

Board to Board Report

A report from the Alliance Board of Directors to the
Boards of Directors of member organizations

October 2020



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Message from the Chair

Dear members,

Last week we celebrated Community Health and Wellbeing Week. Every year, during the Community Health and Wellbeing Week (CHWW) we come together to bring attention to the issues that are important to our communities as well as highlight the great work all of you do to achieve the best possible health and wellbeing for everyone living in Ontario.

This year has been dominated by the COVID-19 crisis. The pandemic has amplified and exacerbated existing health inequities; it has also brought to light the importance of community involvement to address long-existing and new barriers. With this year's CHWW theme – *Power in Community: A Healthy Recovery that Works for Everyone* – we wanted to celebrate Alliance members' leadership and innovation during the COVID-19 response and spotlight the many different ways you've stepped up to meet the needs of your clients and communities. Check #CHWW2020 on Twitter and Facebook for highlights.

The pandemic isn't over yet; many communities continue to deal with the second wave and the long-lasting impacts of COVID-19 along with a number of other public health emergencies: overdose and drug poisoning crisis, anti-Black racism, racism impacting Indigenous people, homelessness and isolation, just to name a few. As we look to the future, addressing these intersecting crises is crucial to ensuring a just and healthy recovery that works for everyone.

This challenging work of eliminating health disparities and making sure that people and communities we serve have equitable opportunities to lead healthy, vibrant lives builds upon our decades-long commitment to health equity. It is reflected in the refreshed Health Equity Charter and resolutions that were

put forward for this year's Annual General Meeting, all of which aim to eliminate barriers to good health and wellbeing. As we continue our work of advancing health equity, we need to stand together, build strong partnerships, continuously re-examine our own practices, and keep each other, policy- and decision-makers accountable. Most importantly, we need to leverage the power of communities, build on their diverse strengths and create spaces for community voices and leadership at every level of our organizations – from front facing staff to the boardroom – and in the broader society.

I know we are up for the challenge because community engagement has always been at the core of our work. I look forward to continue working with you as we build healthier and stronger communities.

This week we also welcome our new CEO Sarah Hobbs. Sarah's commitment to the vision, mission and values of the Alliance has guided her in her role as the executive director of Planned Parenthood Toronto, during her service as the Alliance Board Chair and co-chair of the Executive Leaders' Strategy Group. As we head into a new season of transformation and change, with pandemic recovery and health systems transformation on the immediate horizon, we are delighted to entrust the executive leadership of our Alliance to a thoughtful, committed and trusted colleague and friend with many years of experience in our sector.



Liben Gebremikael

Message from the Chair

As we welcome Sarah, we also say good-bye to Adrianna Tetley and thank her for her tireless, dedicated leadership over the past 15 years. We will be celebrating Adrianna's outstanding service during the Annual General Meeting on November 10.

I look forward to seeing you all at our virtual AGM in November!



Liben Gebremikael
Board Chair, Alliance for Healthier Communities

Alliance Board 2020-2021

Liben Gebremikael: Chair

Executive Director, TAIBU Community Health Centre

Mariette Sutherland: Vice-Chair

Committee member, Noojmowin Teg Health Centre

François Seguin: Treasurer

Board Chair, l'Équipe de santé familiale communautaire de l'Est d'Ottawa

Marc Bisson: Secretary

Executive Director, Centre de santé communautaire de l'Estrie

Claudia den Boer

CEO, CMHA Windsor-Essex County Branch

Cate Melito

Executive Director, Grand Bend Area Community Health Centre

Cliff Ledwos

Clinical Director, Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services

Dale McMurchy

Board member, Kawartha North Family Health Team

Aniko Varpalotai

Board member, Central Community Health Centre

Micheal Hardy

Executive Director, Anishnawbe Mushkiki

Mike Bulthuis

Board member, Centretown Community Health Centre

ONTARIO HEALTH

As of September 29th, Ontario Health has a new operating model and organizational structure which “has been designed to reflect the perspectives of all whom OH serves – Ontario patients, long-term care residents, community clients, caregivers, volunteers, and diverse communities including *Indigenous, Francophone, the Black community* and persons with disabilities.” You can read Ontario Health’s [full 2020-2021 mandate letter](#). Their new operational structure reflects the following portfolios:

- **Regional Portfolios**

All LHIN team members will continue their very important roles working with their Regional Leaders in the North, Central, Toronto, East, and West to coordinate and deliver home and community care; to support local planning and efforts via quality improvement, enhancing access and equity, driving integration, and issues and relationship management; and to plan for and support COVID-19 local response efforts.

