

HEALTH TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY – POLICY FORUM TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Health Technology Strategy (HTS) Policy Forum (hereinafter the “Policy Forum”) is a federal, provincial and territorial coalition of interests for health technology policy, seeking to achieve common purpose and economies through identifying areas of common policy interest, sharing health technology information and collaborating where beneficial to the members. One of its primary goals is to prevent “whipsawing”, the unfavourable, collateral impact on one jurisdiction brought on by decisions and actions by another jurisdiction.

In these Terms of Reference, unless otherwise provided, the definitions set out in Appendix 1 attached hereto shall apply herein.

1.0 Mandate

The mandate of the Policy Forum is to provide F/P/T jurisdictions with opportunities to share information and collaborate on health technology policy development.

2.0 Responsibilities

2.1 The responsibilities of the Policy Forum are to:

- a) identify health technologies of common interest and issues in their management;
- b) share health technology assessment and policy analysis information;
- c) collaborate, where beneficial to members, on the implementation, appropriate use and decommissioning of health technologies;
- d) identify health technologies that may be suitable for field evaluation trials.

3.0 Accountability

3.1 The Policy Forum reports to the CADTH Board of Directors as delegated by the Conference of Deputy Ministers of Health (CDM).

3.2 The CADTH Board of Directors shall be accountable to the CDM for ensuring that the Policy Forum carries out its mandate within its Terms of Reference.

4.0 Membership

4.1 Composition

Participation on the Policy Forum is voluntary and consists of Voting Members as follows:

a) ***Voting members:***

Each federal, provincial and territorial Ministry or Department of Health may appoint one voting member. Such members may be chosen from the CADTH Board of Directors.

Each jurisdiction may also appoint an official alternate who would attend Policy Forum meetings in the event the voting member is not able to attend.

Jurisdictional appointees would ideally have decision-making responsibilities for health technology policy formulation and implementation in their respective federal/provincial/territorial jurisdictions.

b) ***Observers:***

The Policy Forum Chair, in consultation with the Policy Forum secretariat, may invite observer(s) to attend Policy Forum meetings from time to time, as he/she deems appropriate.

4.2 Appointment/Nomination Process

A Voting Member and his/her official designate shall be appointed by each of the participating federal, provincial or territorial Deputy Ministers of Health.

4.3 Term of Appointment

Each Voting Member serves at the pleasure of the Ministry or Department of Health appointing him/her.

4.4 Committee Officers

The officers of the Policy Forum shall be the Chair and Vice-Chair.

The Voting Members shall choose, by majority vote, from their group the Chair and Vice-Chair.

Regarding the term of appointment of the first Chair and the first Vice-Chair of the Policy Forum, the Chair shall be appointed for a term of two years and the Vice-Chair for a term of one year. Thereafter the appointment of the Chair and

Vice-Chair shall be for a term of two years, and may be renewed at the discretion of the CADTH Board of Directors.

The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Policy Forum. In addition, the Chair is responsible for reporting on Policy Forum activities to the CADTH Board of Directors and shall act as the key liaison between the Policy Forum and CADTH. The Chair shall be the sole spokesperson for the Policy Forum.

The Vice-Chair shall, in the absence or disability of the Chair, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the Chair.

4.5 Voting Rights

Decisions and actions taken by the Policy Forum will predominately be in the form of common agreement amongst some or all of its voting members. However in the event a vote may be needed, a simple majority of the voting members shall be required.

Each federal, provincial and territorial Ministry or Department of Health shall be entitled to one vote on all matters coming before the Policy Forum. The voting privileges are also automatically assigned to the official designate in attendance at a Policy Forum meeting.

5.0 Policy Forum Meetings

5.1 Frequency of Meetings

Face-to-face meetings are held twice yearly. Additional teleconference meetings and/or face to face meetings will take place, as required.

5.2 Notice of Meetings

Meetings of the Policy Forum may be held at any time and place in Canada to be determined by the Voting Members, provided that reasonable notice of such meeting shall be given in advance to each Voting Member.

5.3 Quorum

The quorum at meetings of the Policy Forum shall be a majority of the appointed Voting Members.

5.4 Attendance

All Voting Members shall attend Policy Forum meetings. A Policy Forum Member who is unable to attend a face to face meeting may request permission from the Chair to participate in the meeting via other means such as video

conference, teleconference or other communications facilities. The Chair shall have sole discretion in deciding whether to grant permission to such Member's request but shall only grant permission in exceptional circumstances.

5.5 Attendees

In addition to Voting Members or his or her official designate, only the following persons shall be entitled to attend Policy Forum meetings but have neither the right to participate, except as noted below, nor the right to vote:

- a) (the) CADTH President and CEO
- b) the most senior staff member of the HTA Directorate
- c) designated CADTH secretariat staff;
- d) such other CADTH staff as the CADTH President and CEO may determine from time to time.

The CADTH staff attending the meeting shall serve as a resource to the Policy Forum. They will provide administrative and secretariat support and may actively participate in the presentation of information or discussions at the request of the Policy Forum Chair. They shall also assist in obtaining additional information and/or expert advice at Policy Forum's request.

5.6 Agenda

The Policy Forum meeting agendas are developed by the Policy Forum Chair in consultation with the Policy Forum Secretariat.

