Evaluating the organization through Executive Limitations policies

Alliance for Healthier Communities · Governance Workshop · June 2026

A practical workshop on using policy to guide, monitor, and fairly evaluate CEO/ED performance.

Presenters

Tamara Chipperfield

CEO, Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre

Melissa Kwiatkowski

CEO, Guelph Community Health Centre

Adrianna Tetley

Governance coach; former CEO, Alliance for Healthier Communities

> *Both PQCHC and Guelph CHC are refreshing their Executive Limitations and monitoring systems — and will share practical lessons from that work.*

Let’s get to know each other

Hands up if you are here as...

1. **Board member**
   Governance oversight perspective
2. **CEO/ED**
   Delegated operational leadership perspective
3. **Other role**
   Staff, consultant, funder, partner, or sector leader

And which model are you part of?

- CHC
- CFHT
- NPLC
- IPHCO
- Other

Opening diagnostic: what are your CEO/ED reports designed to do?

Inform
Monthly operational updates, stories, activities, and environmental scans.

Assure
Evidence that policy expectations, legal duties, funder obligations, and risk controls are being met.

Evaluate
Board judgement against pre-established policy criteria and monitoring evidence.

Direct
Board-level instructions about operational means — often a sign the governance system is unclear.

Reflection

When your board receives CEO/ED reports, are they mainly updates — or are they structured in a way to fulfill operational oversight and evaluate performance?

Questions to locate your current state

- Do you receive monthly CEO/ED reports covering a wide range of operational topics?
- Are those reports mainly presented as general updates or are they tied to specific governance policies?
- Do your policies use Executive Limitation language — or are you unsure?
- Do EL monitoring reports fulfill fiduciary and operational oversight?
- Are EL reports an integral part of CEO/ED performance appraisal?

> *If the board has not defined what it needs to know, the CEO/ED is left to guess what to report.*

Guelph CHC: starting at the beginning

- Had Executive Limitations, monitoring reports, and performance reviews.
- CEO and board were unclear on the “why” of monthly monitoring reports.
- Tools were not connected to each other.
- The result: extra work for the board and CEO without enough governance clarity.

> *The issue was not a lack of reports —*
> *It was a lack of an integrated system.*

The “aha” moment

Executive Limitations are the way the board gives guidance and evaluates CEO/ED performance.

Before
MSAA reporting · QIP reporting · narrative reporting · EL reports · EDI workplan reporting · advocacy reports · etc.

After
A coherent monitoring system mapped to board policies, with clear criteria for judgement.

Session objectives and learning outcomes

1. **Explain**
   How EL policies support board oversight of operations.
2. **Distinguish**
   The difference between operational updates and monitoring reports.
3. **Describe**
   The three parts of a strong EL monitoring report.
4. **Connect**
   How EL monitoring links to CEO/ED performance evaluation.

Setting the context: four roles of a high-performing policy governance board

1 · Represent moral owners

Be clear about the communities the organization exists to serve.

2 · Lead

Articulate mission, desired outcomes, and value for your moral owners. Holds Strategic Plan

3 · Evaluate operations

Delegate clearly to the CEO/ED and rigorously monitor compliance.

4 · Exercise sound governance

Use policies that clarify roles, structure, decision-making, and board self-evaluation.

Today’s focus: Role 3 — evaluating the organization through Executive Limitations.

Role 3: evaluating the organization through EL policies

> *The board has an operational oversight role. The question is whether it exercises that role through policy and monitoring — or through operational interference.*

Board work
Set limits, criteria, monitoring method, frequency, and evaluation process.

CEO/ED work
Reasonably interpret policy, lead operations, and provide evidence of compliance.

A robust evaluation system is needed

- CHCs, IPHCOs, NPLCs, and CFHTs are complex organizations with multiple funders, risks, accountabilities, and community expectations.
- A comprehensive set of EL policies covers the full breadth of operational responsibility delegated to the CEO/ED.
- Monitoring reports provide assurance and become the evidence base for evaluating CEO/ED performance.

> *The board evaluates the organization by judging evidence against criteria it established in advance.*

Monitoring is based on results — not activities

Activity reporting

"We held 40 health promotion activities."

Results monitoring

What changed as a result? Was it worth the added resources? Did it advance the board's Ends?

- The CEO/ED is responsible for outcomes of all organizational activities, not only activities they personally carry out.
- Outcomes are reported to the board through scheduled EL monitoring reports.
- The board judges whether the evidence demonstrates compliance with policy.

What is an Executive Limitations policy?

