



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

Board Bulletin

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Developing a Board Work Plan

Community health center (CHC) program growth over the past decade has resulted in increased scrutiny accompanied by higher expectations of a return on investment. CHCs must continue pursuit of the 'Triple Aim' – Increased Access, Cost Effectiveness & High Quality. CHC success will depend on organizations being able to identify winning strategies, work as a team, be providers of choice in their communities and have a highly functioning board. The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) site visit teams are closely reviewing governance activities, requesting the organization's board work plan as a tool to monitor compliance.

Board Work Plan Explained

The board work plan is a living document that captures board activity and tracks decisions necessary to fulfill governing duties. It is prepared annually and should align with the health center's strategic plan. Because CHCs often have a fiscal year that does not line up with a program year, boards must be careful to establish the year they wish to use and develop a way to address gaps caused by differing twelve-month periods. Not only is the board work plan used to document specific actions but also to facilitate an efficient approach to conducting and completing the work. Time should be invested to make sure the board work plan encompasses major recurring tasks. To ensure that all work is getting done, review of the plan should be a routine agenda item. Reliability of the board work plan is crucial to ensure that deadlines are met and the work load is accomplished. While designing the work plan will depend on input from all board members and key management staff, there should be a designated 'point person' or committee for accountability. The plan should reflect the date each activity was last reviewed/approved and agree with board minutes. Performance reviewers will be studying the board work plan when conducting site visits to determine if board approval was sought and granted. With the many new initiatives/expectations routinely coming down the pike, provision for emerging issues must be made. There should be a process by which to examine and evaluate unplanned activities, adding only essential items to the work plan. Boards must be careful not to let the 'urgent devour the important' – in other words, do not miss deadlines or fail to do necessary work because the focus was too easily shifted to the unexpected.

What to Include in an Annual Work Plan

Boards, working with staff, determine what items need to be in the work plan and align activities with deadlines/schedules. The intent is to fulfill governance duties only. CHC boards must avoid micromanaging and leave day-to-day operations to the CEO. The following list is not all-inclusive but provides a starting point:

- **Mission & Strategy** – Review Mission/Vision, Needs Assessments, Strategic Plan, Budget, Capital Plan;
- **Governance** – Annual meeting – officer election, review committees, meeting documentation, meeting attendance/participation, bylaws review, board development, board recruitment, board self-assessment (annual evaluation), health center evaluation;
- **Management & Facility** – Update organizational chart, evaluate CEO, determine salary ranges, review policies and procedures, fee structure, sliding fee scale update, monthly financial statements, annual audit, corporate compliance, grant approval, FTCA deeming application, credentialing/privileging review and monitor practice management systems; and
- **Clinical Program** – Review and update all policies related to the clinic, pharmacy, radiology and laboratory services, patient bill of rights and responsibilities and medical records policy.

HRSA recently encouraged CHC leadership to: 1) Focus on the Mission ("If there's no mission, there will be no margin"); 2) Build on Success – Over 19.5 million patients are now served in CHCs, targeting people in most need of care; 3) Stay Focused on Successful Strategies; and 4) Be Positioned for New Opportunities by conducting strategic planning and building organizational capacity. In this ever-changing environment, a strong annual work plan is needed so boards can effectively manage the workload and demonstrate to reviewers that proper oversight is in place. To review the entire series, visit www.okpca.org and click on the home page *Board Bulletin* link.

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