

## Health Technology Assessment Committee Terms of Reference

Through the health technology review, the Health Technology Assessment Committee (HTAC) assesses and reviews ministry and health authority sponsored business cases for the provincial coverage of non-drug health technologies. HTAC makes evidence-informed recommendations to Leadership Council based on its publicly-available multi-criteria decision analysis framework. The aim of the health technology review is to make recommendations about the public provision of non-drug health technologies that will contribute to maintaining and improving the health and well-being of British Columbians and provide value for money.

### BACKGROUND

A health technology assessment is the evaluation of the clinical effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, and broader effect of drugs and medical technologies, both on patient health and the health care system. Leadership Council and the Health Operations Committee have noted that decision-making about non-drug health technologies across the province is dispersed, and have formed the Health Technology Assessment Committee to provide advice to Leadership Council on non-drug health technology coverage in the province. Technologies considered will be predominantly hospital based.

Every citizen of British Columbia is entitled to the best health care that the province can afford, but resources are finite. As such, the committee must weigh the evidence related to the benefits and costs of all health technologies in forming its recommendations.

### 1. MANDATE

The mandate of the Health Technology Assessment Committee is to:

- Establish and implement a prioritization and decision-making process that is transparent, credible, consistent and fair.
- Support health authorities, the ministry and Leadership Council in making evidence-informed decisions in a timely manner.
- Make recommendations to Leadership Council on the public provision of non-drug health technologies that fall within the committee's scope.

Recommendations should:

- Balance opportunities to improve health outcomes with the need to manage health care costs;
- Promote standardization of technologies across the province where warranted; and
- Promote the health and safety of British Columbians.

## 2. SCOPE

Health technology includes a wide range of procedures, devices and equipment applied to the maintenance, restoration, and promotion of health. It encompasses interventions at any stage of health care, including risk detection and disease prevention, early detection of disease, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care.

The Health Technology Assessment Committee focuses on the clinical and cost-effectiveness of new<sup>1</sup> and emerging health technologies that have a large-scale effect on the public health care system. The health technology review will be applied to all new non-drug technologies (tools, devices, diagnostics, and procedures) under consideration for public provision that meet the cost threshold of \$25,000 per patient or \$1,000,000 province-wide. The cost threshold includes both the direct costs of a technology and indirect costs such as those for implementation and operation. Technologies reviewed should be transformative (e.g., with the potential to meet an unmet need, and /or replace an insured device or procedure) rather than those in which minor changes in technique or to an existing device have been made.

The Health Technology Assessment Committee (HTAC) may examine health technologies that have already diffused within the province, at the request of Leadership Council or the Deputy Minister of Health, when the need has been identified for a systematic evidence-informed analysis. The committee may also review any other technology at the request of Leadership Council or the deputy minister.

HTAC does not examine or provide recommendations about pharmaceutical products or information systems, infringe upon the important role of innovation through health research, or engage in reviews of disease management. It does, however, examine the integration of technologies related to specific diseases and conditions.

## 3. ROLE

The role of the Health Technology Assessment Committee is advisory in nature. The committee makes recommendations directly to Leadership Council regarding the public provision of non-drug health technologies.

---

<sup>1</sup> In this context, new refers to technologies that are not currently publicly provided across the province for clinical purposes, as well as new applications of existing technologies.

## 4. RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of the Health Technology Assessment Committee are to:

- Consider all business cases submitted to the health technology review.
- Assess submissions based on its multi-criteria decision analysis framework.
- Make recommendations to Leadership Council as the committee deems appropriate, and consider requests for reconsideration as appropriate.
- Provide advice and recommendations based on a systematic, objective, evidence-informed analysis of proposed health technologies in the context of existing clinical practice, taking into account economic, human resource, regulatory, and ethical considerations.
- Create a forum to maximize opportunities for, and prioritize the uptake and diffusion of, emerging health technologies deemed to significantly improve patient outcomes and/or systems efficiencies relative to existing or competing interventions.
- Outline the implications of implementing recommendations, including the effect on individuals, society, and health care sectors.
- When appropriate, recommend field evaluation of technologies deemed to be potentially useful but for which there is inadequate high-quality evidence to support multi-million dollar, multi-year investments.
- Ensure transparency regarding its decision-making process, recommendations and the analyses upon which recommendations are made to Leadership Council.
- Develop the capacity within and across health authorities to make consistent evidence-informed decisions about the public provision of non-drug health technologies.
- Promote a culture of critical appraisal and evidence-informed decision making within the health authorities.

