

# ***North Sound Accountable Community of Health***

## **Governance Recommendation**

**November 9, 2014**

Approved December 1, 2014

### **Summary**

The North Sound Accountable Community of Health (North Sound ACH) is a broad network of community players that can transform health in our region. We will work collaboratively and engage the public to ensure the Triple Aim plus access<sup>1</sup> is successful.

In summary, the North Sound ACH Organizing Committee agrees on four key governance components:

1. governance structure of the North Sound ACH
  - The North Sound ACH governance structure will be phased in in early 2015 as follows to clarify the function and role of the North Sound ACH in transforming healthcare, and in improving the health and wellness of our community members in the North Sound region.
    - i. To continue our momentum, the Organizing Committee -- with a few additions to its membership -- will become the initial North Sound ACH governing body.. Several sectors have been identified as priorities to expand current membership in the first months of 2015: Tribal Nations, first responders, business, and health plans
    - ii. Formal decision making resides within the North Sound ACH, which will include multi-sector representation that is not dominated by a single sector.
    - iii. A “Steering Committee” formed by a smaller group of members of the [governing body] will be appointed by the North Sound ACH to oversee implementation and operations as well as suggest policy issues and options to support decision-making by the North Sound ACH as a whole. This body would also include multi-sector representation.
    - iv. The North Sound ACH operating principles and a charter will clarify how we make decisions and are accountable to one another. This document must be developed and agreed to as early as possible in 2015.
2. initial administrative organization for the North Sound ACH
  - the Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement (WAHA) should continue as the administrative organization at least through the end of 2015 in the interests of continuity and momentum..
3. accountability to the communities within the North Sound region
  - Formal and informal structures of maintaining accountability to the communities within the North Sound will drive the governance structure and functions.
4. an interim steering committee for the North Sound ACH
  - The Organizing Committee will appoint an Interim North Sound ACH Steering Committee to assist in the time-sensitive work that needs to be done to apply to be an ACH pilot by 12.8.2014.

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<sup>1</sup> North Sound ACH Mission, adopted October 3, 2014: Continually improve the health of our communities and the people who live in them, improve health care access, quality, and the experience of care, and lower per capita health care costs in the North Sound region which includes Snohomish, Skagit, San Juan, Island and Whatcom counties

## **Background**

On October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014 nine members of the North Sound Accountable Community of Health (NSACH) Organizing Committee volunteered to serve on a Structure Task Force. On October 31<sup>st</sup> the Structure Task Force presented their recommendations to the Organizing Committee. The results of that discussion are the 4 decisions described herein.

The Task Force was responsible for recommending to the Organizing Committee: 1) a governance structure for NSACH that includes multi-sector representation across the five-county region; 2) a clear decision-making process that will help achieve the vision of advancing health care innovation; and 3) the “backbone” organization, hereafter referred to as an administrative organization to support the NSACH.

The Task Force members also support the principle that the North Sound ACH must be accountable to the community, both the general public and stakeholders throughout the five-county area, including health care organizations. The North Sound ACH will be built from the local level. Its priorities will emerge from the plans and initiatives of local health care organizations and entities, and from the public’s interest and energy around transformative change in the health care system. This group outlined a process of community accountability and the Organizing Committee asked that this process be incorporated into the governance plan for the North Sound ACH.

At the outset, the Structure Task Force identified a minimum set of functions North Sound ACH must be able to perform in order to be a viable ACH Pilot: 1) receive and administer grant funds, 2) show accountability for how funds are dispensed, and 3) participate in audits from the state. The Structure Task Force then adopted five criteria for selecting a governance structure:

- 1) **K.I.S.S.** There should be a minimum amount of structure to support the function, no more.
- 2) **Mission alignment:** The North Sound ACH and the administrative organization must have alignment of missions.
- 3) **Clear operational relationship:** There must be a clear operational relationship and decision-making process between the North Sound ACH and the fiscal agent. The North Sound ACH will have the authority to set the work plan and create the budget. The administrative organization will have the authority to operationalize the work plan and budget.
- 4) **Cross sector representation:** The structure must have true cross-sector representation.
- 5) **Short term AND long term:** The structure must be able to support and deliver a short-term, shovel ready project while also identifying, energizing, and sustaining a commitment to long-term system transformation.

The Structure Task Force felt that, if done right, the North Sound ACH governance structure could facilitate cross- and multi-sector decision-making, a principle that is consistent with the North Sound ACH Common Agenda (approved October 3, 2104). In addition, the Structure Task Force identified an additional principle to guide their work:

- To realize our common agenda, decision-making must live within the entire, cross-sector North Sound ACH. One or more smaller groups may be necessary to perform certain duties, in which case there needs to be in place a clear accountability structure between larger and smaller groups.

