

# Trustee Education Certification for Iowa Hospital Governance





## A Voluntary Process for Strengthening Trustee Leadership and Accountability

Health care organizations are continually finding themselves under the microscope of legislators, community members, media and government officials regarding accountability. The escalating cost of health care, the need for more information on quality and patient safety to respond to public desire and regulatory demands, as well as the increasing complexity of hospital operations in turn makes the task of overseeing the delivery of health care a very important role to play. These factors, combined with the recent governance leadership failures on Wall Street and the Iowa scandal around the Central Iowa Employment and Training Consortium (CIETC) governing board, cast doubts among the public and, as a result, greater scrutiny of all boards.

Many people agree that if health care leaders do not establish standards, expectations and governing criteria for performance and leadership, federal or state governments eventually may. For example, New Jersey recently expanded its state law and now all board members must undergo education. A government commission there cited the need for improved governance among the reasons for the state's struggling hospitals. In Massachusetts, the Blues plan is adding pay-for-performance measures for quality oversight by hospital boards. Hospitals with board members receiving education on quality improvement can receive a bonus by the insurer.

It takes knowledge, understanding, dedication and commitment to be an effective board member and make the decisions to enable the delivery of efficient, high quality and safe health care. Therefore it's important that board members have traditional governance skills and qualities, as well as a special understanding of the complicated hospital industry.

The IHA Council on Education and Member Services has developed a framework to support Iowa hospital board members in being an effective board member and in carrying out the delivery of health care in their local community and region.

The Council has designed the Trustee Education Certification (TEC) program to advocate for hospitals to utilize governance best practices, promote the coordination of care and the best use of resources, and demonstrate to lawmakers, regulators, physicians, employees, the business community and other community stakeholders that Iowa hospitals:

- Understand and embrace the need for governance accountability.
- Govern according to a standard of excellence.
- Are willing to formally certify their adherence to governance best practices.
- Are committed to coordination of resources in their community.
- Embrace community accountability and transparency.
- Structure their community benefit and outreach programs to meet identified community needs.
- Utilize data from IHA to identify and address areas of need, especially regarding the uninsured and underinsured.
- Utilize performance data to identify opportunities for improvement and monitor progress that improves quality and safety.
- Integrate local health efforts with state programs.

## What is Trustee Certification?

Trustee Education Certification (TEC) This certification is a process of verifying an individual trustee's initiatives to improve personal health care knowledge, leadership effectiveness, and compliance with a variety of governance best practices.

By ensuring ethical, independent and conflict-of-interest-free behavior, all hospitals will be able to provide the highest quality governance while simultaneously earning and reinforcing employee and community trust.

Voluntary certification is a meaningful way of assuring various stakeholders that Iowa's hospitals hold themselves to high standards and are accountable for their governing performance.

## How Can Certification Make a Difference?

By its use, participating hospitals are demonstrating a commitment to improve performance of their boards, encouraging trustees to pursue ongoing education and educating trustees about their responsibility in serving their community.

The purpose of the certification process is to provide assistance and enhance existing guidelines to ensure the following:

1. Hospitals are being guided by knowledgeable and dedicated board members.
2. Board members are aware of basic expectations and standards of participation.
3. Board members meet their fiduciary duties of care, loyalty and obedience.
4. Board members are meeting their governance obligations to bylaws, accreditation standards and laws.
5. Board members realize the importance of continuing education in hospital governance.
6. Board members are aware of the importance of advocacy on behalf of the hospital to their communities and legislators.

## Who Benefits From Certification?

- Hospitals will benefit by having knowledgeable board members that are ambassadors and champions for your facility and the community.
- Hospital boards can benefit by having consistent standards and an ability to communicate compliance with those standards to build reputation, confidence and loyalty, and head off outside intervention in their governance.
- Hospital trustees can benefit by having a better understanding of expectations for individual and overall governing leadership excellence and having a guide for improving their individual knowledge and leadership potential.

## How is Certification Conducted?

For an individual board member to become certified at the basic level:

- The trustee confirms their intention to participate by completing the *TEC Enrollment Form* and submitting it to IHA.
- The trustee must complete all of the items listed under the *Basic Standards* sections on the *TEC Standards* form.
- The completed *TEC Standards* form along with the *TEC Education Log* are submitted to the hospital board chair and CEO for verification.
- The completed forms are then submitted to IHA for approval by the IHA Council on Education and Member Services.
- Letters are sent to the trustee and hospital CEO confirming certification.
- The certified trustees are recognized and honored at the annual IHA Governance Forum.