- **Health System Portfolios**

- Population Health and Value-Based Health Systems
- Clinical Institutes and Quality Programs
- Health System Performance and Support
- Digital Excellence in Health

- **Corporate Portfolios**

Note: LHINs are operating under the OH Regional Leads (Regional Portfolio), but they are still separate legal entities. All CHC accountability agreements (MSAA) remains with your individual LHIN.



Ontario Santé Health Ontario

ONTARIO HEALTH TEAMS

Throughout the pandemic, various progress has occurred as it relates to Ontario Health Teams (OHTs). There are 43 Alliance members involved in the [29 approved OHTs](#), which include 5 new OHTs that were [announced](#) in July. Congratulations to our members in Algoma, Niagara, Ottawa East, Western (London), and Western York OHTs, as well as the 34 Alliance members of the [17 teams](#) who have submitted their Full Application as of September 18th!

In July, the province also [announced](#) it is investing up to \$25.25 million to directly support the 29 approved OHTs. Of this funding, \$9.5 million will be dedicated to virtual care as a direct result of COVID-19; with the remaining \$15.75 million (up to \$375,000 per OHT) to be used for expanding digital care, dedicated human resources (backbone) and purchasing business information tools.

To further support these OHTs as part of their Central Program of Supports, the Ministry of Health developed a [Collaborative Decision-Making Arrangements \(CDMAs\) Guidance Document](#) and with additional resources from [RISE](#), including CDMA templates and [guidance](#) about using them. A summary about the templates is outlined in this [brief](#).

We would like to recognize all Executive Leaders and staff who have continued this important work by leveraging and forging stronger partnerships to better meet the needs of your communities during this pandemic and as you plan for a more integrated local care system.

LEARN: TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Alliance Resources

- Alliance OHT Webinar – Role of Governors ([recording](#) | [slides](#))
- Alliance Partner and Stakeholder [Briefs](#) and Full Application [Template](#)
- Building Collaboration Capacity for OHTs [Webinar Series](#)
 - Webinars on [Trust](#), [Collaborative Leadership](#), [Collaborative Governance](#) and [more](#)

Ministry of Health Central Program of Supports

- [Becoming an Ontario Health Team](#) (links to all government resources)
- [Collaborative Decision-Making Arrangements \(CDMAs\) Guidance Document](#)

RISE - Rapid-Improvement Support and Exchange

- Includes [briefs](#) such as this one on [Collaborative Governance](#)
- Includes [webinars](#) such as this one on [Attributed Population](#)

LEGISLATION – CONNECTING PEOPLE TO HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE ACT, 2020

The government of Ontario set out in February 2020 to modernize Home and Community Care legislation. In June, the Alliance deputed to the *Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly regarding Bill 175, Connecting People to Home and Community Care Act, 2020*. In its written [submission](#) and deputation, the Alliance outlined 5 recommendations to the government:

1. Create locally-based, equitable approach to Home and Community Care that is based on client needs and improved working conditions.
2. Commit to living wages and proper working conditions for Personal Support Workers (PSWs);
3. Embed care coordination within comprehensive primary care teams with broadened scope, including social prescribing;
4. Commit to not-for-profit delivery of home and community care; and
5. Renew their commitment to health equity in home and community care, including the collection of sociodemographic and race-based data.

This bill received royal ascent in July; new regulations are now being drafted to accompany this legislation. The Alliance was invited by the Ministry of Health to participate in two consultations about the proposed regulations in August relating to both Primary Care and French Language Services.

We continue to support members in responding to the challenges of the pandemic through information sharing, resourcing, and advocacy. Latest [data](#) demonstrating that COVID-19 disproportionately impacts those who are Black and racialized, lower income, and living in higher density housing highlights the vital need for members to take leadership on equity-focused responses locally as we enter the second wave.

Alliance is continually advocating for the [critical role of comprehensive primary care organizations](#) in responding to the pandemic, from ongoing management of illnesses and health promotion, to identifying needs, testing, and providing trusted information and education.

We have also engaged in a range of advocacy initiatives to support [migrant agricultural workers](#), [personal support workers](#), [enhanced discharge planning](#) for people being released from corrections institutions, and [safe school reopening](#) particularly in communities most impacted by COVID-19.