## **Decisions: North Sound ACH Governance**

### **Decision 1: North Sound ACH Governance Structure**

The purpose of a North Sound ACH structure is to support and enable local efforts to advance the triple aim plus access. To this end and in the interest of continuity and momentum, the Organizing Committee agrees that:

- The Organizing Committee, with few changes to its membership, will become the North Sound ACH [governing board]. Membership will be formal with a signed agreement of mutual roles and responsibilities.
- The NSACH will continue to be comprised of multi- and cross-sector representatives that are able to decide on a shared regional agenda. To this end, membership must be flexible as we learn together and identify gaps in representation.
- North Sound ACH decisions will be based on information fed up from local communities and sectors through a network of formal and informal mechanisms (see Decision 4 below). Decisions will also be based on secondary research into best practices and academic literature.
- A smaller group called a Steering Committee will be appointed by the North Sound ACH. The Steering Committee will support North Sound ACH decision-making. This will include vetting and tee-ing up policy issues and options, and overseeing the implementation and operationalization of the North Sound ACH. This group will also be charged with some basic housekeeping functions such as HR and reviewing financial statements. The Steering Committee will not be dominated by traditional health providers and will reflect the sector diversity to the extent size allows.
- Either the Steering Committee or an interim subcommittee appointed by the North Sound ACH will develop operating principles and a charter to recommend to the North Sound ACH. The operating principles and charter (similar to bylaws used in the nonprofit realm) will outline governance details such as term limits for members, size of committees, and appointment, roles, and responsibilities of North Sound ACH members and officers. The charter will clearly communicate an accountability policy between the Steering Committee, and possibly other subcommittees, and the North Sound ACH.
- It is important to have a chair and vice chair (or something similar) of the North Sound ACH so an individual or individuals can speak on behalf of the North Sound ACH when needed.
- Formal decision-making will reside in the full North Sound ACH [governing body].

### **Decision 2: Administrative Organization**

In the interest of continuity, stability, and momentum, the Organizing Committee selects WAHA to continue as the administrative organization (“backbone organization” for the purposed of the ACH Pilot grant application) at least for the 2015 calendar year, performing the following duties for the North Sound ACH:

- Administration
- Communications
- Operations
- Budget development and fiscal management
- Data, measurement, and evaluation (NOTE: this final recommendation hinges on external factors, such as statewide data sharing infrastructure, and costs)

### **Decision 3: Accountability to Community**

For the North Sound ACH to be successful, communities must be engaged to shape their goals and strategies for community health improvement. To this end, Formal and Informal channels of accountability should exist.

FORMAL (filtered):

- The **Membership** of the North Sound ACH will include representatives of sectors, organizations and agencies.
- The North Sound ACH's regional **Common Agenda** to transform health care in the area must enjoy the support of the public-at-large and local organizations and agencies involved in health care and beyond to be accountable. Multiple channels of engagement are necessary. Given the rich networks of community engagement that exist in many communities, the North Sound ACH will draw upon and encourage community members to engage with existing geographic or issue specific committees and groups that exist throughout the region.
- The North Sound ACH's **relationships with governmental or quasi-governmental organizations and entities** involved in health as understood in Memoranda of Understanding and other similar documents are additional avenues for accountability

INFORMAL (unfiltered):

- The North Sound ACH may enter into contracts with **local associations and coalitions** to become vital partners with the NSACH.
- There are a number of **local meetings or forums** in which NSACH and representatives of local organizations participate. The North Sound ACH should encourage local entities to connect with North Sound ACH about issues of mutual concern or about issues and needs of particular interest to a given community.
- **Direct communication and engagement with the community** should be a focus, especially for communities that face health disparities or are underrepresented in existing formal channels.

Decision 4: Delegate an Interim North Sound ACH Steering Committee

The Organizing Committee selected an Interim Steering Committee (ISC) for the North Sound ACH to be empaneled in November 2014. The structure of this committee will carry into the Steering Committee in 2015, but the composition will change. The ISC will assist the Organizing Committee and WAHA staff with the time-sensitive work that needs to be done to apply to be an ACH pilot by December 8, 2014. In keeping with Recommendation 1 above, the Interim Steering Committee will:

- Support large group decision-making by teeing up policy issues and options
- Be accountable to the Organizing Committee
- Be available via email to staff and Organizing Committee members as time sensitive questions arise regarding administrative matters
- Reflect the cross- and multi-sector representation of the Organizing Committee. Specifically, one sector will not be in the majority
- Will be ideally suited and have the relevant expertise to assist WAHA staff with the development of the work plan for the first North Sound ACH initiative