5.7 Decisions

No decision can be enacted unless there is a quorum. Decisions will typically be made by consensus. If a vote is necessary, a simple majority of the Voting Members participating in the meeting shall be required.

5.8 Records of Meetings

The Chatham House Rule shall be applied to meetings of the Policy Forum. Participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s) nor that of any other participant may be revealed.

A summary record of consensus decisions and follow up actions required to facilitate the work of the Policy Forum shall be documented.

A copy of the decision record shall be sent to Voting Members, official designates, CADTH staff as outlined in Section 5.5.

6.0 Reimbursement of Expenses

Voting Members shall be entitled to be paid by CADTH reasonable expenses incurred by them in the performance of their duties.

Teleconference expenses are paid by CADTH, as required.

The reimbursement of any additional expenses will require CADTH Board of Directors approval in advance.

7.0 General Provisions

7.1 Secretariat and Administrative Support

Secretariat and administrative support is provided by CADTH.

7.2 Amendment to Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference may be amended at any time, and from time to time, by the CADTH Board of Directors.

7.3 Confidentiality

It is the responsibility of Policy Forum members to know what information is confidential and to obtain clarification when in doubt. Except as he or she may be compelled by applicable legal process, a member must, both while having and after ceasing to have that status, treat as confidential all information regarding the policies, internal operations, systems, business or affairs of the Policy Forum and of CADTH obtained by reason of his or her status as a member of the Policy Forum and not generally available to the public. A member shall not use information obtained as a result of his or her involvement on the Policy Forum for his or her personal benefit. Each member shall avoid activities which may create appearances that he or she has benefited from confidential information received during the course of his or her duties as a Policy Forum member.

7.4 Sub-committees

The Policy Forum may form sub-committees and/or task groups to fulfill its mandate. The Policy Forum may call upon committees or task groups within the existing CADTH / HTA structures and/or other external resources to support its work. The reimbursement of any expenses associated with the use of the foregoing structures or resources will require CADTH approval in advance.

APPENDIX 1

Definitions

In the Terms of Reference of the Policy Forum, the following definitions apply, unless otherwise provided.

CADTH: Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health, a corporate body duly incorporated under the laws of Canada.

CADTH Board/Board of Directors: The CADTH Board comprises 13 Directors appointed by the Deputy Ministers of Health of the federal government, nine provinces, and three territories. The Board is accountable to its Members, the participating federal, provincial and territorial health ministries, for the delivery of CADTH's programs.

Chatham House Rule: The world-famous rule that may be invoked at meetings to encourage openness and the sharing of information. – Explanation of the Rule found in Appendix 2.

Consensus: A mutually acceptable agreement that takes into consideration the interests of all concerned parties. An agreement reached through consensus may not satisfy each participant's interests equally or receive a similar level of support from all participants.

F/P/T: federal, provincial and territorial

Observers: Observers to the Policy Forum may be appointed, in consultation with the Policy Forum Chair but are not entitled to vote.

Participating F/P/T Health Ministry: a Member of CADTH that is either a federal, provincial or territorial government as represented by its Deputy Minister of Health.

Policy Forum Member: a member of the Policy Forum

Policy Forum Terms of Reference: the Terms of Reference established for the Policy Forum by the CADTH Board of Directors.

Voting Members: means a Member appointed by the federal, provincial or territorial Health Ministries. The official designate for the Health Ministry may vote at Policy Forum meetings when serving in his/her official capacity as the official designate.

APPENDIX 2

The Chatham House Rule reads as follows:

"WHEN A MEETING, OR PART THEREOF, IS HELD UNDER THE CHATHAM HOUSE RULE, PARTICIPANTS ARE FREE TO USE THE INFORMATION RECEIVED, BUT NEITHER THE IDENTITY NOR THE AFFILIATION OF THE SPEAKER(S), NOR THAT OF ANY OTHER PARTICIPANT, MAY BE REVEALED".

EXPLANATION of the Rule

The Chatham House Rule originated at Chatham House with the aim of providing anonymity to speakers and to encourage openness and the sharing of information. It is now used throughout the world as an aid to free discussion. Meetings do not have to take place at Chatham House to be held under the rule.

Meetings, events and discussions held at Chatham House are normally conducted 'on the record' with the Rule occasionally invoked at the speaker's request. In cases where the Rule is not considered sufficiently strict, an event may be held 'off the record'.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Q. When was the Rule devised?

A. In 1927 and refined in 1992 and 2002.

Q. Should one refer to the Chatham House Rule or the Chatham House Rules?

A. There is only one Rule.

Q. What are the benefits of using the Rule?

A. It allows people to speak as individuals, and to express views that may not be those of their organizations, and therefore it encourages free discussion. People usually feel more relaxed if they don't have to worry about their reputation or the implications if they are publicly quoted.

Q. How is the Rule enforced?

A. Chatham House can take disciplinary action against one of its members who breaks the Rule. Not all organizations that use the Rule have sanctions. The Rule then depends for its success on being seen as morally binding.

Q. Is the Rule used for all meetings at Chatham House?

A. Not often for the larger meetings (so-called Membership Events); more frequently for smaller ones, for example where work in progress is discussed or when subject matter is politically sensitive.

Q. Who uses the Rule these days?

A. It is widely used in the English-speaking world - by local government and commercial organizations as well as research organizations.