To become certified at the advanced level\*:

- Board members must complete all of the items listed under the *Basic Standards* and the *Advanced Standards* as indicated on the *TEC Standards* form.
- The same process as above for approval and submission of the completed forms as well as recognition.

\*Because health care is a diverse industry, it is possible that some advanced standards may not be applicable to all candidates. If an item included in the advanced standards is not applicable to the person completing it (for example: if only the officers of the board evaluate the CEO), please attach an explanation why the item is not applicable.



# Trustee Education Curriculum Guide

The following topics should be used to fulfill the twelve hours of trustee education requirements for certification and recertification. A hospital's orientation process may cover many of the topics noted in the core and advanced curriculum and can be used to satisfy education requirements.

## **Core Curriculum for All Trustees**

- Board roles and responsibilities
- Fiduciary duties of Care, Loyalty and Obedience
- Characteristics of a high performing board member
  - Commitment of time
  - Ethics, Confidentiality, Conflict of Interest
  - Board meeting preparation, attendance, and participation
  - Ongoing education
  - Securing appropriate information necessary to make sound decisions
  - Willingness to represent the hospital, function as a liaison to the community and facilitate communication
  - Differentiating between public responses as an individual versus as a hospital board member
  - Understanding the role and responsibilities of the board
- Board role in quality
- Board role in strategic planning
  - mission, vision and values
- Board role in medical staff relations
  - privileging and credentialing
- Hospital payment and finance
- Federal and Iowa hospital law and regulation
- Public hospital requirements (for public hospitals)
  - Open meetings
  - Meeting requirements
  - IPERS
  - Organization, terms, membership, vacancies, quorum
  - Tax levies
  - Conflict of interest
  - Duties
  - Powers
- CEO evaluation
- Board self assessment
- Environmental assessment and health care trends

## **Curriculum for Advanced Governance Standards**

- Governance best practices
- Characteristics of high performing boards
- Conflict management and resolution
- Micro governance versus micro management
- Disruptive board members
- Board development
- Grassroots advocacy
- Community benefit
- National health care trends

# Trustee Education Certification Standards

Beginning Date \_\_\_\_\_ End Date \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Hospital/Health System: \_\_\_\_\_

*This certification form was designed to be both user-friendly and informative. It is divided into five (5) areas with basic and advanced criteria listed for certification.*

## 1. Prepare for and participate in board and committee meetings

### *Basic Standards:*

- Participate in new board member orientation program
- Demonstrate basic knowledge of:
  - Hospital's services
  - Board member selection process
  - Hospital mission, vision and history
  - Hospital bylaws
- Attend board and committee meetings as required by hospital bylaws
- Attend board retreats and participate in strategic planning sessions
- Review all board materials distributed prior to and at board meetings
- Demonstrate knowledge of issues presented before the board
- Participate at board and committee meetings

### *Advanced Standard:*

- Communicate with board chair and CEO on community issues regarding the hospital that need to be addressed at board meetings

## 2. Commitment to meeting the fiduciary duties of care, loyalty and obedience, and understand governance obligations to bylaws, accreditation standards and laws

### **(A) Ethics and Conflict of Interest:**

#### *Basic Standards:*

- Sign conflict of interest policy at intervals required by hospital bylaws
- Comply with conflict of interest policy and abstain from voting when appropriate
- Act at all times in the interest of the hospital
- Attend an ethics education program
- Maintain strict confidentiality in compliance with hospital bylaws/policies

### **(B) Commitment to Quality of Patient Care:**

#### *Basic Standards:*

- Periodically review hospital bylaws
- Demonstrate basic knowledge of licensure, accreditation and Medicare certification standards
- Represent consumers and the community served
- Review state and national quality improvement efforts and be familiar with hospital-specific results on publicly-reported data
- Act on medical staff credentialing recommendations
- Review periodic reports and ensure the hospital has proper procedures in place to adequately address the following areas:
  - Quality improvement
  - Patient safety/medical errors
  - Sentinel events
  - Be aware of never events
  - Medical staff activities
  - All other committee reports at each board meeting  
i.e. standing committees (either regular and ancillary), special committees, task force or other similar bodies reporting or bringing business before the board

#### *Advanced Standards:*

- Be involved in the hospital/health system's quality committee as assigned
- Be involved in the hospital/health system's accreditation survey as assigned

