Version Number	Description of Changes	Effective Date
1	Initial release	1997-10-22
2	Revision	1999-01-30
3	Revision	2003-05-28
4	Revision	2012-07-19
5	Revision	2018-10-24
6	Comprehensive revision	2024-04-24
7	Formatting updates	2025-07-22
8	Comprehensive revision	2026-02-18
9	Editorial revision (gender-inclusive language)	2026-07-28

Policy Objectives

- The Chief Executive Officer, with the support of the Board of Directors, develops an emergency succession plan for their own role as well as a long-term succession plan for themselves and the members of the senior leadership team.
- The Board of Directors oversees the evaluation of the Chief Executive Officer and entrusts them with responsibility for succession planning within the senior leadership team.

Monitoring: Annually

Purpose

To ensure continuity of leadership and organizational stability in the event of the CEO's sudden absence or departure, and to maintain long-term succession planning aligned with the hospital's strategic priorities, risk management, and commitment to quality care.

Scope

This policy applies to the CEO role and succession processes overseen by the Board of Directors. It also outlines expectations for leadership development within the organization to ensure a strong pipeline of potential successors.

Guiding Principles

3.8 **(a)** In order to protect the Board of Directors from the sudden loss of the services of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the CEO:

3.8.1 Shall not allow that members of the senior leadership team remain unfamiliar with the files, processes, and responsibilities of the CEO, including those relating to the Board.

3.8.2 Shall not fail to maintain current and accessible documentation of key CEO responsibilities, delegations of authority, and critical organizational processes.

3.8 **(b)** In order to ensure immediate succession in the event of the CEO's sudden absence, the CEO:

3.8.3 The CEO shall not fail to delegate functions as appropriate in accordance with the written interim delegation procedure set out in Appendices A and C.

3.8.4 Shall not fail to recommend to the Board a clear designation of interim decisional accountability to ensure organizational continuity.

3.8 **(c)** To ensure the long-term succession of the CEO and the senior leadership team, the CEO:

3.8.5 Shall not neglect to develop and maintain a best-practice talent management and leadership development strategy aligned with the hospital's strategic priorities, risk management framework, and commitment to quality of care.

3.8.6 Shall not neglect to ensure a thorough understanding of the competencies, skills, and experiences required for executive leadership positions within the organization.

3.8.7 Shall not neglect to establish and implement a regular process for identifying, assessing, and preparing high-potential individuals for executive and leadership roles.

3.8.8 Shall not neglect to design and execute individual development plans to build the leadership capacity of potential successors.

3.8.9 Shall not neglect to ensure that succession planning and talent development reflect the hospital's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

3.8.10 Shall not fail to present to the Board of Directors, at least annually, a succession plan for the CEO and members of the senior leadership team, including strategies, identified successors, and associated development measures.

Board Oversight

The Board of Directors and the CEO shall hold formal discussions on succession planning for the CEO and the members of the senior leadership team at least once annually, normally in June.

Definitions

Emergency Succession: A temporary, unplanned leadership transition to ensure continuity of operations in the event of the CEO's sudden incapacity, departure, or extended absence.

Interim CEO: The individual designated to assume the responsibilities of the CEO on a temporary basis until the Board appoints a permanent replacement.

Long-Term Succession Planning: A structured, proactive process to identify and develop potential leaders within the organization to ensure leadership continuity, aligned with the hospital's strategic priorities, risk management, and commitment to quality of care.

Talent Management Strategy: A coordinated approach to attracting, retaining, developing, and engaging employees with leadership potential, to build a sustainable pipeline of future executives.

Leadership Competencies: The combination of skills, knowledge, abilities, and behaviours required to successfully perform executive leadership roles within the hospital.

Succession Plan: A written plan that outlines the immediate and long-term strategies for replacing the CEO and senior leadership positions, including interim arrangements, identified successors, and leadership development measures.

References

- ***Policy 2.3 – Monitoring Chief Executive Officer Performance***
- ***Policy 2.5 – Chief Executive Officer Performance Evaluation***

Appendix A – CEO & Senior Leadership Succession Plan Template

Purpose: To provide a standardized format for the CEO's annual succession planning report to the Board of Directors, ensuring consistency, clarity, and alignment with the hospital's strategic priorities and Accreditation requirements.

1. Executive Summary

- Brief overview of the succession planning process completed this year.
- Key risks and mitigation strategies identified.
- Highlights of leadership development initiatives.

