

<b>RIDEAU COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES</b>		<b>NUMBER:</b> GOV 320
		<b>TYPE:</b> Governance
Policy Owner:	Board of Directors	<b>EFFECTIVE:</b> January 2022
Approved by:	Board of Directors – January 25, 2022	
Reviewed:		
Revised:		

## **BOARD EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND JUSTICE**

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### **Introduction**

When boards of directors, leadership teams, and staff come from a wide array of backgrounds, the *benefits* of diversity include more innovation, better decision-making, and improved organizational performance.

For a board of directors, the wider the variety of backgrounds represented and engaged around the board table, the more diverse perspectives the board has in fulfilling its role and in doing its work. Ultimately, the board’s work will be more dynamic, more informed, and more effective.

In the not-for-profit sector, many boards and senior leadership teams are engaged in discussions on defining the boards’ governance roles; and determining how boards can demonstrate commitment and lead by example.

The purpose of this initial policy is to identify the roles and responsibilities the Board of Directors in promoting a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice. (The role of the Board will continue to evolve over the next few years as the Board enhances its knowledge and understanding, and as the Board learns from its experiences.)

### **Policy**

Rideau Community Health Services (RCHS) is committed to a diverse, inclusive, and equitable environment where all board members, staff and volunteers feel respected and valued regardless of gender, age, race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation or identity, disability, education, or any other lived experience.

We respect the value that diverse life experiences bring to our board and leadership; and we strive to listen to their views and give them value. RCHS views inclusion and diversity on the Board as leading to a better understanding of opportunities, issues, and risks; enabling stronger decision-making; and ultimately improving our performance and ability to provide strategic oversight.

We are committed to modeling diversity, inclusion, and equity and maintaining fair and equal treatment for all.

### **Board Role and Responsibilities**

1. The Board oversees the progress being made on the development and implementation of the RCHS’ Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Program , including policies and procedures, priorities, equity data, and performance metrics.

2. The Board is responsible to ensure that the board is diverse and inclusive, and it is focused on equity. The Board can fulfill these responsibilities in a number of ways, as follows:
  - Recruiting board members that have a diverse set of skills, talents, and perspectives, and come from different life experiences and cultural backgrounds.
  - Building a culture of trust, candor, and respect by:
    - advancing a culture of inclusion where all board members are encouraged to share their perspectives, identities, and life experiences in board discussion
    - welcoming and appreciating differences and ensuring all board members are equally engaged and committed to fulfilling the board's work.
  - Building awareness of how systemic inequities have affected our society and the clients we serve in order to avoid unintentional biases and to effectively advance the mission, vision, and values of Rideau Community Health Services.
3. The Governance and Nomination Committee is responsible to develop an annual "Board Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Action Plan" which identifies specific initiatives/actions and metrics to improve the board's diversity stance (**see draft template attached as appendix A**). Annually, the Action Plan is presented to the Board for approval, as required.

### **Monitoring & Reporting**

Semi-annually, the CEO briefs the board on the progress being made on RCHS annual priorities and metrics for the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Program.

Semi-annually, the Chair of the Governance and Nomination Committee presents the progress on the Board's Action Plan.

### **Disclosure**

This Policy will be published on the RCHS website. A summary of this Policy, together with any measurable objectives adopted by the Board and the progress made towards achieving those objectives, will be disclosed in the Annual Report.

### **Appendices**

Appendix A – Board EDIJ Action Plan Template

### **Associated Policies**

GEN 150 Equity, Diversity, Inclusivity, and Justice  
GOV 40 Board Development and Orientation

