



A. PURPOSE

The Steering Council (“Council”) for the British Columbia Health Services & Policy Research Support Network (“HSPRSN”) has been established by the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research (“MSFHR”) to consult broadly with BC Health Authorities, the Ministry of Health Services (“MOHS”) and BC’s academic community, for the purpose of developing consensus on and providing recommendations to the MSFHR Board of Directors regarding strategic and funding priorities for health services and policy research and capacity building initiatives for the Province.

B. DUTIES

1. Consult, co-ordinate and collaborate with stakeholders to identify immediate and longer term priorities for health services and policy research, programs and initiatives to be developed and implemented through the HSPRSN to build capacity for and to develop and maintain effective health services and policy research activity in the Province of British Columbia for the benefit of the health of all British Columbians.
2. Strike working subcommittees and task forces, with participation not limited to Council membership, to bring broad input into developing recommendations for research and capacity building initiatives; consult with health system leaders to ensure such recommendations support provincial priorities for health system innovation and reform.
3. Based on these consultative processes, develop and make recommendations to MSFHR on programs, funding mechanisms and allocations from HSPRSN funds to support priority research and capacity building initiatives for approval by the MSFHR Board of Directors.
4. Receive and review recommendations from external review committee(s) on applications to HSPRSN research and capacity building competitions and programs and make funding recommendations to HSPRSN/MSFHR staff for approval by the MSFHR Board of Directors.
5. Receive and review reports on the implementation of funding programs and make recommendations to HSPRSN/MSFHR staff on revisions to improve program administrative processes.
6. Provide advice to HSPRSN and MSFHR staff on the evaluation processes for HSPRSN awards.

7. Receive and review evaluation reports and make recommendations to HSPRSN and MSFHR staff on improvements and/or to address issues that may arise through the evaluation processes.

C. Membership

1. Members of the Council are appointed by the MSFHR Board of Directors on the recommendation of the MSFHR Executive Lead for HSPRSN and senior management of MSFHR in consultation with the Steering Council.
2. Membership of the Steering Council will include:
 - a) One designate, ex-officio, from each of British Columbia's Health Authorities to be recommended by the Health Authorities' respective Senior Executive bodies.
 - b) Two designates, ex-officio, from the Ministry of Health Services (MOHS) with responsibility for research and strategic policy to be recommended by the MOHS executive.
 - c) Six members from BC universities nominated by MSFHR Executive Lead for HSPRSN and MSFHR senior management in consultation with their respective institutions on the basis of their individual knowledge and/or expertise in health services and policy research and/or applied management processes and systems.
 - d) One designate, ex officio, from MSFHR
3. Ex-officio appointments to the Council shall be standing appointments without term limits.
4. University appointments shall normally be for a two year term, with the option of an additional one or two year term in the event that an individual assumes the position of Council Co-Chair.
5. Except in the case of individuals who assume the position of Co-Chair, university appointees who have completed a two-year term shall again be eligible for re-appointment as a member one year after the date on which he or she last ceased to be a member.
6. Delegates to the Council are not permitted.
7. In extraordinary circumstances, a Member's appointment may be terminated for cause on the authority of a majority vote of the MSFHR Board of Directors.
8. Two Co-Chairs for the Council will be appointed by the MSFHR Board of Directors on the recommendation of the MSFHR Executive Lead for HSPRSN and senior management of MSFHR in consultation with the Steering Council, one a member recommended by BC's Health Authorities and one representing the BC academic health services and policy research community.

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9. Co-Chair appointments are normally for two years. Co-Chairs are jointly responsible to:
 - a) Rotate the responsibility to serve as Chair of the Steering Council Meetings during the terms of their awards.
 - b) Ensure the integrity of HSPRSN Steering Council processes and in particular ensure that policies and processes for confidentiality, protection of privacy and conflict of interest are strictly maintained.
 - c) Maintain a positive working relationship with Council members and ensure that new members are appointed to the Council as required to maintain a full complement as described herein.
 - d) Ensure that a Council self-evaluation is completed annually and the results reported to the Council and to MSFHR.

D. OPERATIONAL PROTOCOL

1. The Steering Council will meet a minimum of three times per year, with additional meetings as required at the call of the Co-Chairs.
2. In extraordinary circumstances, a special meeting of the Steering Council may be convened:
 - a) Upon request of the MSFHR or its Board of Directors.
 - b) If at least 25% of voting members request such a meeting by application in writing to one or both of the Co-Chairs, with a copy to MSFHR.
3. A quorum shall be fifty percent (50%) of total members plus one.
4. The Council shall at all times strive to reach a consensus for resolutions, but in cases where consensus is not possible, voting will be conducted.
5. All members shall have one vote with the exception of the MSFHR designate and whose appointment shall be non-voting.
6. In case of an equality of votes on a resolution, the Co-chairs of the Council shall not have a casting or second vote in addition to the vote they cast as Council members and the proposed resolution shall not pass.
7. A resolution consented to in writing, whether by document, fax, email or any method of transmitting legibly recorded messages, by all the members of the Council shall be as valid and effectual as if it had been passed at a meeting of the Council duly called and constituted. Such resolution may be in two or more counterparts, which together shall be deemed to constitute one resolution in writing.

8. Time and duration of meetings will be determined by the Co-Chairs in consultation with the MSFHR Executive Lead for HSPRSN.
9. Agenda packages will be circulated on paper and/or electronically to members no later than five working days in advance of meetings.
10. Administrative support for the Council is provided by MSFHR through the MSFHR Executive Lead and staff of HSPRSN.
11. Members will be encouraged to communicate the business of the HSPRSN with stakeholders on a regular basis and to facilitate two-way communication between the Council and stakeholders.
12. In the event that business brought before the Council is determined to be confidential, the Co-Chairs will indicate the status of such business prior to the discussion or distribution of related materials to the Council. In such cases, all members of the Council will maintain confidentiality with respect to all relevant matters, including but not limited to maintaining confidentiality of discussions, documentation and minutes.
13. At least once annually, all members of the Council will disclose in writing all interests that may give rise to an actual conflict of interest in relation of Council business, and will not attend related parts of any meeting, participate in discussions, or vote on any matter in which they have an actual conflict.

E. DOCUMENTATION PROTOCOL

1. Minutes and other supporting documents will be circulated to all Council members following each meeting and no later than with the agenda package for the subsequent meeting.
2. Approved minutes and other supporting documents will be provided to MSFHR and its Board of Directors.
3. Written declarations with respect to Council members' undertakings to abide by the Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality provisions of these terms of reference will be completed annually and maintained on file by the Council secretariat (HSPRSN/MSFHR staff).

F. Evaluation Protocol

1. Annually, the Council shall review its Terms of Reference and performance and report to the MSFHR on this review. The report will include any resulting recommendations for changes to the Terms of Reference, for consideration by the MSFHR Board.

Original: Approved by HSPRSN Steering Council March 4, 2004

Amendment #1: Approved by HSPRSN Steering Council June 16, 2004

This draft: Reviewed by HSPRSN Steering Council March 8, 2006

Approval: MSFHR Board of Directors March 31, 2006

Amendment #2: Reviewed by HSPRSN Steering Council, February 26, 2009

Approval: MSFHR Board of Directors April 2, 2009