

Health Quality Ontario Ontario Health Technology Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

AUTHORIZED BY: HQO Board of Directors

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I. Background:

Health Quality Ontario (HQO) has a legislated mandate to make evidence-based recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care regarding the Government of Ontario's provision of funding for health care services and medical devices.

Health Quality Ontario fulfills this part of its mandate through the Ontario Health Technology Advisory Committee (OHTAC), which reviews the best available evidence and then, after careful deliberation, makes recommendations. OHTAC is currently a committee of the HQO Board of Directors, and only after the Board's approval do OHTAC recommendations become HQO recommendations. This document sets out the terms of reference for OHTAC.

II. Role:

OHTAC's role is to make recommendations about the public funding of health care services and medical devices.

In making these recommendations, OHTAC relies on reviews that systematically appraise the available evidence in a scientifically sound and objective manner.

For each recommendation, OHTAC shall consider the clinical benefits and harms, value for money, societal, ethical, and patient perspectives, and implications for health system resources.

OHTAC shall also:

1. Publicly disclose the reasons for every recommendation;
2. Consider feedback provided through a standardized public commenting process on each draft recommendation before issuing a Final Recommendation;
3. Establish and maintain an appeals process, that allows for changes to board-approved final recommendations, where appropriate

III. Membership:

Membership includes voting and non-voting members. The non-voting members include the ex-officio representatives from HQO and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC). All other members, including the Chair and Vice-Chair are voting members

1. OHTAC will generally consist of between 15 and 20 voting members, including the chair and vice-chair.
2. All members serve on OHTAC on a volunteer basis.
3. All voting members are approved by the HQO Board of Directors.
4. The board shall aim to include individuals with expertise in the following areas:
 - a. Health care provision

- b. Economic evaluation
 - c. Clinical epidemiology
 - d. Ethics
5. At least two members shall be individuals who are not employed in the health care sector and who can contribute the patient perspective
 6. The board shall strive to include:
 - a. At least one individual with current or recent experience in the health care technology industry.
 - b. Individuals from a variety of health care sectors.
 - c. Individuals who represent the diversity of the population of Ontario.

IV. Termination of Membership:

An individual may resign as a member at any time upon written notification to the committee chair. At the board's discretion and upon written notification, a member's appointment may be terminated at any time within the term period.

V. Nomination of Members:

1. A public call for membership nominations will be issued to fill membership vacancies when a term of appointment has ended.
2. The nomination process consists of the following steps:
 - a. The existing membership of OHTAC is reviewed with respect to the criteria referenced in Section III herein.
 - b. The public call for nominations may specify particular criteria referenced in Section III herein that are underrepresented among OHTAC members.
 - c. HQO staff will review the qualifications of all applicants and present qualified candidates to OHTAC chair and vice-chair for their appraisal.
 - d. The OHTAC chair will present the selected candidates to the HQO Board of Directors for approval.

VI. Term of Appointment:

Each member of OHTAC including the chair and vice-chair shall be appointed for a 3-year term, renewable up to two times at the recommendation of the chair, for a total of three consecutive terms (i.e., 9 years of service).

VII. OHTAC Chair:

1. Provides leadership to OHTAC, represents OHTAC to the board, the Minister, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, health care providers and the public.
2. May appoint the vice-chair or alternate committee member to chair a meeting or portion thereof in instances where they have to recuse themselves.
3. Shall perform such functions as are necessary to carry out the terms of reference of the committee. In fulfilling these responsibilities, the committee chair shall have the necessary support of HQO staff. These responsibilities include:
 - a. Presiding at all OHTAC meetings, and being responsible for the general supervision of the affairs and business of OHTAC;
 - b. Ensuring all committee members fully commit to fulfilling their responsibilities as outlined under the OHTAC terms of reference;
 - c. Responding, on behalf of OHTAC, to correspondence related to the mandate or recommendations of the committee;

- d. Acting as the liaison between the OHTAC and the HQO Board of Directors;
- e. Nominating for the HQO Board's consideration a candidate for the OHTAC vice-chair position;
- f. Acting as the main liaison between OHTAC and HQO staff, to maintain a constructive and collaborative relationship to maximize the impact of the committee's work;
- g. Maintaining the integrity of the committee and its work, by ensuring members follow the Conflict of Interest Guidelines, in consultation with HQO staff;
- h. Acting as the primary public spokesperson for OHTAC;
- i. Reviewing each OHTAC recommendation report before public posting; and
- j. Recruiting nominees for OHTAC.

VIII. Vice-Chair:

- 1. The OHTAC vice-chair shall perform all other functions as are necessary to carry out the terms of reference of OHTAC when the chair is unable to do so.
- 2. The vice-chair provides assistance to the OHTAC chair in carrying out the following duties:
 - a. Chairing meetings in the event the chair is unable to attend the meeting. This will include any pre-meeting planning or other preparatory work that would accompany chairing a specific meeting;
 - b. Chairing meetings for a specific agenda wherein the chair should declare a conflict of interest with regard to the specific item;
 - c. Assisting the chair with the development of the meeting agenda;
 - d. Assisting the chair in a review of the OHTAC recommendation report before public posting; and
 - e. Assisting the chair with the recruitment of nominees for OHTAC.