COMMUNITY-LED TESTING

Alliance has continually called for a [proactive and accessible testing strategy](#) that includes focus on vulnerable individuals since early in the pandemic. Team-based primary health care providers have trusted relationships in the community and play an important role in ensuring that testing is available and accessible in the most affected communities. A [recent webinar on community-led approaches to testing](#) showcased how members are leading this crucial work and the associated need to correct misinformation, address stigma, and provide social supports.

As the province begins to open COVID-19 testing in the private sector, we are ramping up [advocacy for immediate action](#) and investment for community-led and equity-based testing.

OPIOID CRISIS AND SAFER SUPPLY

People who use drugs are facing two crises at the moment: the ongoing COVID-19 and the opioid overdose crisis that has intensified during the pandemic. Between March and May 2020, Ontario experienced a 25 percent increase in overdose deaths, compared with the same period last year. The Office of the Chief Coroner also notes that an estimated 55 to 80 people are dying per week of overdoses across the province. There are a few reasons why the crisis is so severe; the most important is the tainted drug supply. The criminalization of drugs and drug use forces people who use drugs to rely on unregulated or street markets. The pandemic has disrupted supply chains and made an already toxic supply all the more unreliable.

COVID has also led to a reduction in access to health services. To meet COVID prevention and control measures, overdose prevention and supervised consumption sites have reduced access. In some regions access to harm reduction supplies has also been impacted. These factors along with limited access to safer supply (pharmaceutical-grade alternative to the toxic street supply) have intensified the opioid overdose crisis. Over the course of the pandemic Alliance members have joined calls for the expansion of safer supply in response to the escalating crisis.

A glimmer of good news: thanks to the tireless advocacy of members and partners, the federal government is providing [funding to a number of safer drug supply projects in Ontario](#), including in Toronto, Ottawa, London, and Kingston. Following Federal Minister of Health Patty Hajdu's [letter](#) encouraging action at all levels to provide people who use drugs with a full spectrum of care, [we are urging the Ontario government](#) to prioritize the development of an Ontario strategy to further advance safer supply and address the province's severe opioid crisis.

BLACK HEALTH UPDATES

In Ontario, Black and racialized people have been disproportionately impacted by COVID. Early in the pandemic, the Black Health Committee, a coalition of Black leaders within the community health sector released [a statement](#) highlighting the pandemic's disproportionate impact on Black communities. Over the course of the pandemic, Black health leaders have continued to call for multi-pronged interventions to address COVID's impact on Black communities. Following the June resurgence of the movement for Black Lives Matter following the killing of George Floyd in the United States and the death of Regis Korchinski-Paquet in Ontario, Black leaders in the community health sector also [called for action](#) to address the harms to Black communities caused by policing. Black health leaders in the community health sector continue calling for the recognition of anti-Black racism as a public health crisis and for specific and community led responses to COVID that speak to the unique risks faced by Black communities.

RACE-BASED AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA COLLECTION

May marked a significant step forward in our advocacy for race-based and socio-demographic data collection, when the Chief Medical Officer of Health announced Ontario will begin [collecting this data](#) from positive COVID-19 cases on a voluntary basis. However, we have [raised concerns](#) that the province's current data collection strategy lacks both a health equity and an anti-racism lens, and risk replicating systemic harm to marginalized populations.

Alliance will continue to monitor and advocate for strong accountability and data ownership frameworks in the implementation. We also encourage all Alliance members to improve the collection of race-based and socio-

demographic data in their own organizations, and promote data quality in general, as significant data gaps still exist.

VIRTUAL CARE AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Alliance has developed a number of resources to support virtual care, including a [virtual visit checklist](#) and a [guided script for check-in and social calls](#). Leveraging member expertise, Alliance also hosted several webinars on delivering virtual health promotion and community programs, including [general introduction, understanding digital tools](#), [virtual physiotherapy services](#), and creating safe online spaces for [LGBTQ+ populations](#) and [marginalized older adults](#). We will continue to support members in the important expansion of virtual clinical care, mental health services, and social and community supports.

