



## Board Chair Profile: Guidance for Building a Leadership Pipeline Within the Hospital Board

Leadership at the board table differs from the executive table in that its effectiveness draws only on influence, not authority. As one board chair put it, “As an executive, I ask people to do things. As a board chair, I ask people questions.”

In effective chairing, influence relies heavily on a combination of attributes, skills, and experiences – qualities not often captured in the traditional skills matrix used to recruit and assess the directors from which board chairs are appointed.

The *Board Chair Profile* on the back of this page, developed from consultations with 14 board chairs across Ontario hospitals, includes six qualities for effective chairing. To support thoughtful board chair succession planning, Ontario hospital boards are encouraged to:

- reflect on the board chair qualities relevant to their hospital;
- integrate the relevant qualities early on in board recruitment processes alongside the skills matrix; and
- consider the relevant qualities when appointing directors, as well as the interest and capacity to commit to the time requirements of the board chair role in the future.

This long-term view mitigates risk to the hospital by building a robust internal pipeline of board chair talent.

Succession planning for both parts of the board chair-CEO partnership is essential for the continuity of effective leadership in Ontario hospitals.

# BOARD CHAIR PROFILE: QUALITIES FOR EFFECTIVE CHAIRING



## Honest broker



Builds trust by consistently demonstrating integrity and objectivity to fairly and accurately represent a multiplicity of stakeholders.

## Consensus builder



Understands the role of chair as first among equals, leading and building consensus through influence with a receptivity to different perspectives.

## Mission-driven ambassador



Driven by a commitment to the hospital's mission and fully embraces the demands of the role.

## Constructive challenger



Demonstrates the courage, judgement, and independence to challenge and communicate effectively, including through crises, in the best interest of the hospital.

## Governance custodian



Understands the respective roles of board and management, discerning at various times if it is appropriate to provide guidance, support, or direction, and leveraging the power of a strong chair-CEO partnership.

## Health landscape navigator



Understands the context in which the hospital operates and has the confidence and acumen to engage with it.

Proximity Institute (Proximity) is an independent charitable organization dedicated to leadership development at the most senior level in Ontario hospitals. Our mandate is leadership development and change leadership. Our purpose is enabling effective leadership. Our long-term ambition is to work collaboratively with Ontario hospitals to identify, develop, and ready a quality pipeline of emerging CEO talent.

Proximity was founded by the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA).

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