### **(C) Commitment to the Organization's Financial Health:**

- Review and analyze annual and capital budgets
- Monitor key financial indicators

3. Commitment to governance educational development

*Basic Standards:*

- Participate in board education
- Participate in self-education by regularly reading health care and governance periodicals (i.e., IHA Trustee Minutes, AHA's Trustee Magazine)
- Report to the board on individual continuing educational activities
- Complete 12 hours of trustee education over a two-year period with four hours in face-to-face education programming.  
(To maintain certification, a trustee must complete 12 hours of trustee education every two years)

*Advanced Standards:*

- Attend trustee education programs at regional or state level or Internet-based offerings
- Attend trustee education programs at national level or conferences with national level speakers. (i.e., AHA Membership Meeting, IHA Governance Forum, IHA Annual Meeting, IHA Summer Leadership Forum, Estes Park Institute, Governance Institute, AHA Rural Health Forum, AHA Center for Healthcare Governance, AHA Health Forum Leadership Summit)

4. Participate in performance evaluation of self, the board and the CEO

*Basic Standards:*

- Conduct self-assessment annually
- Participate in assessment of board annually
- Participate in annual CEO evaluation (if applicable)

5. Participate in advocacy efforts on behalf of your hospital and the health care industry

*Basic Standards:*

- Sign up and join the Iowa Hospital Action Network.
- Be a personal advocate for your hospital in your community as appropriate
- Introduce yourself to your state representative and senator as a board member of your hospital and contact them as requested by hospital chief executive officer or when appropriate
- Introduce yourself to your U.S. Congressman and Iowa's two U.S. Senators and their health aides as a board member of your hospital and contact them as requested by the hospital chief executive officer or when appropriate

*Advanced Standards: (complete two of three listed below)*

- Participate in IHA Legislative Day and/or invite your state legislator to your hospital for a tour
- Participate in IHA/AHA legislative activities in Washington, DC by
  - Attending and participating in scheduled appointments and/or
  - Contacting your representative in the House and/or Senate (via telephone, letter or email)
- Consider a contribution to the IHA PAC (political action committee)

Use the space below to provide explanation of exceptions as necessary. Please feel free to attach any additional documentation in support of meeting the standards. Supporting documentation can include:

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| personally signed statements | governance education certificates of attendance             |
| attendance records           | letters or statements from your Hospital CEO or Board Chair |
| newspaper articles           | records of offices held, resume                             |
| board meeting minutes        | copies of board agenda                                      |

**I meet the Iowa Hospital Governance standards for trustee recognition.**

Applicant Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**The Applicant meets the standards for trustee recognition.**

Governing Board Chairman Signature \* \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Administrator/CEO Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\* Or another Board officer if the applicant is the Board chair.

If you have any questions, please call IHA at 515/288-1955 or e-mail at upahp@ihaonline.org. Please mail completed application and supporting documentation to: Penni Upah, Iowa Hospital Association | 100 East Grand Avenue, Suite 100 | Des Moines, IA 50309-1835

**Congratulations** on your decision to participate in the Iowa Hospital Trustee Education Certification (TEC) program! Your decision to become certified demonstrates your dedication and commitment to your hospital and community. To assist you in this endeavor and to ensure a smooth process, please follow these instructions.

### STEP 1

Confirm your intention to participate in the Trustee Education Certification (TEC) Program by completing and returning the *TEC Enrollment form* to IHA.

### STEP 2

Track your progress on the *TEC Standards form*. Once you have satisfied the requirements, you should submit the *TEC Standards form* along with the *TEC Education Log*. These completed forms are to be submitted to IHA by the end of December to ensure recognition at the subsequent IHA Governance Forum.

### STEP 3

Trustees who satisfy the TEC requirements will be recognized and honored at the annual IHA Governance Forum.

# TEC Enrollment Form

I would like to enroll in the Iowa Hospital Trustee Education Certification (TEC) program. By submitting this form to IHA, I am confirming my intention to obtain Iowa Hospital Trustee Education Certification.

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Hospital \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate how you would prefer to receive future correspondence from IHA regarding your Trustee Education Certification (choose one):

Email

Mail

Would you like IHA to also copy the correspondence regarding your Trustee Education Certification to someone at your hospital? If yes, please complete the information below.

No

Yes (*fill out information below*)

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Hospital \_\_\_\_\_

Hospital Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Fax Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Direct questions and send this form to:

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