

Background Information for Prospective Board Members

Vision of CanFASD

- To support Canada's leadership in addressing the extraordinary complexities of FASD

Purpose

- To produce and maintain national, collaborative research designed for sharing with all Canadians, leading to prevention strategies and improved support services for people affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Guiding Principles

- To do and/or facilitate research that is meaningful to families, governments and stakeholders
- To work collaboratively with partners
- To use appropriate language when communicating about FASD, recognizing the sensitivities and complexities of FASD

Goals

- To develop and foster relationships, research programs, and initiatives across the spectrum of FASD activity
- To facilitate and enhance productive linkages across jurisdictions, communities, and disciplines related to FASD
- To answer high-priority questions that are meaningful about the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of FASD
- To disseminate empirically-validated knowledge about the prevention, surveillance, diagnosis and treatment of FASD
- To inform policy, practice and decision making
- To become a centre of expertise on FASD in Canada
- To build a sustainable research network
- To build research capacity and knowledge across and within all communities

History of CanFASD

CanFASD was established as a not-for-profit society in 2012. CanFASD grew out of the Canada Northwest FASD Research Network, which was established in March of 2005 through the support of the Canada Northwest FASD Partnership (CNFASDP). The CNFASDP is comprised of the four western provinces and three territories. Each province and territory has a Minister on the CNFASDP and there is a steering committee of public servants representing each jurisdiction.

Initially, CNFASDP provided the direction and focus for the research network that is in the report, *Three Forums: Final Report on the Research Opportunities and Challenges*. Based on recommendations from this report, the Research Network formed five collaborative Network Action Teams which are

currently conducting research in the areas of diagnostics, intervention and prevention. These teams answer questions that require research and evaluation posed by governments, organizations and communities. Members pursue common goals under the leadership of the Scientific Director. The Research Network formally and informally connects group of professionals from a range of research sciences located across Canada.

Presently

Moving forward, the Research Network is expanding nationally, and plans to work with all existing Canadian researchers, programs, organizations, families and professionals, including existing grassroots organizations that want to collaborate on research on the complex issues surrounding FASD.

Our annual reports provide information regarding our current funding partners, activities and budget: <http://canfasd.ca/media/annual-reports/>

The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of the CanFASD has evolved from the Canada North West Research Network established by the CNFASDP Ministers in February 2005. From 2005 until incorporation as a society in 2012, the members of the Board of Directors were appointed by and reported to the Ministers.

The CanFASD is now a not-for-profit charity governed by its' society bylaws. Under those bylaws there is an elected Board of Directors who develop and are responsible for developing the overall policies, financial and human resources matters of the organization.

Scope

The Board of Directors works collectively with the Executive Director to assess needs, set priorities and strategic direction, plan and allocate resources and oversee the Board's operations. Members of the Board of Directors must be available to attend meetings, actively participate in Board discussions, and be responsible for the decisions of the Board. The Board of Directors may be expected to participate on standing or special committees to address issues faced by the Board, Partnership Ministers, Executive Director, or Scientific Director. The term of the appointment will be for the period of three years. The Board is a governing board of directors. Main areas of responsibility include development and maintenance of by-laws/policies/procedures; strategic/business/operational planning; and financial/performance management.

Typical Abilities, Experience and Knowledge Directors bring to the Network

Typically, elected members of the Board of Directors have:

- Diverse skill sets in areas such as marketing, finance, administration, media relations, law, Fundraising, business, research, governance, policy development
- Work experience in a team setting and are team players
- FASD knowledge and expertise
- Demonstrated ability to devote time to attend meetings and review all information prior to

Board Meetings

- Commitment/interest/passion on FASD issue
- Familiarity with issues faced by diverse cultural groups in Canada, including those faced by Aboriginal Nations
- Alcohol/substance/addictions expertise
- Diverse background and/or work area in the health system, social services system, legal system, justice system, education system, research and ethics
- Previous board experience with other community organizations

Responsibilities:

- Review and Maintain Operating Policies
- Develop Board Policies
- Develop Strategic/Business/Operational Planning
- Annual Budgeting and Financial Management
- Human Resource Management
- Performance Management
- Communications
- Board Committees

Work Environment

- Travel outside of the home community to regular Board meetings will be required
- Attendance at a majority of meetings is expected
- Completion of the required readings and preparation is expected prior to meetings of the Board of Directors
- Provision of “expert advice” if the topic under discussion is in the Board member’s area of expertise may be requested

Meetings

- Meetings are held in person and via telephone
- In person meetings are held twice per year
- Telephone meetings are held 2-4 times yearly
- There is an annual general meeting (AGM)
- Various committees of the Board of Directors meet as needed