DIGITAL EQUITY

The expansion of virtual programming during COVID-19 has exposed the gaps in access to technology that would allow everyone to participate in the society and the need to advance digital equity and digital inclusion. The Performance Management and Information Management (PM/IM) Team is focusing on the importance of digital equity, the urgent need for a digital equity strategy, and the actions stakeholders must take to realize digital inclusion across the province. The PM/IM team is facilitating a Digital Equity Working Group to guide the thought-leadership and development of the digital equity strategy. The team also engaged several leaders in the digital equity space in the cities of Seattle, Boston, and the United Kingdom, who presented their work and lessons learned. The information from these sessions will be incorporated into the digital equity strategy and presented to the Executive Leaders Network for endorsement.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

The high global demand for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) led to supply shortages in Ontario. Many members faced higher costs and other supply challenges. In response, Alliance and IPHCC partnered to provide PPE procurement support, including inventory monitoring, coordinate emergency PPE sharing between member organizations, obtain private donations, escalate urgent needs to regional and provincial tables, and manage bulk purchases of masks, gowns, disinfectant wipes, and other supplies. Alliance also joined other community-based organizations in advocating for a provincial PPE strategy, resulting in the Pandemic PPE Transitional Support Program (PPTSP).

LEARN: KEEPING ALLIANCE MEMBERS CONNECTED

Log into the [members portal](#): We have created a group for COVID-19 resources. The information is updated regularly. Those who have an account on the portal have been added to the group automatically. If you do not have access to the portal, please contact Gabriela Panciu at gabriela.panciu@allianceON.org and she will send you the log-in information.

[Sign up](#) for our weekly bulletin. The bulletin is issued every Thursday and will include the most recent COVID-19 updates, media stories and stories from members.

Follow us on Twitter and Facebook

For any questions, please email communications@allianceON.org

Research

RECENT RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Since COVID-19 emerged as an urgent health issue, the Alliance and our research partners have been studying the impact of the pandemic and how our sector is responding, focusing on how our members are shifting to virtual care delivery. One rapid-response study has been completed and will be published in the *Longwoods Healthcare Quarterly* later this fall.

Meanwhile, we're continuing with other research that will improve outcomes and advance health equity. Our research partners include 12 universities and research institutes across Ontario. Our studies are funded by organizations such as INSPIRE-PHC, SSHRC, and CIHR, and Ontario's Ministry of Health.

Below is a selection of studies that are currently underway or will begin shortly:

- Virtual Care during COVID-19 and Implications for Future Care Delivery
- COVID-19: The Role of Leaders in Shifting to and Sustaining Virtual Delivery of Social Programs.
- Recommendations for Patient-Centered Telemedicine: Learning from patients' experiences with synchronous virtual primary care encounters during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Exploring engagement of mHealth apps for Diabetes management
- Spread and Sustainability of Integrated Models of Team-Based Care for the Management of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease: A Multi-case Study

- Primary Care for Individuals with Severe Mental Illness (PRiSMI)
- Advancing knowledge of homelessness: Expanding use of administrative datasets in Ontario

ADVANCING THE LEARNING HEALTH SYSTEM

The Alliance continues to become a Learning Health System (LHS) – a participatory culture of learning and quality improvement. A learning health system requires committed and engaged front-facing staff who will participate in learning, innovation, evaluation, and knowledge-sharing. At the local level, they can advance improvement efforts at their centre, OHT, or regional tables. They may also wish to participate in a province-wide practice-based learning network (PBLN) specifically for Alliance members. PBLN participants work together to answer community-based healthcare questions and translate research into practice. Governors and leadership can help by fostering curiosity, encouraging continuous learning and growth, and allowing staff to set aside time for these activities.

CACHC CORNER

Over the past few months, the Canadian Association of Community Health Centres (CACHC) has moved forward on its 2020 – 2025 Strategic Plan, focusing efforts in three core areas: communications and advocacy; member services/support; and research and evaluation. Much of this work has surrounded the association's efforts to address the inequitable impact of COVID-19. In late September, the association also held its annual general meeting for members, during which CACHC provided a review of core achievements from the past year and elected a new slate of Board Members to round out its national leadership.

A few core highlights from the past few months of work at CACHC include:

- Funding from TD Bank's Ready Commitment to support Community Health Centre efforts to address COVID-19. From March to May 2020, small grants were distributed by CACHC to all member Community Health Centres that applied.
- Development and distribution of short advocacy videos addressing the inequitable impact of COVID-19 on segments of the Canadian population and the impact of CHCs.
- Developing and cataloguing various support tools, resources, and news articles focused on innovative Community Health Centre services and programs addressing COVID-19.
- Advanced work through CACHC's National Research & Evaluation Working Group on adoption of national CHC Evaluation Framework, including initiation of early adopters' phase, and development of adoption guidance document for CHCs.

LEARN/ACT

Access all of [CACHC's COVID-19](#) advocacy videos, updates, and resources

[Access materials](#) (including 2020-2025 Strategic Plan) and watch the recorded proceedings of CACHC's 2020 Annual General Meeting.

