Do meetings follow a prepared agenda? Is a quorum present at monthly meetings so the board can make necessary decisions? Does the board have adequate information to make informed decisions and are all members encouraged to participate in discussion? Does the board have a conflict of interest policy that is enforced? Are board members adhering to confidentiality measures? Are committees functioning properly so that meetings can be efficient and effective?
- **Board/CEO Relations** – Trust between the board and the CEO is critical to CHC success. Does the board evaluate, at least annually, the CEO and clearly outline performance expectations? Are conflicts effectively resolved? Does the board have a succession plan for the CEO position? The stability of the organization and long term viability depends on continuity of leadership.
- **Fiscal Oversight** – Does the board understand its roles and responsibilities in financial stewardship? Does the board receive and review financial reports monthly to demonstrate due diligence in fiscal oversight? Do the reports show comparisons between actual expenditures and budget projections? Do the reports compare last year's numbers to current year standings? Is the board tracking required financial performance measures to ensure compliance with the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) expectations? Has the board established financial goals for long-term sustainability?
- **Strategic Planning** – Has the board engaged in effective strategic planning that includes community feedback and staff input? Does the board routinely monitor its strategic plan to measure progress in achieving goals?
- **Board Strengthening** – Do board members seek ongoing training to make sure all members are informed of roles and responsibilities? Do new board members participate in a governance orientation program? Is an annual self-evaluation done to measure board performance?
- **Quality Assurance and Corporate Compliance** – Does the board receive routine reports on quality assurance and risk management activities? Is there an established corporate compliance program?
- **Public Image** – What is the board doing to enhance community relations and heighten awareness of available CHC programs and services? Are board members fulfilling their roles as CHC ambassadors? Is your board recognized as being strong public stewards for the community?

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Oklahoma Primary Care Association
4300 N. Lincoln Blvd., Ste 203, OKC, OK 73105
(405) 424-2282, Ext. 104 • Fax (405) 424-1111 • www.okpca.org