



Timeline (guide):

5:15 pm	Call to Order
5:20 pm	HSNS Presentation: Provincial Preschool Autism Services and HSNS (Dr. Sharon Walker & Ms. Erin Christian)
5:40 pm	Dinner (with guests)
6:15 pm	Regular board meeting

Board of Directors

Frost, Jon	P	Kujath, Magdalena	P	Noronha, Adline	R
Grant, John	R	Landy, Mark (Chair)	P	Rizzetto, Maria (Vice Chair)	V
Haley, Matthew (Sec-Treasurer)	R	Marchand, Josette	P	Sullivan, Vickie	V
Kaur, Anuroop	P	Mason-Browne, Anne (CEO)	P	Vossen, Emma	P
Kieffe, Michael	P	Moore, Gordon	P	Freeman, Robin – Exec. Assistant	P

Guests: Dr. Sharon Walker, Director of Pediatric and Autism Hearing and Speech Services
 Mr. Bob Kolanko, Director of Finance and Operations
 Ms. Erin Christian, Director, Provincial Preschool Autism Service

Dr. Greg Noel sent his regrets for this meeting.

Present: (P) Videoconference: (V) Regrets: (R) Absent: (A)

1. Call to Order & Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 5:20 pm by Mr. Landy

2. Presentation – Provincial Preschool Autism Services and HSNS

Ms. Christian, Director Provincial Preschool Autism Service and Dr. Walker, Director of Preschool and Autism Hearing and Speech Services provided a brief history of HSNS involvement in provision of services to preschool children with autism services since the inception of HSNS wherein, any preschool child residing in Nova Scotia is eligible to receive HSNS services. Prior to 2001, the N.S. Government, families, and partners noticed an increasing incidence of autism resulting increased pressure for services and funded HSNS to hire Speech – Language Pathologists to collaborate with regional teams to work directly with children with autism and their families. In 2005, the government expanded funding to support the Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention (EIBI), a program providing services exclusively for children diagnosed with autism. In 2020 government struck a stakeholder advisory committee and hired an external reviewer to evaluate services to meet these growing demands and develop a more comprehensive and responsive provincial model of services for any preschool child who was on the autism spectrum. In April 2022, the government announced a new provincial model of autism services, the Provincial Preschool Autism Service (PPAS) with four key partners: IWK Health, NS Health, Autism Nova Scotia, and Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia.

Ms. Christian noted that the key driving factors that directed the change in service model included:

- consistent upward trend in the number of children diagnosed with autism over the past 10-15 years.
- a continually growing demand for diagnostic assessments for children with “suspected autism”.

- a continually growing demand for autism intervention services, including HSNS services.
- EIBI resources were under tremendous pressure, with an unacceptable wait list for services.
- families reported challenges in navigating the system of care.
- the model was not meeting the needs of all families consistently province wide.
- growing evidence to support the recommendation of a “needs-based” approach which provided a broader range of services.

Questions and general discussion with the presenters followed. Topics included describing personal/family experiences, clarification of which children would be eligible, and potential ideas to support the model.

Children born in 2018-2019 would be the first cohort of preschool children with diagnosed or suspected autism to experience the new service model, PPAS.

3. Dinner with guests

Ms. Mason-Browne thanked Ms. Christian and Dr. Walker for their presentation. Ms. Christian exited the meeting following dinner with the Board.

4. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: THAT the Board of Directors approve the agenda. It was moved and seconded; motion carried.

5. Announcements

5.1 Regrets: as listed above.

5.2 Declarations of potential conflict of interest: None.

6. Minutes, September 21, 2023

MOTION: THAT the Board of Directors approve the minutes of September 21 as circulated. Motion was moved and seconded; motion carried.

7. Board Executive Report

Mr. Landy noted that Board Executive Committee did not meet since the September 21st Board meeting. He shared the experience he and Mr. Haley shared at the 2023 Clinical Forum on September 27th. He remarked on how welcome he felt, and the impressive amount of coordination involved in planning and hosting this event. Further, he recognized the remarkable collegiality he witnessed as all HSNS staff from throughout the province reconnected, in person, for the first time in four years. He added that he was pleased to announce the Innovation Fund and the recipients of the HSNS Quality Award for this year. He offered his congratulations to Ms. Mason-Browne and the entire organizing committee for a wonderful event.

8. CEO Report

Ms. Mason-Browne began by advising that the 2024-2025 Business Plan had been submitted to the Department of Health and Wellness by the N.S. Government deadline of October 10th. It includes the four business cases and financial pressures presented last month. Executive staff are participating in N.S. Health planning meetings regarding the One Person One Record (OPOR), a government initiative involving the implementation of a provincial, electronic medical information system.

The biennial Clinical Forum held on September 26-28th was a great success wherein Mr. Landy (Board Chair) and Mr. Haley (Board Secretary Treasurer) joined HSNS staff from across the province. The recipients of the Quality Improvement Recognition “Cheers From Us” were announced, as well as the launch of the Board Innovation Fund.

Negotiations on the HSNS-NSGEU Collective Agreement continue with agreement on the Essential Health and Community Services Plan still pending. The New Brunswick Association of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists (NBASLPA) Registrar acknowledged the request from Ms. Mason-Browne to waive N.B. registration and licensure fees for HSNS staff providing virtual follow-up to N.B. clients. A response to this request is anticipated in November.

M.J. Hampton, who provides a regular health opinion offering (“Health Hacks”) on CBC Radio addressed the importance of hearing tests and the need for additional resources for those who are unable to purchase hearing aids or assistive listening devices. HSNS was referenced positively in that interview. Subsequent to this, a CBC reporter contacted both Dr. Noel and Dr. Kiefte regarding programs and government support for the provision of hearing aids. Communications staff at the Department of Health and Wellness were alerted to this request for information as well. Dr. Kiefte added that he had participated in two interviews, the purpose of which was not to try to influence government, just to relate the story.