## 5. COMPOSITION

The Health Technology Assessment Committee shall be composed of one public member, four professional members, six health authority members, one health Shared Services BC member, and three ministry members, totaling fifteen voting members, including a chair and vice-chair. The four professional members shall include a health economist, a health technology assessment expert, an ethicist, and a physician.

## 6. APPOINTMENT

Leadership Council will appoint health authority members for renewable two-year terms. The ministry will appoint ministry and health Shared Services BC members. These members will be considered core committee members. The chair and vice-chair will be chosen by core committee vote and will be in place for two-year terms.

The core committee will select the public and professional members, who will also be appointed for renewable two-year terms.

## 7. TERMINATION FROM THE COMMITTEE

Members are required to attend all the technology review<sup>2</sup> meetings each year. However, the chair has the discretion to approve, in advance, an extended absence of any member (subject to the right of the ministry or health authority to replace their respective members at any time). A member may resign at any time upon written notification to the chair. The chair may request that Leadership Council replaces a member who has missed three technology review meetings in a row.

## 8. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All members must abide by the terms of the Health Technology Assessment Committee conflict of interest guidelines. Breach of these guidelines may result in termination of the member from the committee.

## 9. CONFIDENTIALITY

Members are required to respect the confidentiality of any materials provided as part of the assessment process and the discussions at the meetings. No member shall knowingly divulge any such information to any person other than another member, unless the member is legally required to do so. A member shall not use information obtained as a result of his or her involvement in the committee for his or her personal benefit. Each member shall avoid activities which might create the appearance that he or she has benefited from confidential information received during the course of his or her activities with the health technology review.

---

<sup>2</sup> Meetings at which business case submissions are reviewed.

## 10. COMMITTEE MEETINGS

### NATURE OF MEETINGS

The Health Technology Assessment Committee shall hold health technology review meetings as required to carry out its responsibilities and to consider all submissions made to it. Significant preparation time will be required of members prior to each meeting.

### ATTENDANCE

Members are required to attend all health technology review meetings. A member who is unable to attend an in-person meeting may request permission from the chair to participate by telephone or another communication method. The chair shall have sole discretion in deciding whether to grant permission to such member's request. At the chair's discretion, members who fail to attend three consecutive technology review meetings may be asked to provide an explanation to the chair as to why they are unable to attend. Without an explanation of extenuating circumstances, such members may be terminated from the committee.

### QUORUM

The quorum at meetings of the Health Technology Assessment Committee shall be eight members.

## 11. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations shall be made based on consensus scores on the multi-criteria decision analysis assessment framework. Voting will be conducted if a consensus cannot be reached on a score. If a vote is required for a committee recommendation, the affirmative vote of at least 50 per cent plus one of the voting members participating in the meeting, excluding abstentions, is required. Silent (anonymous) voting will be conducted if it is deemed appropriate by the chair. Voting will be done in camera.

### REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

When making a recommendation to Leadership Council, the Health Technology Assessment Committee shall provide a rationale for the recommendation and this will be distributed in accordance with the procedure established.

Recommendations shall specify the circumstances under which high-quality evidence supports the use of the technology, and state that the technology should not be used in circumstances for which there is insufficient evidence to support its use.

---

## SEEKING CLARIFICATION

At the discretion of the chair, the Health Technology Assessment Committee may seek additional written information from:

- a) Submission requestors in order to carry out its mandate; and/or
- b) Experts or other stakeholders in order to carry out its mandate.