



Orientation and Education Policy

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NOVA SCOTIA PRESCRIPTION MONITORING PROGRAM

SECTION I

ORIENTATION AND EDUCATION POLICY

1. Policy Objective

The field of governance is rapidly evolving. New regulatory changes for private sector companies/Crown Corporations are complex and in many instances will only be clarified over time. Evolving governance standards in the private sector are influencing best practices in quasi-public sectors.

While it is expected that directors will possess sufficient knowledge, experience and expertise at the time of their appointment to serve in such capacity, it is recognized that they will not be experts in all disciplines or in all aspects of governance. Therefore, ongoing director development is an ongoing responsibility of the Board, the Board Chair and individual directors.

The purpose of this policy is to establish board norms relating to director orientation and ongoing education.

2. Policy Statement

The Board will ensure that each new Director receives a comprehensive orientation to help him/her become as effective as possible as soon as possible. Ongoing education to enhance the Board's and individual directors' governance capacity will also be planned and offered to the directors.

2.1 Responsibilities

The Board is responsible to (a) define the key elements of a comprehensive orientation program, (b) provide leadership in the delivery of the orientation program (normally through the Board Chair), (c) annually take stock of its collective and individual needs for professional development, and (d) develop an annual education program delivered in one or more special meetings or incorporated into the regular meeting agendas of the Board.

The Administrator's responsibility is to co-ordinate all aspects of the orientation and ongoing education program, once defined by the Board.

2.2 Orientation

All new directors will receive a comprehensive orientation about the Board's mandate, the nature and operations of the Program, the role of the Board, and the expectations for individual directors. The orientation's objective should be to help new directors become as effective as possible as soon as possible.

The orientation should:

- ◆ Ensure that each new member of the Board has a good understanding of the formal governance structure, the legislation, regulations and policies relating to the Board and the Program, the role of the Board, its supporting committees, and the expectations in respect to individual performance as set out in the charter of expectations or equivalent statement;

- ◆ Build an understanding of the Program including:
 - The full range of programs and services provided by the Program
 - Summary details of the Board's principal assets, liabilities, major contracts and major stakeholders
 - The structure of the Board and the Program
 - The Program's major risks and its risk management strategy
 - Key performance indicators
 - Operational or regulatory constraints
 - Requirements for reporting and public disclosure
- ◆ Build a link with the individuals who administer or provide leadership to the Program, including:
 - Opportunities to meet and get to know fellow Directors
 - Meetings with the Administrator
 - Site visit to view the Program's operations and to meet the Administrator's employees assigned to the Program
- ◆ Build an understanding of the Board's or the Program's main relationships, including those with:
 - The responsible Minister
 - Key government representatives who deal with the organization
 - People served by the Program
- ◆ The orientation should provide a comprehensive set of written briefing materials that Directors may use as reference materials. These materials will normally include:
 - ◆ Biographical and contact information for all Board members and the Administrator
 - ◆ The Prescription Monitoring Act and regulations
 - ◆ The Board's governance policies and Program policies
 - ◆ The current annual business plan
 - ◆ The current strategic plan
 - ◆ An explanation of the Program's key performance indicators
 - ◆ A summary of director's liability insurance and indemnity
 - ◆ Details of any major litigation involving the Board or the Program

- ◆ Minutes of the last 3-6 board meetings
- ◆ Details of Board committees and copies of the minutes from the last 3-6 meetings if a new director will be joining a specific committee
- ◆ A schedule of dates for upcoming board meetings
- ◆ Website references

Each orientation program may be customized to take into account the background and skills displayed by individual directors.

The Administrator will ensure that an orientation for new directors takes place. The Board Chair will attend if possible. Existing directors will be encouraged to attend. External expertise will be included in the orientation as required. The Board will review the Board orientation program/package/manual every 3 years.

2.3 Ongoing Education

In recognition of the evolving nature of a director's responsibilities, ongoing education will be necessary. In most cases, all directors should be exposed to the same education.

In light of the unique nature of the Board's mandate, it is likely more appropriate that education will normally be delivered in-house and not via general seminars/conferences. Effective use of available governance literature will also support the ongoing personal and professional development of directors.

2.3.1 Ongoing Education Program

On an annual basis, the Board and the Administrator will develop an education agenda for the entire Board based on a consideration of:

- ▶ Suggestions from Directors as part of the annual board evaluation
- ▶ Key strategic directions of the Program
- ▶ Major decisions on the horizon
- ▶ Appropriate and significant risk management themes; and
- ▶ Other factors as considered appropriate

The topics included on the ongoing education agenda will be addressed at:

- ▶ Education sessions at regular board meetings
- ▶ Special meetings devoted to education, as appropriate

The delivery of the educational program will primarily be done in-house, drawing upon external resources where appropriate.

2.3.2 Governance Literature

As part of board packages, relevant articles or book summaries relating to governance or matters of pertinence to the oversight of the Program will be included by the Administrator. Directors who come across quality reference materials are also encouraged to send them to the Administrator for inclusion in board packages.

3. Legislative Framework

Not applicable.

4. Principles

The following principles will guide the Board's orientation and ongoing education:

- (a) The Board will proactively define its requirements for orientation and ongoing education.
- (b) Directors will commit time to participating in the orientation and education sessions as part of their overall commitment as directors of the organization.
- (c) Wherever possible, all directors will participate in the same educational offerings; customized education may be required to support specialized committee work from time to time.

5. Definitions

In this policy:

- (a) "Administrator" means the agency or person designated by the Minister to administer the Program, and for the purposes of this Policy includes the Manager appointed by the Administrator or any other person employed by the Administrator.
- (b) "Board" means the Nova Scotia Prescription Monitoring Board established by the Prescription Monitoring Act.
- (c) "Program" means the Prescription Monitoring Program established by the Board.

6. Scope

This policy applies to:

- (a) the Board, and
- (b) the Administrator.

7. Accountability

The Administrator and the Board Chair have responsibility for the ongoing monitoring and enforcement of this policy. They will report on compliance with this policy to the Board at least once per year.

8. Challenging Compliance

Any challenge to the Program's compliance with this policy shall be provided in writing to the Board Chair.