

## Chapter 24

# Prairie North Regional Health Authority – Granting Hospital Privileges Follow Up

### 1.0 MAIN POINTS

In 2011, we assessed Prairie North Regional Health Authority's (Prairie North) processes to grant privileges to physicians. We concluded that Prairie North did not have adequate processes to grant privileges to physicians and made seven recommendations to help Prairie North strengthen its processes.

Prairie North has implemented three of the seven recommendations that we made in 2011. Prairie North still needs to align its processes with the Practitioner Staff Bylaws, clarify the responsibilities of its medical advisory committees, continue developing requirements for physicians doing special procedures, and monitor physicians' use of medical privileges.

### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

Under *The Regional Health Services Act*, regional health authorities (RHAs) are responsible for granting medical privileges to physicians. Physicians must receive medical privileges before they can admit patients to hospitals to do diagnostic tests, perform surgeries, etc.

Prairie North provides health services to the northwest part of Saskatchewan. It is responsible for ensuring that qualified physicians deliver safe, competent health care in its hospitals. One way it does so is by granting medical privileges to eligible physicians.

In 2011, we assessed Prairie North's processes to grant privileges to physicians. Our *2011 Report – Volume 1*, Chapter 10, concluded that Prairie North did not have adequate processes to grant medical privileges to physicians. We made seven recommendations to help Prairie North strengthen its processes. The Standing Committee on Public Accounts agreed with our recommendations on August 28, 2012.

This chapter describes our follow-up of management's actions on the recommendations we made in 2011.

To conduct this review, we followed the *Standards for Assurance Engagements* published in the *CICA Handbook - Assurance*. To evaluate Prairie North's progress towards meeting our recommendations, we used the relevant criteria from the original audit. Prairie North's management agreed with the criteria in the original audit.

### 3.0 STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This section sets out the recommendations and Prairie North's actions up to March 31, 2013. We found that Prairie North has fully implemented three of the recommendations but still has work to do for the remaining four recommendations.



### 3.1 Processes Consistent But Not Yet Aligned with Bylaws

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We recommended that Prairie North Regional Health Authority monitor whether its processes for granting medical privileges are aligned with its Practitioner Staff Bylaws and take action to ensure consistent processes across the region. (2011 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement August 28, 2012)

**Status** – Partially Implemented

The Practitioner Staff Bylaws require the Practitioner Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) to make recommendations to the Board regarding the granting of medical privileges to physicians. The Advisory Committee can appoint an ad hoc committee and set its terms of reference to carry out this responsibility. Prairie North uses its Medical Advisory Committees (MACs) to review the requested medical privileges of its physicians and make recommendations to the Board. However, Prairie North has not developed terms of reference for its MACs.

Prairie North has begun work to better allow it to monitor whether its processes for granting medical privileges are aligned with its Practitioner Staff Bylaws. As part of this work, Prairie North has assigned two of its existing physicians as senior medical officers. It clarified that the role of these co-senior medical officers is to hire physicians and recommend granting of medical privileges. They are also responsible for the discipline process, along with ensuring these processes are consistent with the Practitioner Staff Bylaws. Prairie North also plans to designate clinical chiefs, who will oversee and monitor physician competencies.

Prairie North has done work to ensure that there are consistent processes for granting medical privileges across its region. Prairie North has also revised and implemented standard forms that are used across its region. The forms include checklists of information that must be included with applications. For example, proof of liability insurance and a current medical license must be attached with the application. The senior medical officer must also sign off on the application indicating that all of the required documentation was received.

### 3.2 Responsibilities Not Yet Clear

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We recommended that that Prairie North Regional Health Authority clarify the responsibilities of the Chief of Medical Staff and committees in each hospital for granting medical privileges. (2011 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement August 28, 2012)

**Status** – Partially Implemented

As discussed in **Section 3.1**, Prairie North has clarified the responsibilities of the senior medical officers. However, it has not yet done so for its MACs that are responsible for reviewing and recommending privileges to be granted to physicians. Prairie North needs to develop terms of reference for its MACs.