IX. Ex-officio Membership:

- 1. Three HQO staff shall be ex-officio, non-voting members of OHTAC. These positions are delegable, but will ordinarily be filled by the following individuals:
 - a. Director, Health Technology Assessment
 - b. Vice-President, Evidence Development and Standards
 - c. President and CEO
- 2. Two Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care staff shall be ex-officio, non-voting members of OHTAC. These positions are also delegable.

X. Attendance:

- 1. OHTAC members are expected to attend OHTAC meetings in person.
- 2. A member who is unable to attend a meeting in person may request permission from the chair to participate in the meeting via teleconference.
- 3. Members who are absent for more than three OHTAC meetings per year may have their membership revoked by the Board of Directors.

XI. Frequency of Meetings:

OHTAC shall meet regularly throughout the year at the call of the chair. Typically OHTAC will meet between 6 and 12 times per year.

XII. Quorum:

- 1. The quorum for normal business of the OHTAC meeting shall be 50 percent of voting members, either present in-person or via telephone-conference.

2. In determining quorum the presence of the chair and vice-chair is counted.
3. If a quorum does not exist, then no business shall be transacted except to adjourn.

XIII. Voting:

1. The decisions of OHTAC will typically be arrived at by a consensus of those members present.
2. Voting will take place only when consensus cannot be reached or in exceptional circumstances.
3. Before a decision to move to a vote is made, the chair will, in all cases, consider whether continuing the discussion at a subsequent meeting is likely to lead to a consensus.
4. Voting, where required, will be by show of hands, unless circumstances require a ballot, and decisions determined by a simple majority of those members present.
5. The identity of the voters is not generally recorded in the minutes. A member may request that his/her opinion and vote be recorded in the minutes.
6. The chair will vote only in the event of a tie.
7. Only committee members present at the meeting will be eligible to vote. There will be no proxy voting.
8. Ex-officio members are not eligible to vote.
9. No member may vote on any motion in respect of which he or she may have a conflict of interest as determined by the chair (see section on Conflict of Interest).

XIV. Minutes:

1. HQO staff will prepare the minutes of OHTAC meetings with the assistance of the committee chair and vice-chair.
2. The minutes shall reflect the names of the members present and shall be reviewed and approved at a later meeting of the Committee where the minutes may be corrected if necessary.
3. The minutes shall be the official record of the meeting and be an accurate record of the actual motions, resolutions, and results of deliberations including the reason(s) for any Committee recommendations.

XV. Reasons for Recommendation:

OHTAC shall provide the reason(s) for the recommendation to support every recommendation made and these reasons shall be made publicly available.

XVI. Subcommittees:

1. OHTAC may establish subcommittees as required from time to time and the functions of any subcommittee shall be advisory to OHTAC.
2. All subcommittees will have a terms of reference subject to approval by OHTAC.
3. Members of OHTAC subcommittees will be appointed by OHTAC.

XVII. Conflict of Interest

Committee members must notify the chair and HQO staff of any actual apparent, or potential conflicts of interest related to committee business, and will adhere to any relevant HQO policies regarding conflicts of interest. In consultation with HQO, the chair will determine what action, if any, is required arising from the conflict of interest.

XVIII. Confidentiality

Disclosure of any data, materials or information obtained in the course of participation on the Committee that is not generally available to the public is prohibited.

XIX. Staff Support:

1. HQO staff will provide support for OHTAC meetings. The staff support function will include:
 - a. Providing all administrative pre-and post-meeting support;
 - b. Providing support during meetings including minute taking;
 - c. Coordinating the preparation and distribution of meeting material including but not limited to agendas, meeting minutes, and evidence reports;
 - d. Coordinating and distributing meeting materials no Less than 10 calendar days before the meetings; and
 - e. Ensuring OHTAC meeting proceedings and meeting venues are accessible to persons with disabilities.

2. HQO staff shall keep a permanent record of:
 - a. Records of all OHTAC meetings reflecting attendance, key decisions and actions of the Committee including results of any voting undertaken and the number of members with declared conflicts of interest during the meeting; and
 - b. Records of every draft recommendation and final recommendation made by OHTAC and reasons for each.

XX. Communications:

HQO staff will provide communications and issue management support. OHTAC members are requested to refer all media enquiries to HQO staff. The OHTAC chair is typically the public spokesperson for OHTAC.

XXI. Expenses:

HQO will reimburse travel/ meal expenses incurred by the members in accordance with its Travel Meal and Hospitality policy.

XXII. Review:

Terms of reference, mandate, activities, membership, and relevance of the committee will be reviewed as needed.