
A Framework for the Establishment of a Saskatchewan Academic Health Sciences Network

Introduction

The Noseworthy report (1999) recommended the creation of a Health Sciences Advisory Council to address the optimum use of the resources within the University of Saskatchewan in the interests of health care in Saskatchewan. The Fyke and the Glynn reports (2001) recommended that Saskatoon District Health (SDH) be designated an academic health sciences centre, with a different mandate and governance structure than those of the other health districts and with education and research requirements being acknowledged as central to the mission of the centre. As Glynn noted:

“There should be an interdependent relationship between the University of Saskatchewan and SDH – each needs the other to thrive and survive.”

“Teaching, service and research should be seen as complementary and interrelated core activities of the university and the district.”

Consistent with the Noseworthy recommendations, the Health Sciences Advisory Council was formed in January 2000 to function in an advisory capacity to its member organizations. The Council has focused on the governance challenges associated with the creation of a stronger collaboration and operational issues such as access to operating rooms and the recruitment of physicians and faculty.

Consistent with the Noseworthy, Fyke and Glynn recommendations and the recently released Action Plan for Saskatchewan Health Care, the Council has given consideration to the creation of an academic health sciences centre and has determined that there are persuasive arguments to establish a province-wide network to meet the need for effective collaboration. Accordingly, the Council now agrees to a framework for the establishment of a Saskatchewan Academic Health Sciences Network for partnership in service, research, and teaching.

This new initiative reflects a partnership led by Saskatoon District Health and the University of Saskatchewan and supported by the Province of Saskatchewan and the Regina Health District.

Purpose of the Saskatchewan Academic Health Sciences Network

The Saskatchewan Academic Health Sciences Network is an interdependent partnership involving Saskatoon District Health, the University of Saskatchewan, Regina Health District, other provincial health districts, and the Province of Saskatchewan. The Network is directed towards serving its partners' long term mutual interests in providing clinical services, conducting health research and educating future health care professionals. The Network, as a partnership entity, is designed to ensure that it carries out its mandate through a joint and collaborative relationship. The Network will ensure an effective, accountable and visionary governance and management structure through which collaborative service, research and teaching will be delivered.

The Saskatchewan Academic Health Sciences Network will strive to develop areas of service, research and teaching excellence including some or all of the following:

- Primary health care research and delivery;
- Core specialty services;
- Integrated teaching and learning models for health professionals;
- Strategically focused areas of bio-medical research;
- Aboriginal health; and,
- Population and community health.

Additional areas of excellence may be identified and developed as the Network establishes itself.

Guiding Principles for the Network

The Saskatchewan Academic Health Sciences Network will operate using a set of guiding principles. These principles build on the discrete missions of the Network's partners, with emphasis on collaboration, interdependence, interdisciplinary practice, and an expansive definition of health.

<i>An interdependent model</i>	
Interdependence of service, research and teaching	The delivery of patient/client-centred care, the conduct of high quality research, and the delivery of superb teaching are activities performed at their best when they are considered interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Inherent in this interdependent model is mutually respectful teamwork and cooperation between and within disciplines.

<i>Primary areas of focus</i>	
Patient/client-centred care	Patients/clients will receive the best care possible, and the Network will operate consistent with the maxim that patient/client needs have the highest priority. Patient/client-centred care is the provision of care that is respectful of and responsive to individual patient/client preferences, needs and values and ensuring that their values guide all clinical decisions.
Research	The generation of new knowledge is an essential responsibility of the Network. Research will be encouraged, supported and reviewed to ensure the Network's competitive national standing.
Nature of the educational experience	Patient/client care is continually improved through the application of existing and current knowledge to the teaching programs that prepare succeeding generations of health professionals.
<i>Special features</i>	
Expansive definition of health	The Network adopts an expansive definition of health, according attention to bio-medical research, primary health care needs and to those population health concerns that are particularly pressing in the province of Saskatchewan.
Interdisciplinary professional practice	The Network will advance, promote and expect interdisciplinary team approaches in the development of professional practice for service, teaching and research.
<i>Geographic reach</i>	
Provincial resource	The Network is a provincial resource with responsibility for conducting research, disseminating knowledge, providing support to enhance the quality of health care in the province, and training practitioners in a manner that meets the interests of all citizens of Saskatchewan.
Collaboration with others for the best use of regional resources	The Network will seek to collaborate with other agencies, institutes and centres, particularly those in other parts of the prairie region, to achieve the best possible outcomes for service, teaching and research and to secure the appropriate allocation of resources for specialized medical services and research priorities.

