### TENNESSEE HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION BOARD CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

"This is one of the most important and valuable things our board has ever done. We have since made Certification a part of our hospital bylaws as mandatory for all members of our board"

> –Edwin Anderson Board Member, Cumberland Medical Center

> > Tennessee Hospital Association is proud to offer all member hospitals and health systems access to the Board Certification Program. This program provides educational guidance to ensure excellence, innovation and accountability in healthcare governance.

As trustees for large and small hospitals across Tennessee, board members have an obligation to the success of these organizations and to the welfare of the communities they serve.

Developed and administered by the THA Trustee Council, the Board Certification Program is built on the idea that accountability and high standards of excellence are the hallmarks of quality governance and leadership.

This is why the Council designed a governance improvement process unique to Tennessee. The program allows board members to stay informed on the pressing healthcare topics of the day – health reform, finance, quality, compliance and cultural competency – while identifying appropriate best practices for hospitals in each of these areas.

These proactive steps can demonstrate to lawmakers, regulators, physicians, employees and community stakeholders that Tennessee's hospitals:

- Understand and embrace the need for accountability in governance.
- Govern according to a standard of excellence.
- Are willing to formally commit to governance best practices.

The aim of trustee certification is to achieve the highest quality of governance by ensuring ethical, independent and conflict-of-interest free behavior. Top notch leadership and governance foster sustainable employee and community trust. Through this process, Tennessee's hospitals are able to show stakeholders that high standards and accountability are central to successful governance.

The THA Board Certification Program provides meaningful leadership education to improve governance, enhance public trust and avoid outside interference in governance work for Tennessee's hospitals.

#### Who Benefits from Certification?

Quite simply, everyone involved in the healthcare system – leaders, clinicians, employees, patients, families, communities – can benefit from high quality hospital governance.

Hospital boards benefit by having consistent standards. The added ability to communicate compliance with those standards helps build a strong reputation, confidence and loyalty.

Hospital trustees benefit by having a better understanding of expectations for individual and overall leadership excellence – particularly as it relates to governance practices.

Improved leadership can also have a positive impact on hospital operations and community perception.

# What is the Board Certification Program?

The Board Certification Program is a voluntary, annual process for THA member hospitals and health systems, focusing on continuing education and governance best practices. Certification represents a commitment by individual trustees and boards to increase healthcare knowledge and leadership effectiveness.

## How Does the Board Certification Program Work?

The timeline for certification is based on the terms for individual hospital board members (i.e., January to December or July to June). The Board Certification Program functions at a two levels:

#### Individual Trustees

On an annual basis, each certified board member shall:

• Complete five hours of continuing board education from any of the following topic areas:

- Compliance
- Diversity/Cultural Competency
- Finance
- Governance
- Health Reform
- Quality and Patient Safety

Attend at least 75 percent of regularly scheduled board meetings, unless otherwise specified by individual board bylaws. Ad hoc or special meetings will not be included in this count. Complete and sign the certification checklist, which is a personal attestation of compliance with hospital bylaws, minimum governance expectations and standards of excellence. The hospital CEO and Board Chair will also sign the form.



"Having our trustees educated on key healthcare topics has made our board meetings both more efficient and productive."

> -Ted Stubblefield Board Member, NorthCrest Medical Center

#### Hospital or System Boards

For hospitals or health systems that participate, three levels of board certification will be recognized:
One Star (★) - 40 to 69 percent of all board members certified
Two Star (★★) - 70 to 99 percent of all board members certified
Three Star (★★★) - 100 percent of all board members certified

#### How Does a Trustee Earn Continuing Board Education Credits?

For purposes of the Board Certification Program, continuing board education focuses on topics "larger" than the individual hospital. For example, a presentation about new models of delivery in healthcare reform would count as continuing board education (CBE). A presentation about the hospital's plan to build a physician office building would not.

Participating hospitals or systems and board members are encouraged to focus CBE in six specific areas:

- Compliance
- Diversity/Cultural Competency
- Finance
- Governance
- Health Reform
- Quality and Patient Safety

Board members are encouraged to complete one hour of education in five of the six topics per year.



Boards may choose conferences/programs/training materials with content applicable to any/all of the six topic areas. The number of CBE credit hours granted for all education programs and materials will be subject to approval by the Trustee Council.

When appropriate, THA will make available white papers and other readings (or approve hospitaldesignated readings) which can be used as discussion points for board meetings. Time set aside to discuss these items at board meetings will count towards annual CBE credit requirements.

Examples of CBE for the THA Trustee Certification Program include:

THA meetings, conferences and events

Programs from The Governance
 Institute, Center for Healthcare
 Governance, Estes Park Institute

- AHA Membership Meeting
- Distance learning / On-line resources
- Governance CD series from Larry
   Walker or Jamie Orlikoff

#### TO LEARN MORE ...

Visit the Tennessee Hospital Association's website at www.THA.com and click on "Other Services" and "THA Trustee Council."

