



Health Care *for the* Homeless Clinicians' Network Operating Guidelines

Revised October 2014

Name of Organization

The name of the organization is Health Care for the Homeless Clinicians' Network (henceforth referred to as the Network). The Health Care for the Homeless Clinicians' Network operates under the authority and control of the National Health Care for the Homeless Council, (henceforth referred to as the Council).

Mission and Purpose

The HCH Clinicians' Network is a national membership of clinicians dedicated to combating and preventing homelessness and to improving the health and quality of life of homeless people. Organized to provide peer support to clinicians from various disciplines, the Network actively:

- shares information and experience to enhance clinical practice;
- promotes clinical research;
- educates clinicians, communities, people experiencing homelessness, and policymakers on the interrelationship between homelessness, health, and public policy issues; and
- collaborates with other clinical networks, professional associations, and groups working with homeless people.

The HCH Clinicians' Network's mission is based on these underlying principles:

- The conviction that homelessness in the United States is an intolerable health and social problem;
- A commitment to confront the multiple and complex problems associated with homelessness by using an interdisciplinary approach;
- A commitment to improve the health status of people experiencing homelessness by providing quality health care services in a holistic manner;

- A commitment to enhance homeless people's ability to care for themselves;
- A commitment to develop our leadership abilities, share information, and foster collegiality among clinicians serving homeless people;
- A commitment to honor the diversity of the people we serve; and
- A commitment to speak out on homeless issues, educate the public, and inform public health policy.

Membership of the Organization

Any person providing health care and other services to persons experiencing homelessness is eligible for membership. Students enrolled in a college or university or occupied in a formal training program in preparation for entry into a health career may join the Network.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is the governing body of the Clinicians' Network. It manages and directs the affairs of the Network. Steering Committee members operate within the bylaws of the National Health Care for the Homeless Council.

Steering Committee Member Roles and Responsibilities

- Participate in committee conference calls, missing no more than 3 Steering Committee conference calls each year
- Serve on at least one working committee
- Complete committee assignments
- Attend all face-to-face Steering Committee meetings
- Actively participate in the consensus decision-making process on matters coming before the Steering Committee
- Attend the National HCH Conference
- Recruit and orient new Steering Committee members
- Serve without compensation

Nomination Process

- The Membership Committee will prepare a slate of nominees for expiring positions on the Steering Committee at least thirty (30 days) prior to the date of the Annual Membership Meeting. Those nominees approved by the Steering Committee will be presented for consideration by the Membership at the Annual Membership Meeting.
- The Steering Committee will be composed of fifteen (15) members of the Network who currently provide hands-on services to homeless individuals.
- Of these fifteen (15) members, at least one (1) member will serve primarily children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness.

- The composition of the Steering Committee should be generally representative of the clinical disciplines composing the Network's membership and committed to its mission and goals.
- Steering Committee members, as a group, shall represent diverse cultural backgrounds including ethnicity, race, and gender.
- The Steering Committee should have broad geographical representation with a goal of least one representative from each U. S. Public Health Service region.

Election Process

- Members of the Steering Committee shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Network Membership from among a slate of candidates. All nominees must be Network members in good standing and eligible for election. Steering Committee members shall assume office upon completion of the Annual Membership Meeting. For purposes of electing Steering Committee members, each member shall be entitled one (1) vote for each vacancy.

Term of Office

- Each Steering Committee Member is elected to serve a term of three (3) years. Members of the Steering Committee are permitted to serve two (2) full consecutive terms. If filling a vacancy of one (1) year or less duration, the member may serve two (2) additional consecutive three-year terms. After a period of one (1) year absence from the Steering Committee, a member may be elected to the Steering Committee again.
- The terms of Steering Committee members are staggered, with some of the members' terms expiring in each year.
- A Steering Committee member who has served as Chair in the third year of any term may remain on the Steering Committee as Immediate Past Chair for an additional year past the end of that term.

Removal and Replacement of Steering Committee Members

- A Steering Committee member is subject to removal when he or she is no longer providing hands on services to homeless individuals. Exceptions to this criterion will be considered when persons are promoted within their projects and have continued responsibility for clinical service delivery. Such individuals will be allowed to complete their 3-year term but will not be eligible for re-election to a second term if applicable.
- A Steering Committee member will be automatically removed from membership on the Steering Committee when his or her written resignation is received by the Chair of the Steering Committee. In such a case that the Chair is resigning, membership is terminated when written resignation is submitted to the Council's staff support of the Network's Steering Committee.
- A Steering Committee member shall be removed from office with cause by consensus of the Steering Committee. Just cause includes, but is not limited to, recorded absence at three consecutive face-to-face Steering Committee meetings, more than three Steering Committee conference calls in a year, or three

- consecutive committee conference calls, unless waived by the Chair.
- If the Steering Committee determines that any member is obstructive to the progress or wellbeing of the organization, the remaining Steering Committee members may remove said Member by a consensus decision.
- A Steering Committee vacancy due to death, resignation, or any other reason may be filled by the Steering Committee at its next regular meeting, in such a way as to maintain required Steering Committee composition. The Chair shall request the Membership Committee to select an appropriate candidate for Steering Committee approval by consensus. This Steering Committee member elected by this process shall serve until the end of the term of the person that he or she replaces.