- EL policies provide operational risk boundaries and limits to the CEO/ED's authority.
- They establish the conditions, procedures, and decisions that would be unacceptable to the board.
- They allow staff methods, decisions, and activities to be responsibly led and managed by staff.
- Everything not limited by policy is delegated to the CEO/ED to reasonably interpret and manage.

> *Although the language can feel negative, ELs are liberating: they clarify what the CEO/ED may not do, and delegate everything else.*

Six steps to fulfill oversight and link it to CEO/ED performance

1 · Determine accountability

What does the board need from the CEO/ED?

2 · Set criteria in policy

Ends and ELs define performance expectations.

3 · Set monitoring method

Internal, external, or direct inspection.

4 · Evaluate evidence

Use monitoring to judge, not just inform.

5 · Take board action

Accept, request more evidence, or require correction.

6 · Summarize annually

Use cumulative monitoring data for appraisal.

Step 1: determine the accountability the board needs

- The board delegates authority to the CEO/ED and holds the CEO/ED accountable for achieving desired outcomes.
- Board–CEO/ED relations policies clarify how authority is transferred and limited.
- Accountability requires expectations, responsibility, evidence, and follow-through.
- A strong board–CEO/ED relationship requires clear rules — and then the board must play by them.

Step 2: set performance criteria through Ends and EL policies

> *Judgement without criteria is not fair to the CEO/ED — and can allow unacceptable conditions to go unnoticed or uncorrected.*

- The board does its job first by writing policy.
- Policies delegate authority and authorize the CEO/ED to take all reasonable actions within the limits set by the board.
- The board then evaluates performance against pre-established criteria, not preferences invented after the fact.

What a complete set of EL policies might cover

- Global Executive Constraint
- Treatment of Clients
- Treatment of Staff
- Compensation and Benefits
- Financial Condition and Activities
- Financial Planning and Budgeting
- Asset Protection
- Compliance with Legislation
- Risk Management
- Health Equity, Anti-Oppression & Anti-Racism
- Quality / Quality Improvement
- Communication and Support to the Board
- Emergency CEO/ED Succession

As a set, these policies should cover the full scope of the CEO/ED's operational role.

Reflection: look at your policies through this lens

PQCHC example

Had three omnibus EL policies; the work is to determine whether they are comprehensive and at the right level of delegation.

Guelph CHC example

Had ELs, but needed to better connect policies, monitoring reports, and CEO/ED evaluation.

- Are your ELs comprehensive enough to cover the CEO/ED role?
- Are they at the right level of authority for the board?
- Does the board understand them as limits on CEO/ED authority?

Creating an integrated EL system: map existing reports to ELs

Quality EL QIP · quality reports	→	**Board receives** Assurance evidence rather than disconnected updates
Compliance EL MSAA · contracts · funder reporting	→	**Board receives** Assurance evidence rather than disconnected updates
Risk EL Risk report · narrative reports	→	**Board receives** Assurance evidence rather than disconnected updates
Health Equity EL Health equity framework · client experience data	→	**Board receives** Assurance evidence rather than disconnected updates

Step 3: establish method and frequency of monitoring

Internal monitoring

Written by the CEO/ED or someone delegated by the CEO/ED.

External monitoring

Prepared by outside resources retained by the board, such as an auditor.

Board direct inspection

Board-designated inspection against pre-set criteria, such as annual document checks.

> *Typically, financial condition policies are monitored quarterly; many other policies are monitored annually.*

Sample Executive Limitation: treatment of clients

With respect to interactions with clients, the CEO/ED will not fail to ensure conditions, procedures, or decisions are safe, timely, welcoming, non-discriminatory, not oppressive, equitable, dignified, or unnecessarily intrusive.

- Gather data for which there is no clear need.
- Fail to protect client information against improper access.
- Fail to ensure reasonable confidentiality and privacy: visual, physical, and auditory.
- Fail to ensure clear understanding of what may and may not be expected from services offered.
- Fail to conduct an annual client experience survey and report findings as required.

What is included in an internal monitoring report?

1 · Interpretation

CEO/ED interpretation of the policy being monitored, with justification that the interpretation is reasonable.

2 · Measure

Description of the measure being used to determine compliance with the policy.

3 · Evidence

Data that shows results are compliant with the interpretation of the policy criteria.

The report should provide reasonable proof that the CEO/ED has done what the board asked and avoided going outside the limits.

Example: EL monitoring report excerpt — cybersecurity

Policy limit

CEO/ED may not...

Fail to ensure against financial losses, claims, and extra expenses resulting from an actual or suspected cyber event.

CEO/ED interpretation

Interpretation

Ensure that all required insurance policies are in place and premiums are current.

Evidence of compliance

Evidence

Current first-party cyber coverage; incident response, cybercrime, business interruption, privacy liability, and legal cost coverage.

