

Chapter 28

Prairie North Regional Health Authority – Granting Physician Privileges

1.0 MAIN POINTS

This chapter describes our second follow-up of the actions of Prairie North Regional Health Authority (Prairie North) on four recommendations we initially made in our 2011 audit of Prairie North's processes to grant physician privileges. By February 29, 2016, Prairie North had implemented the four recommendations.

Prairie North has aligned its processes with the Practitioner Staff Bylaws, clarified the responsibilities of its Medical Advisory Committees, developed requirements for physicians doing special procedures, and analyzed and revised medical privileges as necessary.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Under *The Regional Health Services Act*, regional health authorities 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.

Our first follow-up,¹ reported in our *2013 Report – Volume 1*, Chapter 24, found that Prairie North had implemented three of the seven recommendations initially made in our 2011 audit of Prairie North's processes to grant medical privileges to physicians.²

To conduct this review engagement, we followed the standards for assurance engagements published in the *CPA Canada Handbook – Assurance*. To evaluate Prairie North's progress towards meeting our recommendations, we used the relevant criteria from the 2011 audit. Prairie North's management agreed with the criteria in the original 2011 audit.

To perform our follow-up on our recommendations, we discussed actions taken with management, reviewed relevant documentation (e.g., policies and procedures, minutes of the Medical Advisory Committees), and sampled physician reappointments.

3.0 STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This section sets out each recommendation including the date on which the Standing Committee on Public Accounts agreed to the recommendation, the status of the recommendation at February 29, 2016, and Prairie North's actions up to that date. We found that Prairie North had fully implemented the four remaining recommendations.

¹ This follow-up assessed management's actions up to March 31, 2013.

² See our *2011 Report – Volume 1*, Chapter 10 for the results of this audit. In this audit, we concluded that Prairie North did not have adequate processes to grant medical privileges to physicians.



3.1 Processes Consistent and Aligned with Bylaws

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. (2010 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement August 28, 2012)

Status – Implemented

Prairie North has implemented processes to align granting of medical privileges with the Practitioner Staff Bylaws. In April 2013, Prairie North developed terms of reference for its Practitioner Advisory Committee³ and Medical Advisory Committees. Consistent with those terms of reference, Prairie North uses three Medical Advisory Committees⁴ to review the requested medical privileges of its physicians, and make recommendations to the Board. We found this process to be consistent across the Region, and with the Practitioner Staff Bylaws.

Prairie North has assigned three physicians as co-senior medical officers. They are jointly responsible for ensuring that physician appointment, privileging, reappointment, and discipline processes are appropriate and consistent with the Practitioner Staff Bylaws.

3.2 Clear Responsibilities Set

We recommended that Prairie North Regional Health Authority clarify the responsibilities of the Chief of Medical Staff and committees in each hospital for granting medical privileges. (2010 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement August 28, 2012)

Status – Implemented

The terms of reference for its Practitioner Advisory Committee and Medical Advisory Committees, noted in **Section 3.1**, clarified the responsibilities of these committees for granting physician privileges.

In January 2015, Prairie North further clarified the responsibilities of its co-senior medical officers (formally referred to as Chief of Medical Staff) and the Vice President of Practitioner Staff Affairs. It has made these individuals responsible for the following: monitoring the processes used to appoint and assess physicians and their privileges, and monitoring the qualification of the physicians to provide services as established by Prairie North.

³ The Practitioner Advisory Committee provides policy advice to coordinate processes to grant medical privileges. It has delegated its responsibility of appointment, reappointment, termination, suspension, discipline, and privileging of physicians to the Medical Advisory Committees.

⁴ Medical Advisory Committees are located in North Battleford, Lloydminster, and Meadow Lake.

3.3 Requirements Set for Special Procedures

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. (2010 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement August 28, 2012)

Status – Implemented

Since March 2013 (our last follow-up), Prairie North has set requirements for granting privileges to all physicians doing special procedures (e.g., anesthesia, obstetrics, general surgery). The requirements set out the required skills, along with the mandatory training needed to maintain those privileges. For example, to be approved to perform basic laparoscopic procedures, a general surgeon must have diagnostic laparoscopic training in a recognized course, plus supervised operating experience (e.g., must do 50 cases with another surgeon present before doing procedures alone).

3.4 Privileges Analyzed and Revised as Necessary

We recommended that Prairie North Regional Health Authority analyze whether physicians complied with the medical privileges granted and revise medical privileges as necessary. (2010 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement August 28, 2012)

Status – Implemented

Each year, Prairie North analyzes whether physicians comply with the medical privileges granted, and revises the medical privileges as necessary. It does this during the annual physician reappointment process. We found the Medical Advisory Committees reviewed a physician's request for reappointment. The review entailed evaluating each physician's privileges based on the set requirements, along with ensuring compliance with the required certification. For example, a physician with emergency room privileges provided a copy of his/her advanced cardiac life support certification/recertification. Using the results of the evaluation, the Committee made a recommendation to the Board (e.g., to reappoint the physician with their privileges or revise the privileges, as necessary).