### 3.3 Requirements Starting to be Set But More Work Needed

We recommended that Prairie North Regional Health Authority set requirements for granting medical privileges to physicians doing special procedures such as anesthesia or practicing as specialists in the region. (2011 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement August 28, 2012)

**Status** – Partially Implemented

Prairie North has begun drafting requirements for granting privileges to physicians for doing special procedures. For example, Prairie North has drafted requirements for those physicians with obstetrical privileges. The drafted requirements set out the required skills, along with the mandatory training needed to maintain those privileges. Prairie North needs to establish requirements for granting privileges to all medical specialists and have the Board approve those requirements.

### 3.4 Applications Complete

We recommended that Prairie North Regional Health Authority consistently require physicians to submit complete applications with the documentation required by its Practitioner Staff Bylaws before granting medical privileges. (2011 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement August 28, 2012)

**Status** – Implemented

The Practitioner Staff Bylaws require physicians to submit specific documents with their applications for seeking medical privileges (e.g., proof of liability insurance and a copy of the physician's current medical license). Physicians applying for medical privileges for the first time must also provide a current criminal record check. We found that all applications that we reviewed included current copies of liability insurance, medical licenses, and criminal record checks.

Prairie North also implemented a system to track outstanding documents. When a physician submits an incomplete application, Prairie North notes which documents are outstanding on a spreadsheet. Communication (i.e., letters or emails) is sent to the physicians reminding them of the missing documentation, and the consequences of not submitting the required documents (e.g., privileges may not be approved).



### 3.5 Reference Checks Conducted

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We recommended that Prairie North Regional Health Authority conduct reference checks for physicians applying to practice medicine in its hospital for the first time.

(2011 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement August 28, 2012)

**Status** – Implemented

Prairie North now conducts reference checks for physicians applying for medical privileges for the first time. For all the applications we reviewed, we found that Prairie North received the standard form (e.g., checklist and questions) from all of the applicants. We also saw evidence of reference checks to verify that the applicants had adequate competence to practice medicine in Prairie North's hospitals.

### 3.6 Board Reviewing Privileges Appropriately

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We recommended that Prairie North Regional Health Authority approve, amend, or revoke recommended medical privileges at the Board's next regular meeting as required by its Practitioner Staff Bylaws and inform the Board of any temporary medical privileges granted. (2011 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement August 28, 2012)

**Status** – Implemented

Upon approval from the senior medical officers and the MACs, the recommendations for granting medical privileges to new physicians are reviewed, approved, amended, or denied by the Board at its next available meeting.

The Board also reviews privileges for continuing physicians once a year based on MACs recommendations.

For all of the files we reviewed, physician privileges were properly approved or amended by the Board. For example, in two of the files we reviewed, the senior medical officers questioned the physicians about privileges requested and the lack of required training. In these files, the senior medical officers and physicians determined that the physician would no longer use those privileges. Therefore, the senior medical officers and the MAC recommended the Board remove those privileges.

Also, in cases where temporary privileges were granted to physicians by the senior medical officers and MACs, the Board was appropriately notified.

### 3.7 Need to Monitor Use of Privileges

We recommended that Prairie North Regional Health Authority analyze whether physicians complied with the medical privileges granted and revise medical privileges as necessary. (2011 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement August 28, 2012)

**Status** – Partially Implemented

As mentioned earlier, Prairie North has drafted requirements for physicians seeking and maintaining obstetrical privileges. Those requirements include the mandatory training that physicians must obtain to keep their privileges. As part of the annual process, physicians are now required to provide proof of certification/recertification of this mandatory training. Also, during the annual process, physicians with emergency room privileges must provide proof that they have taken the advanced cardiac life support course.

Management indicated that Prairie North plans to establish requirements for other medical specialties. Doing so will help to ensure that physicians with certain privileges are maintaining their competencies in the procedures associated with those privileges.