> *The value is the structure: policy language → CEO/ED interpretation → evidence → compliance judgement.*

CEO/ED performance evaluation framework

- Ends and Executive Limitations contain the full sum of the board's guidance to the CEO/ED.

- There should be no separate, surprise criteria for evaluating CEO/ED performance.

- Everything the board wants should be articulated clearly, in one voice, through board policy.
- Every EL policy is monitored to ensure compliance.
At the end of the year, the motions to approve the EL reports are looked at collectively and the sum of these reports are the core of the CEO/performance on operations.

> *The CEO/ED should know the criteria they will be evaluated on and the limits to their authority.*

Reflection: your CEO/ED appraisal system

What is your current CEO/ED performance appraisal system?

Does it include EL monitoring reports as key components of the evaluation?

Discussion prompt

What would need to change for your board to use policy-guided monitoring as the foundation for CEO/ED evaluation?

A year later...

What difference do you hope this will make when your organization completes a review of its ELs and implements a robust monitoring system?

For the board
More confidence, less operational drift, and clearer oversight.

For the CEO/ED
Fairer evaluation, clearer delegation, and fewer surprise expectations.

For the organization
A stronger accountability system tied to mission, risk, quality, and equity.

Closing Comments

> *The board has a role in oversight of operations. It should not be viewed as "operations versus governance."*

- When expectations are unclear and reports are not presented against policy criteria, boards often ask detailed operational questions.
- Monitoring reports let boards evaluate outcomes and assurance evidence without directing means.
- The board stays out of how the CEO/ED does the work — while remaining clear about the outcomes and limits that matter.

What is one change you would make to strengthen the connection between policy, monitoring, and CEO/ED evaluation?

Reflection and Questions?

Thank you · Merci · Miigwetch

For more information

Adrianna Tetley, governance coach
adrianna@adriannatetley.ca

> *Executive Limitations work best when they are treated as a living governance system — not a reporting template.*

Additional reference material if helpful during Q&A

Step 4: use monitoring data to judge and evaluate

- Monitoring reports are not merely information updates.
- They are the board’s topic-by-topic evaluation of organizational performance.
- Quarterly financial monitoring is not just about being informed; it is about judging whether board expectations are met.
- The evidence must demonstrate compliance with the board’s policies.

> *The board should ask: does the evidence show that the policy has been reasonably interpreted and complied with?*

Reflection: typical CEO/ED reports

Common pattern

Monthly omnibus reports cover a wide range of issues and are mostly presented as updates, often through the consent agenda.

Governance risk

The board receives information, but not necessarily monitoring data that allows it to fulfill its oversight role.

> *When monitoring is weak, boards often compensate by asking more detailed operational questions.*

Step 5: take board action

- The CEO/ED states whether the report demonstrates compliance with policy and, if not, why not.
- If the board determines the report is compliant, no further board time or action is needed.
- If monitoring data shows non-compliance, the report is discussed by the full board.
- The board resists the temptation to fix the problem for the CEO/ED.

Possible actions
Agree on a realistic correction timeframe · increase monitoring frequency · change future policy expectations

Step 6: discuss cumulative monitoring data annually

- The board holds an annual summary discussion of monitoring data already received and acted upon.
- CEO/ED compensation and/or contract matters can be discussed at that time.
- The board must not introduce measures into the annual review that were not previously guided by policy.
- The board can always change expectations for the future by changing or adding policies.

> *Do not judge a CEO/ED for failing to comply with a policy the board wishes it had written.*

Board process to review an internal monitoring report

1
Is the interpretation reasonable?

→

2
Is the interpretation justified?

→

3
Is the evidence sufficient?

→

4
Does the evidence demonstrate compliance?

→

5
Accept report or require follow-up action

If the answer is “no” at any stage, the board should ask for a revised interpretation, additional evidence, or a plan of correction — rather than shifting into operational problem-solving.

Typical motion

> *That the [name] Executive Limitations monitoring report be received as per the monitoring schedule; that the interpretation be deemed reasonable; and that the data be deemed sufficient to demonstrate compliance.*

The cumulative record of these motions becomes the main evidence base for the annual CEO/ED performance appraisal.

Components of the performance management framework

1. **Cumulative monitoring summary**
   Summary chart of Ends and EL monitoring reports, including board decisions and motions.
2. **Special initiatives**
   Any agreed priorities not covered by Ends or ELs, with clear measures set in advance.
3. **Professional development**
   CEO/ED development goals and supports.
4. **Overall comments**
   A concise synthesis grounded in previously reviewed evidence.
5. **Compensation review**
   Compensation and/or contract discussion informed by the cumulative record.