Ms. Mason-Browne informed the Board that a presentation on the HSNS Risk Plan and Digital Governance Action Plan is scheduled for the November Board meeting. The results on the annual Business Continuity Plan “Emergency Phone Tree” held on September 25, 2023, were excellent (97%). Anne thanked the board members for their participation.

- 8.1.** Orientation to HSNS Integrated Quality Framework
- 8.2.** Q2 Integrated Quality Scorecard and KPIs (Reports presented)

Ms. Mason-Browne introduced these topics (8.1 and 8.2) by noting that Dr. Walker, at the previous Board meeting, indicated that an overview of the Integrated Quality Scorecard would be presented during the presentation of the Q2 results. Dr. Walker proceeded by presenting this overview while also presenting the Q2 results of the “HSNS Integrated Quality Scorecard”, including the key measurements used to measure quality across the three pillars:

- Organizational Goals and Client Safety/Experience
- Staff Safety/ Wellness, and Risk Management
- Quality and Improvement, and Performance Util

The Q2 results were presented (Integrated Quality Scorecard Report) and included performance on strategic goals, client safety and experience data, staff safety, risk management, utilization, and service performance.

The Board of Directors engaged in a fulsome discussion on the Q2 results. Topics discussed included:

- Client Safety Incident’ markers: “harmful incident”, “no harm incident” and “near miss”.
- Use of units of time (wait times) for measuring ‘quality’ using the current KPIs.
- Service performance is directly related to staff resources. Although the number of client visits increased substantially this quarter, wait times for services remain too high.
- Potential impact following any increase in staffing resources for audiology (e.g., the referral utilization data does not reflect services that are provided by private audiologists).
- KPI benchmarks were set in collaboration with government consultants and reflected a level predicted to be reached with a high level of confidence. Alternate KPIs have been suggested by staff.
- Challenges in increasing the number of SCSD students in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology.

9. Committee Reports:

9.1 Finance and Investment Committee Report: Mr. Moore presented the Finance and Investment Report from the October 17th committee meeting (included in Board materials). The two investments portfolios, Seamark and TD Investments sustained significant loss over the summer related to a downturn in the markets. The funds are monitored regularly by the committee.

The Committee reviewed the Operational Budget for 2023-2024, the Q1 Financial Forecast, Capital Equipment and Acquisitions Status Report, and Business Plan for 2024-2025. The regular financial reports, including CEO expenses, EFTs and cheques were reviewed by the committee, and all is in order with nothing unusual to note.

The question of fundraising was raised at the September General Board Meeting. The Finance and Investment Committee followed up on this question and had a thorough productive conversation about the ability and value of fundraising for HSNS. Staff were directed to investigate and present their findings to the Finance and Investment Committee at a later date.

The Committee started its annual discussion on appointment of the HSNS auditor for 2024-25.

Mr. Moore asked Mr. Robert Kolanko to report on the following three topics:

9.1.1 Orientation to HSNS Financial Statements: Mr. Kolanko provided an overview of the HSNS Financial Statements while also reporting on the Q2 Financial Statement.

9.1.2 Q2 Financial Statement: Mr. Kolanko noted on the revenue side, the \$524 000 variance resulted from one bi-weekly payment as the Department of Health and Wellness frontloaded at the beginning of the year; throughout the year it will level out based on employee deductions current FTE compliment. He went on to advise that HSNS only bills what we expense for EIBI and PPAS noting that it he does not anticipate spending the total of the budgeted funds this fiscal year (claims- based funding). Looking at the financial forecast without the claims-based funding. We are presently running an overall deficit of \$232,371.

9.1.3 HSNS Business Plan for 2024-2025: Mr. Kolanko provided an overview of the content of the Business Plan and advised that this is a consolidated document containing the detail supporting financial pressures and business cases previously approved by the Board. The consolidated document also contains standard background information (e.g., description of services, strategic plan, annual report) that provides information about HSNS. The 'Message from the CEO" (an executive summary) was recently prepared to cleanly outline the manner in which the HSNS priorities for 2024-2025 closely align with the strategic goals of the Dept. of Health and Wellness as outlined in the government 'Action for Health' Strategic Plan 2022-2026.

MOTION: THAT the Board of Directors approve the Finance and Investment Committee Report of October 17, 2023. Moved, seconded and carried.

9.2 Policy & Governance Review Committee: The Policy and Governance Review Committee has not met since the September Board meeting. The date of the next meeting is November 8, 2023.

9.3 Nominating Committee: The Nominating Committee has not met since the September Board meeting. The date of the next meeting is November 6, 2023.

10. Business Arising: none.

10.1. Board Meeting Evaluation: Mr. Landy summarized the meeting evaluation for the September Board meeting. Comments were positive. Board members were encouraged to complete the Evaluation Form after every board meeting to assist with quality improvements for the board.

10.2. Board Activity, Education, and Governance Plan: The Cumulative List of Suggested Educational Topics, and the Board Activity Education and Governance Workplan for 2023-24 were introduced for the Board's information. These are available on Aprio.

11. Old Business: none


12. New Business: none

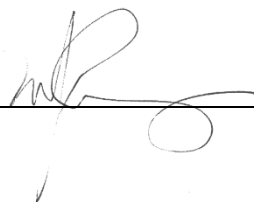
13. Members Comments: Mr. Moore remarked that it was nice to be back at 'in person' board meeting.

14. In-camera session: Mr. Landy moved that the board continue in camera. Motion carried.

15. Date of next meeting: Thursday, November 16, 2023 (In person)

16. Adjournment: It was moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 pm. Motion carried.

Recorded by:  _____

Approved by:  _____