Alliance AGM 2020 resolutions: Putting health equity at the centre

Since it was first approved in 2012, the Health Equity Charter has been one of the foundational documents that, together with the Model of Health and Wellbeing and Model of Wholistic Health and Wellbeing (for Indigenous organizations), has guided our collective efforts recognizing and confronting barriers to equitable health to bring us closer to our vision of the best possible health and wellbeing for everyone in Ontario.

Last year, the Alliance Board launched the Health Equity Charter refresh. As the Alliance Board Vice-Chair and Chair of the Health Equity Charter refresh committee, I am honoured to have been part of the process and want to thank everyone who took the time to provide their input and have helped develop a more relevant and fulsome document.

The refresh of the Charter, originally approved in 2012, has been spurred by both internal and external developments in the health equity landscape. Here, at the Alliance, we heard from several member organizations, particularly those serving Indigenous and Black communities, who expressed concerns about the gaps in the 2012 Charter and questioned whether it still aligns with our evolving understanding of health equity, ally relationship and reconciliation; anti-Black racism and its impacts on the health and wellbeing of Black people, barriers faced by Two Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or queer (2SLGBTQ+), the intersecting and compounding impacts of various forms of discrimination and marginalization. Last year, the Alliance also passed a resolution on Indigenous Health in Indigenous Hands, and has been working to build an ally relationship with the newly formed Indigenous Primary Health Care Council.

Externally, since 2012, we've seen a release of several important reports and recommendations, including: Truth and

Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action report (2015), Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019), Ontario's acknowledgement of Anti-Black racism and consequent action plan to tackle it (2017), the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024), the update of the White Paper on Francophone health in Ontario (2018), among others.

The Alliance Board reflected on these developments and the feedback from various members and asked: How could the Health Equity Charter become a living document that is more relevant to the current situation, at the organizational and sector level?

The refresh process took us longer than planned due to the COVID-19 crisis that has exposed and amplified the health inequities Alliance members have long worked to address. Over the past few months, we have also seen a growing Black Lives Matter movement in Canada and across the world. It has laid bare the pervasive nature of anti-Black racism in all systems, including the health care system, its multiple negative impacts on the health and wellbeing of Black communities, and the need to take a stronger stance on white supremacy, Canada's legacy of colonization and slavery, and racism against Black and Indigenous people.

With the overlapping crises of the pandemic, anti-Black racism, colonization and its continuous impacts on Indigenous people, homelessness, overdose crisis, poverty and isolation, along many others, our collective work to advance health equity is more important than ever. This urgency is reflected in the revised Health Equity Charter.

Your commitment to the Alliance's values of equity, leadership, knowledge and collaboration is also at the core of the resolutions that have been submitted ahead of this year's Annual

Annual General Meeting

General Meeting. This year, we have a record number of resolutions. All 13 of them aim to address health inequities and inequitable access to health care, advance better health outcomes and eliminate barriers that prevent certain populations from living a healthy life. From the Right to Housing to Commitment to Data Collection, to Adverse Childhood Experience and Addressing Violence through a Public Health Approach, to Maintaining the Current Ontario definition of disability for ODSP and Acknowledgement and Mitigation of Climate Change - the resolutions are a testament to your continuous leadership and unwavering commitment to building healthier and stronger communities.

I hope you will take the time to discuss these resolutions at your Board meetings prior to the AGM on November 10. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact Corinne Christie, executive coordinator, at Corinne.Christie@allianceON.org.

The revised Health Equity Charter and resolutions will provide guidance for our collective work in the years to come. I look forward to continue working with all of you to advance health equity across the province in my role as the Alliance Vice-Chair and beyond.

Warmest regards,

Mariette Sutherland,
Alliance Board Vice-Chair, Chair of Health Equity Charter Refresh Committee

ALLIANCE 2020 38TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – PART II

November 10, 2020 | 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

[Register](#)

The Annual General Meeting scheduled for Nov 10 will be a virtual meeting focusing on Resolutions, Awards and other business.

