

**MIDDLESEX HOSPITAL ALLIANCE
REPORT OF THE CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS
JUNE 2009**

As Vince Lombardi says, "*The achievements of an organization are the results of the combined effort of each individual.*" The significant transformation process and achievements of the Middlesex Hospital Alliance over the past year are the results of a dedicated team of staff, administration, physicians and volunteers, making our two community hospitals stronger during changing times.

Board meetings

The Middlesex Hospital Alliance is governed by a knowledge-based board of directors. The board comprises local residents - your neighbours, your business associates, your doctor. The board has 16 members. Eleven are elected by the members of the corporation and five are ex-officio. The ex-officio members are the Chief of Staff at Four Counties Health Services, Chief of Staff at Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital, President of the Medical Staff at FCHS, President of the Medical Staff at SMGH and Chief Executive Officer of the Middlesex Hospital Alliance. Directors on the board are recruited from our community and serve no more than three, three year terms.

Guests may attend meetings of the Board for the purposes of supporting or facilitating the Board Meeting upon:

- a) Invitation by the Chair of the meeting; or
- b) Resolution of the Board; or
- c) Invitation by the Chief Executive Officer.

Board Retreat

The Board of Directors started the year with a Retreat. The focus of the retreat was to examine the key issues facing the MHA and develop strategies to deal with them. It also provided Board members the opportunity to network and share information and ideas.

Education

Ongoing education is an important component for maintaining a knowledge-based board. In addition to the Board Retreat, education sessions are provided prior to each board meeting. Some of the topics covered include: the Role of the Chief of Staff, the Role of the President of the Medical Staff and Patient Safety.

Board Communication

The MHA Board values transparency and accountability and regularly distributes press releases to the local media which are also posted to the MHA web site – www.mhalliance.on.ca – media releases are archived in the “What's New” category. Monthly media releases follow each regular board meeting and are also issued at other times during the month to communicate other important news or events.

Regular communication is also maintained with the MPP and Municipal Representatives to provide up-to-date information and garner continued support for the MHA.

Strategic Planning

External Review SMGH – LHINs Board/Leadership Meetings, External Reviewer

SMGH went through an External Review initiated by the South West LHIN to address the legal requirement to balance the hospital's deficit budget. In March 2008, the SMGH was facing a projected annual deficit of \$2.6 million for 2009/10. The External Review Team's role was to align SMGH costs to that of similar-sized hospitals. Meetings were held with the Chief of Staff and senior medical leadership to discuss the recommendations of the draft External Review Report and to obtain input and feedback to the recommendations. Administration, staff and physicians were also highly engaged in this process and I would like to thank them for their collaborative and diligent efforts.

The Board Leadership, together with Administration was involved in extensive negotiations with the South West LHIN. There was a considerable amount of discussion and negotiation with no agreement reached about continuation of the Obstetrical Services Recommendation when the External Review was made public in March, 2009.

Since that time, administration, physicians and staff have put forth the recommendation to consolidate 4th and 2nd floors into one unit, closing the physical space on 4th floor and maintaining obstetrical services, which is a "win-win" for everyone in the service area. I am confident that the transformation process has positioned SMGH well for the future.

Four Counties Health Services, although not directly involved with the External Review process, has realized financial benefits from positive outcomes.

Board Leadership Networking

The Board Leadership has been engaged with the Thames Valley Board Leadership Group over the past year. This group of Board Executives met quarterly to discuss common concerns and responsibilities of the Board. Some of the topics discussed included:

- CEO goal setting, compensation and succession planning.
- Mr. T. Closson, President and CEO of the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) spoke to the group on the current provincial financial healthcare situation and future transfer payments from the Ministry of Health.
- Mr. N. Gamble, Board Chair of the Southwest LHINs addressed the group on "Hospital – LHIN Working Partnerships" and discussed the "Blueprint for Health" initiative.

Board Intranet Access

Communication continues to be a priority for this corporation and new technologies are changing the options that we have for communicating – internally and externally. The *MHA Insider*, a central internal communication tool used by management, staff and physicians, is now available to Board members remotely. With this *intranet*, the Board is able to access board packages from its web page, receive the most up-to-date information and communicate with each other.

The future continues to hold challenges for the MHA specifically and for all health care delivery in rural Ontario. This board will continue to meet those challenges, through continued negotiations and collaboration with our LHIN, our local politicians and community leaders.

Additionally, we will continue to do the work required to develop our own best practices in leadership and governance.

Special Thanks

I offer my sincere appreciation to the Board of Directors, and the community members who serve on Board Committees. The commitment of time and talents given so generously by all of these individuals contributes to the successful governance and direction of the Middlesex Hospital Alliance.

I would also like to thank and recognize the following members of the Board who are retiring from the Board: Andrew Thorogood, Robin Fennell-Plummer, Lorne McIntyre, Bill Sasse, Dr. Cathy Blokker and Dr. Shelly Sharma.

In closing, I would also like to thank and recognize our two Chiefs of Staff – Drs. Jon Dreyer and Paul Ferner, our Chief Executive Officer Mike Mazza, and his administrative team, Nancy Maltby-Webster, Paul Long and Cathy Swan.

Ineke Haan, Chair
Board of Directors
Middlesex Hospital Alliance