2. CEO Emergency Succession Planning

- **Designated Interim CEO:** [Name / Position]
- **Delegation of Authority:** Outline scope of authority, decision-making boundaries, and reporting expectations during interim period.
- **Risk Mitigation:** Key actions to ensure smooth transition in case of emergency absence.

3. Long-Term CEO Succession Planning

- **Potential Successors Identified:** [List roles/names if appropriate, or internal/external pipeline indicators]
- **Readiness Level:** (Ready now, 1–2 years, 3–5 years)
- **Development Actions Required:** (Coaching, cross-training, executive education, exposure to board/committee work, etc.)

4. Senior Leadership Team Succession Planning

For each key executive role:

- **Role:** [Role]
- **Critical Competencies:** [List]
- **Potential Successors:** [Internal candidates, external pipeline, or talent pool indicators]
- **Readiness Level:** [Ready now / 1–2 years / 3–5 years]
- **Development Plan:** [Leadership development, mentoring, stretch assignments]

5. Leadership Development Strategy

- Summary of organizational initiatives to strengthen the leadership pipeline (e.g., talent management programs, succession bench strength initiatives, diversity & inclusion efforts).

6. Board Oversight & Next Steps

- Timeline for the next review and planned updates.
- Decisions or approvals required from the Board.

Appendix B – Interim CEO Delegation Procedure

Purpose: To provide clear and documented steps for appointing an Interim CEO in the event of the CEO's sudden absence, incapacity, or departure, ensuring continuity of leadership and accountability.

1. Triggering Events

This procedure is activated in the event of:

- Sudden incapacity or illness of the CEO.
- Resignation or unplanned departure.
- Extended leave of absence (medical or other).

2. Designation of Interim CEO

- The Board of Directors has ultimate authority to appoint an Interim CEO.
- The CEO shall annually recommend one or more designated Interim CEO candidates from within the senior leadership team as part of the succession plan.
- The Governance Committee (or Board Chair if urgent) confirms and communicates the appointment.

3. Delegation of Authority

- Interim CEO assumes all responsibilities, authorities, and accountabilities of the CEO role unless otherwise specified by the Board.
- Limitations or adjustments to decision-making authority (if any) must be explicitly defined by Board resolution.

4. Communication Protocol

- Immediate notification to: Board of Directors, senior leadership team, medical leadership, and staff.
- External communication (e.g., Ontario Health, Ministry of Health, media, partners) managed jointly by the Board Chair and Interim CEO.

5. Duration of Appointment

- The Interim CEO serves until the Board either reinstates the CEO or appoints a permanent replacement.
- The Governance Committee monitors performance and effectiveness during interim period.

6. Documentation & Recordkeeping

- The appointment of the Interim CEO shall be recorded in the Board minutes.
- Copies of delegation documentation are retained in the CEO's official personnel file.

Appendix C – Delegation of Authority Adjustment Worksheet for the Interim Chief Executive Officer

Purpose: To provide the Board of Directors with a structured tool to formally document any adjustments to the responsibilities, authorities, and obligations delegated to the Interim Chief Executive Officer (Interim CEO).

General Principle: Unless otherwise formally specified by the Board of Directors, the Interim Chief Executive Officer assumes all responsibilities, authorities, and obligations of the Chief Executive Officer role.

Any limitation, modification, or specific condition must be:

- explicitly defined by the Board;
- documented using this worksheet;
- approved by Board resolution; and
- recorded in the official minutes.

General Information

Item	Details
Name of Interim CEO	
Current position	
Effective date of interim appointment	
Anticipated duration of interim appointment	
Context of the interim appointment (e.g., emergency, extended leave, planned transition)	
Board resolution (date / number)	

Monitoring and Reporting Arrangements

Item	Details
Frequency of check-ins with Board Chair	
Committee responsible for oversight (e.g., Governance Committee)	
Reporting requirements to the Board	
Scheduled review date of delegated authorities	

Adjustments to Delegated Authorities

Area of Responsibility	Standard CEO Delegation	Adjustment (restriction / condition / additional approval required)	Approval Authority	Comments
Governance and Board relations	Full delegation			
Human resources (senior leadership)	Full delegation			
Major financial decisions	Full delegation			
Medical leadership relations (Chief of Staff, medical leadership)	Full delegation			
External relations (Ontario Health, Ministry, partners)	Full delegation			
Public and media communications	Full delegation			
Risk management and critical issues	Full delegation			
Other (specify)				

Confirmation and Approval

The adjustments outlined above have been reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors.

Role	Name	Signature	Date
Board Chair			
Board Secretary			