Four by-law resolutions and nine policy resolutions will be brought to the AGM this year. By-law resolutions include:

- Definition of Comprehensive Primary Health Care
- Member Rights and Responsibilities
- Alliance Community Health Equity Builders Program
- Health Equity Charter 2020

The nine policy resolutions have a health equity lens and are aimed at building our capacity to confront systemic barriers to good health and improve programs and services Alliance members provide. We are pleased that six of the policy resolutions were moved by the Alliance members. The resolutions are:

- Addressing Anti-Black Racism
- Addressing Harms Linked to Policing by Reallocating Funds
- Increasing access to injectable opioid agonist treatment (iOAT) and expanding access to safer drug supply programs

Annual General Meeting

- Commitment to Data Collection
- Addressing Violence through a Public Health Approach
- Adverse Childhood Experiences and Resilience
- Right to Housing
- Maintain current Ontario definition of disability for ODSP
- Acknowledgement, Adaptation and Mitigation of Climate Change within the Community Health Sector

For a full text of by-law and policy resolutions, please [click here](#).

ACT

- If you didn't have a chance to attend the Resolutions Information Webinar on October 5, you can find the recording [here](#).
- Make sure these resolutions have time on your local board agenda
- Take a position on each resolution and ensure your Board delegate to the AGM has the voting direction from your Board
- Raise any issues regarding the resolutions in advance at the [Health System Changes webinar](#) on November 5 or send directly to Corinne.christie@allianceON.org

Inclusive Leadership in Governance Training

Inclusive Leadership in Governance training was developed by the Alliance in partnership with OnBoard Canada, HealthNexus and Ryerson's Chang School in 2017. The aim of the training is to build capacity of primary health care organization boards to lead on equity, diversity and inclusion. The training was launched in March 2018, and includes four online modules.

Since the launch, 27 member boards (25%) signed up for the training with a mix of urban and rural members. Members who took the training highlighted its usefulness, and profiles in the Board to Board and Board Liaison networking webinars show that members have made changes to their governance practices after taking the training: from reviewing their Board recruiting practices; to ensuring their Board composition reflects the community they serve; to working on creating a more inclusive Board meeting environment; and focusing more on advocacy and community engagement.

In September 2019, the Chang School announced that the training would be moving to a new learning management system (LMS). The original re-launch date of February 2020 has since been postponed, and the training hasn't been re-launched. From our discussions with the Chang School, we know that the new learning management system will offer time-limited access to the training at a higher cost, which will not work for Alliance members.

The Alliance is committed to providing affordable, easily accessible training opportunities to members to build their capacity to advance health equity, diversity and inclusion. So we have decided to redevelop the Inclusive Leadership in Governance training in-house. As part of the process we will review the content to address the gaps and create, and create additional resources, like a workbook, to support members' learning journey. We are planning to launch the refreshed training at the beginning of 2021. Stay tuned for more updates!

MEET THE MEMBER ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Member Engagement Committee of the Board is excited to continue working with you in the upcoming year. The committee includes:

Cliff Ledwos – Chair

Clinical Director, Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services

François Seguin

Board Chair, l'Équipe de santé familiale communautaire de l'Est d'Ottawa

Aniko Varpalotai

Board member, Central Community Health Centre

Micheal Hardy

Executive Director, Anishnawbe Mushkiki

BOARD LIAISON PROFILE: NICOLA HOLNESS, BLACK CREEK CHC

Nicola Holness is the Board Chair of Black Creek Community Health Centre. The CHC is located in north-west Toronto where Nicola has lived and worked most of her life so when she was approached to join the Black Creek CHC Board six years ago it felt like a good fit for her experience and skills. Two years into her service on the Board, she took on the Board Liaison role and three years ago was elected Chair of the Board.

Why did you decide to take on the Board Liaison role?

Policy and governance are my personal interest and my strength. So when I looked at different committees of the Board I could join, I felt that becoming a board liaison would help me expand my understanding of policy and governance. I also wanted to learn more about the health sector and the role of our own organization within it and bring back this information to our Board.

I work within the social services sector, mainly around violence against women, poverty and racial issues. I don't get much exposure to

healthcare policy so being a Board Liaison has definitely helped me learn more about how the healthcare system works and how it intersects with other social factors. What makes the Alliance so unique is that it incorporates community perspective. It doesn't just focus on clinical services but connects to the other issues, for instance LGBTQ+ community, housing crisis, policing and so on. For us, as a CHC, it is important to be part of this conversation.

It's also been interesting to hear from the geographical standpoint from other members. The meetings are Ontario wide so you get to hear about different perspectives, issues and how they differ from ours. But also it's an opportunity to share with other people what we are doing well.



What are some of the ways you are using this role to support the work of your local Board?

For me, the important part of this role is communications so I make sure to bring the information from webinars and Board to Board reports back to my CHC Board. With our monthly Board meetings, we have time for updates from various committees so at every meeting I have an opportunity to share information: whether go over the Board to Board report or share the discussions that we had during a Board Liaison meeting.

