Minutes

REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY B
HORIZON HEALTH NETWORK
BOARD OF DIRECTORS – Public

Chair: **Susan Harley**
Board Chair

Meeting Room: Fredericton

Date: Thursday, March 26, 2026

Meeting Time: 1:00pm-3:30pm

Present (✓) Regrets (R)

	Board of Directors		Staff		
✓	Susan Harley	✓	Margaret Melanson **CEO**	R	Jennifer Sheils
✓	Mike Walton	✓	Dr. Susan Brien	✓	Natalie Urquhart
✓	Donna Redmond Gates	R	Jeff Carter	✓	Ashley Calvert
✓	Carol Reimer	✓	Greg Doiron	✓	Dr. Nachi Sinha
✓	Jane Nastasiuk	✓	Jackie Gordon	✓	David Gamble
✓	Carol Ostridge	✓	Gail Lebel	✓	Zach Kilburn
✓	Amanda Myan	✓	Paul Greene	✓	Jaime Vandenberghe

Agenda Items

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1. **Land Acknowledgment**

2. **Call to Order**
The Board Chair called the meeting to order.

3. **Approval of Agenda**
MOTION by Board Member Mike Walton, seconded by Board Member Carol Ostridge. The agenda was approved.

CARRIED.

3.1 **Disclosure of Conflicts**
There were no Conflicts declared.

3.2 **Board of Director Minutes, January 22, 2026 – Public Session**
MOTION by Board Member Amanda Myran, seconded by Board Member Mike Walton. the Minutes of January 22, 2026 were approved as presented.

CARRIED.

4. **Remarks from the Board Chair**
The Board Chair reviewed the following:
Horizon reported strong progress in expanding primary care and mental health services during the first year of its five-year strategic plan, while emphasizing the urgent need to address a province-wide hospital capacity crisis driven by high numbers of medically discharged patients awaiting long-term care. Despite ongoing initiatives to reduce pressure on acute care, Horizon

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stressed that system-wide solutions and timely government action—particularly in long-term care—are essential to stabilizing hospital operations and ensuring patients receive timely, high-quality care.

5. **Report of the CEO**

The CEO's report outlined Horizon's current operating environment, strategic priorities, innovation initiatives, workforce performance, and system pressures.

The CEO highlighted that Horizon continues to operate in a complex and challenging environment, with sustained system pressures alongside growing expectations for access, quality, and patient experience. The CEO noted the organization's ongoing efforts to balance daily operational demands while advancing longer-term system sustainability and resilience.

Discussion emphasized that Horizon's core priority remains the delivery of safe, high-quality, people-centred care, while continuing to transform how care is delivered to meet future needs. Innovation was noted as a key enabler of this work, focused on long-term system readiness rather than novelty.

The Board discussed progress related to Horizon's responsible artificial intelligence program, including the launch of six AI initiatives, exceeding the annual target. It was noted that these initiatives are grounded in addressing practical challenges faced by patients and staff and are intended to enhance, not replace, clinical judgment. Strong clinician engagement and increasing national visibility of Horizon-led innovation were acknowledged.

The CEO provided an update on the AI Scribe initiative, noting its rapid scaling, deployment of approximately 400 licenses, and significant additional demand. The Board discussed how the tool supports clinicians by reducing documentation burden and enabling greater focus on patient care.

Horizon has expanded use of digital tools to improve patient access to information and services, including the introduction of a digital maternal support platform in partnership with SeamlessMD. The value of clinician-led design and patient-centred digital supports was noted.

An update was provided on the establishment of the Institute for Research and Innovation, including the appointment of Dr. Paul Atkinson as Chief Scientific Officer. The Board discussed the importance of aligning research and innovation activities with Horizon's strategic priorities and measurable improvements in patient care.

