



Briefing Note Corpus Sanchez Report

To: Board of Directors
Fr: Valerie Payn
Purpose: Update Board on this Initiative by the Department of Health
Date: July 17, 2008

Introduction

As you know, the Department of Health commissioned a system-wide review of its operations by Vancouver consultants Corpus Sanchez. While health is not one of the Chamber's stated priorities, it remains an active file for us. I am pleased to provide you with the following briefing to keep you current on this important initiative by the Department of Health and the Chamber's involvement in it.

Background

The Provincial Health Services Operational Review (PHSOR) report aims for wholesale change of the province's health care system with its 103 recommendations, with long-term financial sustainability of the system as a prime concern. The final report, prepared by Corpus Sanchez, was submitted to the Department of Health in December 2007. In January, the CEOs of all nine district health authorities in Nova Scotia plus the IWK accepted the recommendations unanimously.

In late January, Policy staff at the Chamber analyzed the report and came to the conclusion that the report deserved enthusiastic support. On February 1, 2008, Chamber CEO Valerie Payn offered Premier MacDonald the Chamber's backing in propelling the report forward.

On July 10, 2008, the Chamber met with Cheryl Doiron, NS Deputy Minister of Health and Sandra Cascadden, Director of the newly formed Health Transition Office in the Department of Health.

Purposes of Meeting

- 1) To determine status of PHSOR recommendations
- 2) To offer the Chamber's assistance in implementing report recommendations

Progress Measures Detailed in Meeting

- 1) About 1100 continuing care beds will be added to the health care system in the next two years.
- 2) There is a comprehensive review of the public health system going on in the province, including the building of a new public health lab.
- 3) The Department of Health has balanced its budget for the last two years.
- 4) Most importantly, the Department of Health has set up the Health Transformation Office to co-ordinate and lead the massive structural change that will happen in the next couple of years.
- 5) Additionally, all provincial district health authorities are required to balance their budgets. Those district health authorities that run a deficit will be penalized.
- 6) The Department is introducing SAP (information management) software across the province.
- 7) An operational review of the province's acute care health system is imminent.

Discussion

The most important fact revealed was that the Department of Health has created a Health Transformation Office to lead the changes. The wholesale systemic change required of the health care system can only occur through a large, co-ordinated effort. This process will be led by Sandra Cascadden, an industrial engineer, certified project manager and leader of the Health Transformation Office. Over the next months, Ms. Cascadden will assemble staff to start affecting the major systemic changes the report recommends. To support those changes, Minister D'Entremont has visited all the DHAs and all the District Health board members have endorsed the changes to the health care systems proposed.

There were three very positive factors mentioned by the Deputy Minister. The first was that that business support, including Chamber support, was instrumental in getting change accepted by Cabinet and at the Cabinet table. Secondly, despite the fact that it will be challenging, the Department of Health and its officials remain deeply committed to wholesale transformation of the health care system. Thirdly, departmental officials are showing, in this meeting and through their actions, that they remain committed to systemic health care change.

Threats to Change

- 1) The sheer size of the task - implementing 103 recommendations
- 2) Finite financial and human resources in the Department of Health
- 3) Some key personnel in Health and related departments, who have been through similar processes before, are mentally and physically fatigued by the prospect of large scale change.

Additionally, Deputy Minister Doiron feels that the change process would not be threatened by a change in government. She believes that all parties, more or less, agree with the proposed system transformations.

Opportunities for Change

- 1) Change will be supported through a definite structure. The Health Transformation Office is being started to support and execute the necessary changes.
- 2) There is general support for the PHSOR report from stakeholders including groups such as Doctors NS, universities, the community college system, labour unions and all health care professional organizations.
- 3) While systemic change is challenging, it is achievable in a province of fewer than a million people. As Ms. Doiron says, "We're a small enough province that we have a chance to do this."
- 4) The Department needs to get as many provincial citizens onside to make this change happen.

What the Chamber Can Do to Help

There is nothing immediate that the Chamber needs to do to assist the department during the summer. However, an open-ended offer of assistance was repeated during the meeting.

The Health Transformation Office will be officially launched in the fall. At that time, the Chamber may be called in to encourage its members to support the change in any way possible. This support may consist of speeches, meetings, communications vehicles or other activities.

Deputy Minister Doiron closed the meeting by saying that "support from the Chamber will be helpful in the future." In the interim, Chamber policy staff will maintain connections open with DOH.

Action Items

None are imminent during July and August 2008.

Conclusions

There will be a role for the Chamber to play in supporting changes. But wholesale changes probably will not start to happen until the fall of 2008.