



Best Medicines Coalition

Terms of Reference

Introduction

The Best Medicines Coalition (BMC) is a broad-based alliance of organizations and individuals with a shared vision of equitable and consistent access for all Canadians to safe, effective and good quality drugs which improve patient outcomes. Within this context, the BMC's areas of interest span from approval and reimbursement through patient safety concerns.

As an important aspect of its work, the BMC strives to ensure that Canadian patients have a voice and are meaningful participants in health care policy development and pharmaceutical review. As a patient-driven organization, the BMC represents millions of Canadians living with or affected by chronic disease or illness. The BMC is both an unincorporated and non-profit organization.

Guiding Principles & Values

The members of the BMC believe that excellence in health care is a fundamental right for all Canadians, and its mission and goals flow from this basic value. BMC members share an obligation and moral responsibility to work with all parties engaged in providing and using health services, be they governments, for profit and non-profit organizations, or patients, and that each should be transparent in its motivations, methods and activities. By so doing the BMC encourages the development of practices that are fair, equitable, necessary, and will be of benefit to all concerned.

In turn, the BMC pledges to be transparent, respectful, and accountable to participant organizations and individuals, the public, and partners with whom BMC engages in various activities. Towards this goal, the BMC has set out Principles and Codes for Ethical Conduct and Partnerships.

Mission

The Best Medicines Coalition (BMC) is committed to ensuring that all Canadians have safe and timely access to medications that have been shown, based on best available evidence, to improve outcomes for patients.

Goals

- Strengthen drug review and post-marketing safety surveillance systems to ensure that patients have timely access and comprehensive knowledge of risks and benefits throughout the life cycle of each drug.
- Establish an effective pan-Canadian drug system which provides an appropriate standard of efficient, equitable and consistent access throughout the country
- Implement effective models for meaningful and equitable participation of patients in drug reviews and general health policy development
- Further public awareness of relevant issues within the BMC Mission.

BMC Participation

Participants in the BMC consist of the following:

1. A Steering Committee consisting of members who have been appointed by organizations that represent the needs of patients and which are involved in activities that support the BMC's mission, goals and values. Steering Committee members can also be independent individuals who do not formally represent a group but are actively involved in advocating on behalf of patients, supporting the BMC's mission, goals and values.
2. An Operations Committee consisting of five persons elected from and by the Steering Committee for a one-year term with possibility for re-election;
3. A Chair elected by the Steering Committee from among the members of the Operations Committee for a two-year term with possibility for re-election. The outgoing chair shall serve for additional year on the Operations Committee.
4. A Vice-Chair may be elected by the Steering Committee for a one-year term if the Chair and Operations Committee chooses, from the members of the Operations Committee;
5. One Treasurer elected by the Steering Committee from among the members of the Operations Committee.
6. Paid staff, such as Executive Director, Coordinator and Accountant, shall be "Ex-Officio" members of the BMC.

BMC Membership Application Process

The following process will be followed in consideration of new BMC members:

- a) Those groups or individuals wishing to join the BMC are asked to complete and submit an application form.
- b) In addition to basic contact information, the applicant will outline information regarding current activities being conducted or pursued which support the mission and goals of the BMC. The applicant will also indicate areas of expertise and which Working Groups are of interest.
- c) On the application form, prospective members will be asked to confirm they have read, understand and agree to the BMC Terms of Reference including the Principles and Codes for Ethical Conduct and Conflict of Interest Guidelines Document.
- d) Applications for membership will be brought forward as discussed on an Operations Committee conference call.
- e) In important membership criteria is the applicant's involvement in activities that support the BMC mission and goals. In addition, membership will be declined if it is deemed that there is already full representation from a specific disease area and/or region.

BMC Participant Responsibilities

Steering Committee Member Responsibilities:

- a) Steering Committee Members are encouraged to take an active role in the work of the BMC to support its mission and goals. Specifically, Steering Committee Members are encouraged to join at least one of the BMC's Working Groups and participate on a regular basis. Participation in a Working Group includes activities such as offering opinion and input in discussions on conference calls or at meetings, responding and offering input on relevant BMC documents, gathering and sharing information, preparing materials and representing the BMC at various types of external meetings.
- b) When attending BMC meeting or discussions Steering Committee members will be responsible for contributing constructively, in a manner promoting inclusiveness and demonstrating respect for other members and their positions.

- c) It will be the responsibility of Steering Committee Members to update or report back to their organizations about issues and activities of the BMC. Steering Committee Members will also be responsible for updating the BMC on issues and activities of their organization that are relevant to the BMC's mission and goals.
- d) In some cases, such as the development of positions or specific messaging on significant and/or controversial issues, Steering Committee members will be required to indicate whether or not they (or their organization) are supportive. Steering Committee members will be responsible for communicating level of support to the BMC. To this end, written notice with the given issue or document will be circulated with a set time to opt in or opt out. Silence will be understood as consent; therefore, anyone who fails to reply by the deadline will be understood to have opted in.
- e) All BMC Steering Group members must abide by the terms of the Conflict of Interest Guidelines and Principles and Code for Ethical Conduct and Partnerships.
- f) Steering Committee members will be asked to consider providing a financial contribution to the BMC. This member contribution is voluntary and participation is confidential.
- g) Steering Committee members who have not contacted the BMC or responded to emails or telephone calls for one year will be considered inactive and removed from membership lists.

