Hospital Board Certification Program

Strengthening Trustee Leadership and Accountability

www.ihaonline.org
The Iowa Hospital Association is proud to offer all member hospitals and health systems access to the Hospital Board Certification Program. This program provides educational guidance to ensure excellence, innovation and accountability in health care governance.

As trustees for large and small hospitals across Iowa, board members have an obligation to the success of these organizations and to the welfare of the communities they serve.

Developed and administered by the IHA Council on Education and Member Services, the Hospital Board Certification Program is built on the idea that accountability and high standards of excellence are the hallmarks of quality governance and leadership.

The aim of trustee certification is to achieve the highest quality of governance by ensuring ethical, independent and conflict-of-interest free behavior. Top-notch leadership and governance foster sustainable employee and community trust.

**What You Face**

**Expectations and Regulations**

Health care organizations remain under the microscope of legislators, community members, media and government officials regarding accountability. The escalating cost of health care, the public desire for more information on quality and patient safety and the increasing complexity of hospital operations all factor into the challenges faced by hospital boards.

Arising from these challenges is the expectation that hospital leaders will establish standards, expectations and governing criteria for performance and leadership. Failing to meet these expectations proactively invites further government regulation down the road.

**What You Need**

**Meeting Expectations with Certification**

As your hospital works daily to deliver efficient, high-quality and safe health care, it requires your knowledge, understanding, dedication and commitment as an effective board member. You not only need traditional governance skills and qualities, but a special understanding of the complex health care industry.

The Iowa Hospital Association has designed the Hospital Board Certification Program to promote governance best practices and encourage the coordination of care and best use of resources. IHA Hospital Board Certification participation demonstrates to lawmakers, regulators, physicians, employees, business leaders and other community stakeholders that you and your hospital board:

- Understand and embrace the need for governance accountability.
- Govern according to standards of excellence.
- Are willing to formally commit to governance best practices.
- Are committed to coordination of resources in your community.
- Embrace community accountability and transparency.
- Utilize benchmarking data in the areas of utilization and financial operations.
- Utilize quality and patient safety performance data to identify opportunities for improvement.
The Benefits

Better Boards, Better Governance

Quite simply, everyone involved in the health care system – leaders, clinicians, employees, patients, families, communities – can benefit from high quality hospital governance. Hospital boards benefit by having consistent standards. The added ability to communicate compliance with those standards helps build a strong reputation, confidence and loyalty. Hospital trustees benefit by having a better understanding of expectations for individual and overall leadership excellence – particularly as it relates to governance practices. Improved leadership can also have a positive impact on hospital operations and community perception.

At the IHA Governance Forum, trustees and hospital boards that have most recently completed the requirements for certification will be recognized at a special reception. Hospitals are encouraged to promote their board’s accomplishment to their communities.

How It Works

Becoming a Basic or Advanced Certified Trustee and Certified Hospital or System Board

To become certified at the basic level:

- The trustee completes all of the standards on the Basic Certification Form.
- The trustee submits the form and Education Log to the hospital board chair and CEO for verification.
- The completed forms are submitted to IHA for approval by the IHA Council on Education and Member Services.
- IHA confirms certification with letters to the trustee and hospital CEO.
- Certified trustees are recognized and honored at the annual IHA Governance Forum.

To become certified at the advanced level*:

- The trustee follows and completes the basic certification process with the addition of meeting the advanced level standards.

*NOTE: Some advanced standards may not be applicable to all candidates. If an advanced standard is not attainable or applicable to the person completing it (for example: only board officers evaluate the CEO), please note this when submitting materials.

To maintain certification:

- Maintaining your certification requires completing a total of 12 hours of continuing board education every two (2) years. Education hours completed must be submitted annually.

To become a certified hospital or system board:

- For hospitals or health systems that participate, three levels of board certification will be recognized:
  - One Star (★) – 40 to 69 percent of all board members certified
  - Two Stars (★★) – 70 to 99 percent of all board members certified
  - Three Stars (★★★) – 100 percent of all board members certified

Why It Matters

To You and Your Community

Your board should be encouraging and supporting its members in the pursuit of continuous learning and becoming more informed and aware of their responsibilities as they serve the community. In addition to demonstrating that your hospital is guided by knowledgeable and dedicated board members, IHA Hospital Board Certification provides assistance and enhances existing guidelines that ensure board members:

- Know basic expectations and standards of participation.
- Meet their fiduciary duties of care, loyalty and obedience.
- Meet their governance obligations to bylaws, accreditation standards and laws.
- Realize the importance of continuing board education in governance and health care issues and trends.
- Recognize the importance of advocacy on behalf of the hospital to their community and legislators.
First-Time Certification

Trustees completing the requirements for the IHA Trustee Education Certification for the first time must complete the Basic Certification Form and 12 hours of continuing board education (CBE).

Certification Renewal

Trustees renewing their certification must complete 12 hours of continuing board education (CBE) over a two-year period (current and previous calendar year only). **Education hours completed must be submitted annually.**

Continuing Board Education

Regular updates provided at hospital board meetings do not constitute continuing board education (CBE). If a distinct education component is included in conjunction with a regularly scheduled board meeting, the time spent in the educational component will count toward CBE. Minimum increment is 15 minutes.

At least four hours of the educational requirement must be completed in face-to-face programming.

Listed below are IHA programs approved by the IHA Council on Education and Member Services to meet certification requirements.

- IHA Critical Access and Rural Hospital Forum, Spring (Approximately six hours CBE)
- IHA Governance Forum, Spring (Approximately six hours CBE)
- IHA Summer Leadership Forum, June (Approximately six hours CBE)
- IHA Annual Meeting, October (Approximately 15 hours CBE)

Other educational programs should be submitted to IHA for pre-approval. The following are examples of topics that may be used to fulfill the 12 hours of CBE requirement.

- Health care reform
- Health care environment, issues and trends
- Finance
- Compliance
- Quality and patient safety
- Requirements for public hospitals
- Governance
- Board’s roles and fiduciary duties
- Diversity/cultural competency
Q. How many education hours am I required to complete for new certification?
A. A total of 12 hours of continuing board education are required for initial certification. The education hours must be earned within the current and previous calendar year.

Q. How do I maintain my certification?
A. Maintaining your certification requires completing a total of 12 hours of continuing board education every two years. Education hours completed must be submitted annually.

Q. Which forms do I need to submit and when?
A. The Basic Certification Form or Advanced Certification Form and Continuing Board Education log need to be submitted. As a best practice, please submit your forms as early as possible. All forms are due December 31 of the current year.

Q. How can I find out what forms have already been submitted and how many hours have been submitted?
A. To find out what forms and how many hours of education were submitted, please contact Ellen Waller via email at ihahospitalboardcertification@ihaonline.org or by phone at 515-283-9363.

Q. What is the deadline for submitting hours of education and all supporting documents?
A. All hours of education and supporting documents are due by December 31 of the current year.