One example is the transition to Ontario Health Teams when we really benefitted from the knowledge shared by the Alliance. Listening to what other communities are doing was interesting for our Ontario Health Team. Hearing from other teams with 20+ agencies involved and how they are approaching it from the governance perspective led to discussions at our Board of how these approaches might apply to us.

How do you see the Board Liaison role strengthen and grow in the future?

Information sharing and knowledge of the landscape is very useful but our Board sometimes struggles with determining actionable goals without interfering in the daily operations of the organization. Although we don't deal with operational matters, from a governance standpoint it's good for us to have that knowledge from the Alliance to provide guidance in executive decisions that may impact our community's health centre. We have a good grasp on local and systemic advocacy initiatives and a strong connection with our local politicians, but it would be good to know if there are other actions we should be taking that we are not aware of.

This is Community Health and Wellbeing Week and we are celebrating the many different way Alliance members have stepped

up to support their clients and communities during the pandemic. What are some things you are proud of about Black Creek CHC's response?

I am proud that Black Creek CHC was able to continue services with things being shut down, utilizing electronic platforms to still run programs, like virtual groups for seniors. We've also been able to continue supporting the most vulnerable clients through food access, along with distribution of harm reduction kits, hygiene products and other items to individuals and families.

Black Creek CHC has also been doing mobile testing, going to different neighbourhoods within our catchment area. We are located in one of the areas with high rates of infections where a lot of people work in the service industry and are at a higher risk of getting sick. Mobile testing a great way for people to stay in their community and get tested without having to wait in huge lines.

ADVICE FOR NEW BOARD LIAISONS

- Read the materials before you go into the meetings. That will help you prepare for what will be discussed and be able to ask questions and participate in the discussions.
- Participate in the orientation networking webinar to better understand what the Board Liaison role entails.
- Connect with other Liaisons who represent their Boards.
- Be prepared for a lot of up-to-date and timely information.

ACT

Confirm your Board Liaison

Board Liaisons play an important role. As the title suggests, it is all about connections: with the Alliance for Healthier Communities, with Alliance members across Ontario and to broader provincial landscape.

Board Liaisons get an opportunity to learn more about Ontario's health system and their organization's role within it, as well as receive regular updates about important developments and opportunities. They will also be able to connect with fellow board members across the province and share their experiences, ideas and questions around community-governed primary health care.

85% of Alliance members now have a Board Liaison assigned and we want to thank all of you for attending webinars and meetings, participating in discussions, sharing your experiences, questions and concerns, and bringing the information back to your Boards.

For those who have not assigned a Board Liaison, we urge you to do so. Don't miss out on this great opportunity to build stronger connections with Alliance members across Ontario, the Alliance itself and to broader provincial landscape.

If you have any questions about the Board Liaison role, you can contact Oleksandra Budna at oleksandra.budna@allianceON.org. Please send the name of your Board Liaison to Gabriela Panciu at gabriela.panciu@allianceON.org.

LEARN

Alliance 101 pre-recorded webinar

The Alliance 101 webinar will take you on an introductory tour of the Alliance for Healthier Communities and provide an orientation to who we are and what we do. This pre-recorded, 30-minute webinar covers the main aspects of our work: Alliance's vision, mission, strategic directions and structure. It also touches on our new name, membership criteria and what unites our vibrant and diverse network.

The webinar is available in [English](#) and [French](#).

Health System 101 pre-recorded webinar

We are currently working on refreshing Health System 101 webinar trying to capture all the changes happening in Ontario's health system. A revised version will be available at the end of October. In the meantime, you are welcome to watch the previous version available in [English](#) and [French](#).

ACT

Board Liaison Resource Guide

We are working on a Board Liaison resource guide to support your work, and are looking for your feedback on a draft. What are some resources/tools you wish you had when you first started as a Board Liaison? What supports would help you do your work today? The draft is [available on the portal](#).

Please let us know if there is any additional information, resources, tools and templates that you would like to see in the guide. You can provide your feedback through [this forum](#) or by sending it directly to Oleksandra Budna, communications and member relations lead, at oleksandra.budna@allianceON.org.

CONNECT

New, redesigned portal: better way to connect with the Alliance and each other

Are you looking to connect with Board members from other Alliance member organizations? Do you have a question or an idea to share? The new portal is here to help you do that and more! With its interactive interface and additional features, it will allow you to:

- Create and manage connections with colleagues
- Interact with connections and groups through a personalized feed
- Sign into the website by linking Facebook or LinkedIn accounts
- Get instant notifications through the SocialLink mobile app

Check out the [user guide](#) for an introduction into some of the key features.