The workforce and recruitment updates, noting Horizon's recognition as one of Atlantic Canada's Top Employers for the third consecutive year. Discussion highlighted the organization's focus on employee and physician wellbeing, including the expansion of the Our Promise

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retention program. Improved workforce indicators, including voluntary turnover below target and strong recruitment outcomes across physician, nursing, and student pipelines, were noted. The CEO discussed ongoing system pressures related to high hospital occupancy, particularly the impact of patients awaiting more appropriate placements. The Board acknowledged the strain these pressures place on patients, families, and staff, and recognized the compassion and commitment demonstrated by Horizon teams in delivering care under challenging conditions. Discussion also addressed efforts to transform care delivery by shifting appropriate services from hospital settings to community-based care, including the planned opening of an additional phlebotomy site in Fredericton. The Board noted that while Horizon continues to take action within its control, sustainable solutions will require coordinated system-wide efforts. The CEO concluded by reaffirming Horizon's commitment to compassionate leadership, meaningful system change, and continuous improvement in care for patients, families, and staff. 6. **Report of the Regional Chief of Staff** The Regional Chief of Staff highlighted continued progress in strengthening clinical operations and physician engagement, including the successful launch of its first centralized reappointment process, strong physician participation in the "Break the Rules for Better Care" campaign, and recent clinical stabilization in vascular surgery and hospitalist services. Despite these advancements, recruitment challenges in key specialties and ongoing system pressures related to patient flow and emergency department congestion remain significant concerns, driven largely by medically discharged patients awaiting long-term care and unattached patients without primary care access.
7. **Presentations** 7.1 **Primary Care** Ashley Calvert, Interim Vice President Community reviewed the presentation "PHP Process" 7.2 **AI Projects Improving Patient Outcomes** Zach Kilburn, Chief Digital Officer (CDO) reviewed the presentation "AI at Horizon". 7.3 **Medically Discharged Patients** Greg Doiron, VP of Clinical Operations reviewed the presentation "Medical Discharge Patients". 7.4 **Community Health** Corinne Saulnier, Clinical Executive Director-Community Health revied the presentation "Community Health Board Report"

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9.	**Patient Safety & Quality Update** Sonya Green-Haché, Executive Director Quality, Patient Safety and Engagement provided an overview of the updated Horizon's Patient Safety & Quality Dashboard. Board members were given the opportunity for questions and comments.
10.	**Finance, Audit & Resource Committee** Board Member Mike Walton provided an overview of the February 23, 2026, FARC Report. **MOTION** by Board Member Mike Walton, seconded by Board Member Donna Redmond Gates. The FARC report was received and filed. **CARRIED.**
11.	**Governance and Nominating Committee** Board Member Donna Redmond Gates provided an overview of the February 25, 2026, GNC Report. **MOTION** by Board Member Donna Redmond-Gates, seconded by Board Member Carol Ostridge. The GNC report was received and filed. **CARRIED.**
12.	**Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Committee** Board Member Carol Reimer provided an overview of the February 23, 2026, PSQI Report. **MOTION** by Board Member Carol Reimer, seconded by Board Member Mike Walton. The PSQI report was received and filed. **CARRIED**.
13.	**Report of the Regional Professional Advisory Committee** Jackie Gordon, Corporate Director, Nursing and Chief Nursing Officer provided an overview of the January 14, 2026, RPAC report. **MOTION** by Board Member Carol Reimer, seconded by Board Member Mike Walton. The RPAC report was received and filed. **CARRIED.**
14.	**Report of the Regional Medical Advisory Committee** The RMAC report was reviewed by the Board of Directors from the February 24, 2026, meeting. **MOTION** by Board Member Carol Reimer, seconded by Board Member Mike Walton. The RMAC report was received and filed. **CARRIED.**
15.	**Other Business** No other business raised.
16.	**Questions from the Public** The Public was allocated time to ask questions and answered by Board Chair and President/CEO.
17.	**Directors, Regional Chief of Staff & CEO only In-Camera**
18.	**Directors only In-Camera**
19.	**Adjournment** **Next Board Meeting:** June 23, 2026