<i>Performance and accountability</i>	
Standards of practice and performance	Teaching, service and research practice and performance will be consistent with the highest quality and professional standards. A high value will be placed on teamwork, cooperation and mutual respect in a high quality work environment that will both attract and retain health professionals.
Accountability	As a condition of public support for its activities, the Network will develop a social contract that describes the initial services and deliverables that will be provided. These will be reviewed on a continuing basis and revised from time to time to meet emerging needs/challenges.

Governance of the Saskatchewan Academic Health Sciences Network

With the creation of the Network, the Health Sciences Advisory Council will be replaced by a Saskatchewan Academic Health Sciences Network Board that will act as the governance entity. The primary responsibilities of the Network Board will be the identification of strategic objectives and general oversight of the Network and the Management Committee. The Network Board will assume the responsibilities of the Health Sciences Advisory Council.

The Network Board will be comprised of representatives from provincial health districts, the University of Saskatchewan, and the Province of Saskatchewan, with chair responsibilities shared by the Chairs (or designates) of the Board of Governors of the University and the Board of Saskatoon District Health. The Network Board will have a joint reporting relationship to the University of Saskatchewan Board of Governors and the Board of Saskatoon District Health and its continued existence is dependent on the agreement of both partners.

Membership of the Network Board will be as follows:

- Co-Chairs (one University of Saskatchewan and one SDH Board Member);
- Four members appointed by Saskatoon District Health;
- Four members appointed by the University of Saskatchewan Board of Governors;
- One member representing the Regina Health District;
- One member representing other Health Districts in the province;
- A representative from the Department of Post Secondary Education and Skills Training; and,
- A representative from the Department of Health.

The membership of the Network Board will be reviewed periodically by the members. Changes in membership will be recommended by the Network Board and submitted to the University of Saskatchewan Board of Governors and the Board of Saskatoon District Health for approval.

The individual partners of the Network Board will continue to fulfill their principal and joint responsibilities as follows:

- Principal responsibility for the **academic programming** of the Network continues to rest with the University of Saskatchewan health sciences colleges.
- Principal responsibility for the **health needs** of Saskatoon and area continues to rest with Saskatoon District Health.
- Where **service, research, and teaching responsibilities require collaboration for their optimal delivery**, the management of this collaboration is vested in the Management Committee, which is a committee of the Saskatchewan Academic Health Sciences Network.

Management of the Network

The ongoing management of the Saskatchewan Academic Health Sciences Network will be provided by the Management Committee. Initially, the Management Committee will comprise the Dean of Medicine, University of Saskatchewan and the Physician Vice-President, Saskatoon District Health who will act as co-chairs. While the membership is expected to incorporate a more expansive province-wide perspective as the Network evolves, the initial management structure is consistent with the critical focus of the Network on the interdependent relationship between Saskatoon District Health and the University of Saskatchewan.

The Management Committee is responsible for achieving the Saskatchewan Academic Health Sciences Network's strategic objectives and priorities. The Management Committee will report regularly to the Saskatchewan Academic Health Sciences Network Board regarding progress on meeting objectives and priorities within the context of the framework established by the Board.

The Management Committee assumes, as a major responsibility and as its first priority, the development of sub-agreements that permit, among other things, the joint:

- planning of space and infrastructure requirements,
- establishment of research priorities,
- creation of research protocols, and
- recruitment of physicians and other health professionals.

Chair
University of Saskatchewan
Board of Governors

Date: _____

Chair
Saskatoon District Health Board

Date: _____

President
University of Saskatchewan

Date: _____

President
Saskatoon District Health

Date: _____

Chair
Regina Health District

Date:

President
Regina Health District

Date:

Minister of Post Secondary Education
and Skills Training

Date: _____

Minister of Health

Date: _____