We invite you to log into the new portal, explore and connect with us and other board members across the province.

In addition to offering a new way to connect, the portal houses a wide range of resources and tools for board members. To register your board for the portal:

- Create a general email account for all of your directors (ex. board@xxxxx.com)
- Send your general email to gabriela.panciu@allianceON.org to gain access.

Once you are signed up, a confirmation email with log in instructions will be sent to you to share with your board.

BOARD LIAISON AND CHAIR MEETING (VIRTUAL)

Tuesday, November 24, 2020 | 5:30-7:30 pm
[Register](#)

Every year before the conference, Board Liaisons and Chairs from Alliance member organizations have an opportunity to meet in person, discuss issues important to them and learn from each other. This year, as you know the conference was cancelled due to COVID. So, like many other events, the Annual Board Liaison and Chair Meeting is going virtual.

On November 24, we invite you to join us to share knowledge, insights and questions. As part of the meeting, TAIBU CHC will present a session on Increasing Marginalized Voices in Governance and Leadership. Please see the session description below. If you have any questions or suggestions about the Annual Board Liaison and Chair Meeting, please contact Oleksandra Budna at oleksandra.budna@allianceON.org.

Increasing the Marginalized Voices on your Governance & Leadership

This session is designed to help organizations better strategize for community engagement at governance and leadership tables/opportunities. TAIBU CHC has developed a Governance and Leadership training module designed to build capacity for emerging racialized and marginalized volunteer groups and to assist larger organizations in recruiting community members for their boards, as well as creating a positive environment for their full participation. This session will combine community engagement and governance capacity building to give participants a broad range of skills and strategies. The session will also include self-reflection and tips for being an advocate and an ally when working with racialized and marginalized communities.

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

Board Liaison Orientation Webinar
Wednesday, October 14, 2020 | 5:30-6:30 p.m.
[Register](#)

This webinar is an opportunity for new and returning board liaisons to learn more about the board liaison role and what it entails, best practices and ways to use this role to enhance the work of your local board. We will share available resources, upcoming events and engagement opportunities, and you will hear from and connect with other board liaisons across the province.

Heath System Transformation webinar
Thursday, November 5, 2020 | 5:30-7:00 p.m.
[Register](#)

The webinar will bring the latest updates on changes underway in Ontario's health system. It'll enable boards to stay current on key issues and gain an insight on how upcoming policy changes will impact their centres.

Board Liaison Networking Session webinar
Wednesday, January 27, 2021 | 5:30-7:00 pm
[Register](#)

This webinar is an opportunity for all board liaisons to connect on key priorities and raise awareness about issues that are affecting all member boards.

Member Engagement

ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to Alliance members celebrating anniversaries this year!

10 years

*South East Grey Community Health Centre
Capreol Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic
Huronia Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic
North Bay Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic
North Muskoka Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic
Waterloo Region Nurse Practitioner-led Clinic*

15 years

*Équipe de santé familiale communautaire de
l'Est d'Ottawa*

20 years

*Delhi Family Health Team
Kitchener Downtown Community Health
Centre
Misiway Milopemahtesewin Community
Health Centre
Rainbow Valley Community Health Centre*

25 years

*Centre de santé communautaire du
Témiskaming*

30 years

Vibrant Healthcare Alliance

35 years

Community Care City of Kawartha Lakes

45 years

Flemingdon Health Centre

Member Complaint Process

Every member of the Alliance has the right to bring forward any complaints they may have about the Alliance.

When a complaint is brought to the Alliance through a board or staff member, the complaint is referred to the Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer. The Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer will determine if it is a policy matter or operations related complaint, and will follow the appropriate process outlined in the Alliance's Governance Policy #2C – Board Members' Code of Conduct.

The full process is available on our [website](#). If you have any questions or concerns please contact oleksandra.bunda@allianceON.org.

Feedback

We are very open to comments and feedback. In particular, we would very much appreciate it if you could take a few minutes to answer the following questions:

1. What did you find useful and/or interesting in *Board to Board*?
2. What would you like to see in future reports?
3. How could it be improved?

Please provide your answers and any other comments in the manner that is most convenient for you, either by:

- emailing Oleksandra Budna at oleksandra.budna@allianceON.org;
- by completing the online survey at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Board-to-Board-Oct2020>

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer these questions. They will be useful in our continued effort to improve future communications.