Operations Committee Responsibilities:

In addition to the above, Operations Committee members are responsible for the following:

- a) Within the general context of the Mission and Goals outlined in the Terms of Reference, the Operations Committee will provide leadership and direction in determining strategies, positions, activities and communications messaging in the ongoing operation of the BMC.
- b) Operations Committee members shall participate in meetings, usually by teleconference, which are held approximately every six weeks or at the discretion of the Chair.
- c) Operations Committee members shall endeavor to be available and accessible via email or telephone for quick response to provide input on issues and operational decisions;
- d) In addition to the above, the Operations Committee members will perform the following as needed and as schedules allow: act as media spokesperson for the BMC on relevant issues; attend meetings and/or represent the BMC; assist in capacity building within the Steering Committee; and act as team leaders/Chairs BMC issue Working Groups and report back to the Operations Committee accordingly.

Chair Responsibilities:

In addition to the above, the Chair is responsible for the following:

- a) The Chair will lead Operations Committee discussions and activities, with support from others such as Executive Director or other paid facilitator.
- b) The Chair will shall act as lead spokesperson for the BMC or may delegate other participants to speak on behalf of BMC.
- c) The Chair will sign official documents on behalf of the BMC, sometimes with other Steering Committee members if they have contributed to the document, or will delegate other members to do so as relevant.
- d) The Chair will provide a verbal and written report of the BMC's activities for the previous year to members at the Annual General Meeting.
- e) The Chair is required to request declarations of conflict of interest (as per conflict of interest guidelines) at the Annual General Meeting and may also at other BMC meetings, at the Chair's discretion.
- f) The Chair will encourage membership capacity building and support members as they participate in a meaningful, equitable way in BMC discussions and decision-making processes, including all internal and external meetings and conferences.

- g) In conjunction with the Accountant, Treasurer and Executive Director, the Treasurer will have co-signing authority on BMC cheques, whereby two signatures are required for all cheques over \$1,000.

Vice-Chair Responsibilities:

In addition to the Operations Committee responsibilities listed above, the Vice Chair (when one has been appointed) is responsible for the following:

- a) The Vice-Chair will be appointed as an alternative to the Chair if the Chair unable to attend a meeting or conference on behalf of the BMC. If a Vice Chair has not been chosen or is not available, any other qualified member may be appointed as an alternative.
- b) The Vice-Chair, in the absence of the Chair, will be Acting Chair.

Treasurer's Responsibilities:

In addition to the Operations Committee responsibilities listed above, the Treasurer is responsible for the following:

- With the support of paid staff, such as the Executive Director, Coordinator and Accountant, the Treasurer will monitor financial statements and report on financials to the Steering Committee at the BMC Annual General Meeting and to the Operations Committee as relevant issues arise.
- In conjunction with the Accountant, Chair and Executive Director, the Treasurer will have co-signing authority on BMC cheques, whereby two signatures are required for all cheques over \$1,000.

Paid Staff Responsibilities

- a) Paid staff, including the Executive Director, Coordinator or other positions, will provide support in executing action points determined by the Chair in consultation with the Operations Committee.
- b) Goals and responsibilities for each staff function shall be outlined in a written document or letter of agreement. It will be the responsibility of the staff member to ensure that the agreement is current.

Accountant Responsibilities

- a) The paid Accountant will report directly to the Chair, Treasurer and Executive Director, providing monthly updates, while maintaining all financial records.
- b) The paid Accountant will maintain all financial records and provide monthly updates to the Chair, Treasurer and Executive Director on finances.
- c) The paid Accountant will issue cheques for all expenses, and will ensure that procedures are followed so that cheques over \$1,000 are co-signed by either the Treasurer, Executive Director or Chair.
- d) The paid Accountant will provide an annual financial report for inclusion in the annual report that is tabled at the Annual General Meeting.

General Operational Issues

Reporting Requirements

- The BMC will produce an Annual Report, including a Chair's report on activities and a financial report, which will be tabled and reviewed at the Annual General Meeting.
- Reports on priorities and activities will be prepared and presented to organizations that have financially supported BMC, as necessary in consultation with funders.

- Minutes and action points will be recorded from all BMC meetings, including the Annual General Meeting, Operations Committee and Working Group meetings, and these notes will be distributed to all Steering Committee members on a regular basis for information purposes and reference.
- Other specific reports will be generated and shared on an as needs basis.

Amendment to Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference may be amended at any time, and from time-to-time, by the BMC after appropriate consultation and discussion regarding risk management issues or areas which BMC should or must consider, and for which BMC must establish criteria or guidelines. As such it is a living document.

Meetings & Development of BMC Positions

- a) The BMC shall hold at least two meetings (face-to-face or teleconference) per year to which its entire Steering Committee membership is invited.
- b) The BMC, including the Steering Committee, Operations Committee and Working Groups, may invite non-members, from government or industry for example, to meetings for informational or educational purposes. However, BMC members should be given prior notification that an external participant or observer will attend. In addition, BMC strategies, positioning and messaging shall be developed independently of organizations that fund the BMC. Therefore, representatives from funding organizations, or their agents or consultants, will not be permitted to participate in strategy or planning sessions.
- c) A quorum for meetings will be 50 per cent plus one of voting members. All members have an equal voice and a vote.