Network Officers

The Network Officers are a Chair and a Chair-Elect, both of whom are elected from among the members of the Steering Committee. Officers are Network members in good standing and have been members of the Steering Committee for at least one year. No person may hold more than one office at the same time. Officers serve the organization without compensation.

Chair

- Preside at all meetings of the Network Membership and Steering Committee
- Appoint all standing, working and ad hoc committee leaders subject to the approval of the Steering Committee
- Serve as the Network representative on the National Health Care for the Homeless Council Board of Directors and attend all Board meetings
- Relate to the Executive Director and staff of the National Health Care for the Homeless Council

Chair-Elect

- If possible, succeed to the office of Chair in the year subsequent to his or her service as Chair-Elect
- Serve as the second Network representative on the National Health Care for the Homeless Council Board of Directors and attend all Board meetings
- Act in the place of the Chair in his or her absence or when requested to do so by the Chair
- Assist the Chair in performing his or her duties as needed

Governing Membership

- Per the bylaws of the National HCH Council, four members of the Steering Committee shall represent the Clinicians' Network on the Governing Membership. Three of these representatives shall be the Chair, Chair-Elect, and the Immediate Past Chair. The fourth representative shall be elected by the Steering Committee annually, in conjunction with the Chair-Elect.

Nomination Process

- The Membership Committee will prepare a slate of officers for the Steering Committee at its annual meeting. Any nominee for an official position who is a member of the Membership Committee will recuse him/herself from Membership Committee deliberations.

Election Process

- Network officers are elected at the Annual Meeting of the Steering Committee. Officers shall be elected from a slate of nominees prepared by the Membership Committee. A majority vote of the Steering Committee members present and voting shall be required for the election of any officer.

Terms of Office

- The Chair and Chair-Elect each serve a one-year term, or the term between Annual meetings until their successors are duly elected and qualified.

Removal and Replacement

- Any officer may be removed by the Steering Committee whenever, in its judgment, the best interests of the organization will be served thereby. Removal shall be by consensus of the Steering Committee members present. Any Steering Committee member removed from office shall be removed from the Steering Committee at the same time.
- An officer shall be automatically removed from membership on the Steering Committee when his or her written resignations received by the Chair of the Network.
- A vacancy in any office due to death, resignation, or any other reason shall be filled by the Steering Committee at its next regular meeting. The Membership Committee shall present a nominee to the Steering Committee for consideration. A person so elected shall serve the unexpired term of the person he or she replaces.

Subcommittees of the Steering Committee

- The Steering Committee, at the recommendation of the Chair, shall approve the formation of and specific charges to all standing, working and ad hoc committees, such as Membership Subcommittee and Communication Subcommittee.
- Subcommittee leaders will be selected by the Chair from among current Steering Committee members. Each committee's composition should be broadly representative of the membership of the Network, and committee leaders shall select committee members in consultation with the Chair of the Steering Committee. Meetings of any committee designated by the Steering Committee may be held whenever called by the committee leader.
- The Steering Committee shall establish working and ad hoc committees as needed to address the mission and goals of the Network. The duties and duration working and ad hoc committees shall be designated by the Steering Committee. Any member of the Network may serve as a committee member at the invitation of the

committee leader. Each committee shall have at least two members who also serve on the Steering Committee.

Meetings

- The Network Membership will meet annually at the National Health Care for the Homeless Conference for the purpose of electing Steering Committee members, receiving an annual report, and for any other business that may arise.
- The Steering Committee will meet annually at the National Health Care for the Homeless Conference. The officers, and any other persons as the Chair may direct, shall present reports on the programs, activities, and other pertinent matters of the Network. Election of new officers shall be conducted at the annual meeting.
- The Steering Committee will meet in person prior to the Council's Governing Membership retreat, typically in October of each year.
- The Steering Committee shall meet monthly by conference call with the exception of months in which the steering committee meets face-to-face and in special circumstances deemed by the chair.

Consensus Decision-Making

Definition of Consensus

- Consensus is a process to reach decisions that best reflects the thinking of the Steering Committee.
- Consensus places emphasis on thinking with regards to “*what is best for the HCH Clinicians’ Network*”
- Consensus aims to find a proposal acceptable enough that all Steering Committee members can support it and no Steering Committee member opposes it.
- Consensus is respectful of the views of the individual Steering Committee member while fostering unity of purpose within the Steering Committee.
- Consensus requires time; active participation of all Steering Committee members; communication skills such as listening, conflict resolution, and discussion facilitation; and creative thinking and open-mindedness.
- Consensus is not a unanimous vote—a consensus decision might not represent every Steering Committee member’s first priorities.
- Consensus is not a majority vote. In a majority vote, only the majority gets something they are happy with; members in the minority may get something they do not like at all.
- Consensus does not necessarily mean that all Steering Committee members are totally satisfied.

When the Consensus Process will be used for Decision-Making

- The consensus process will be used for all decisions that will have an impact on the direction of the Network or conduct of a Network meeting. A formal consensus procedure will be followed for major decisions. For decisions of lesser import, a

- more informal approach may be employed.
- Under exceptional circumstances, the Steering Committee may decide to forego the consensus process in favor of a majority vote (requiring a two-thirds majority to pass). This may be necessary, for example, when an imminent time deadline must be met and/or the Steering Committee feels the consensus process is not appropriate for a particular decision.