

**Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network  
Approach to Decision-Making in the Context of Priority-Setting  
September 12, 2008**

In carrying out its planning, integration, and funding responsibilities, the Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network (WWLHIN) uses a priority-setting approach that is strategic, evidence-based and fair, and facilitates decision-making in practice. In general terms, the approach entails the WWLHIN following this process:

1. The specific purpose (or purposes) of setting priorities is identified.
2. The parameters of consideration are identified, including the WWLHIN's vision, mission, values, Integrated Health Service Plan (IHSP), Ministry-LHIN Accountability Agreement (MLAA), service accountability agreements (SAA) with health service providers, and Ontario laws and regulations.
3. The specific set of items (e.g., requests, business cases, proposals, Health System Improvement Pre-proposals) to be prioritized is determined.
4. The people who will set the priorities are identified.
5. The criteria to be used are identified, including those defined by the WWLHIN Board of Directors as part of its Decision-making Framework, and any others that are appropriate for the specific set of items being prioritized.
6. The weight (importance) of each criterion is assigned.
7. Information applying to each criterion, is gathered, as appropriate, and used.
8. The rating scale to be used is identified.
9. The criteria are applied to the specific set of items.
10. The list of priorities is created.

**Decision-making Framework and Criteria**

The WWLHIN's decision-making framework, cited in point 5 above, includes specific criteria, which are outlined below, but is also explicitly supported by process and behaviours:

- Open and transparent
- Accountable
- Not a surprise to anyone
- Aligned with the WWLHIN vision, mission, values, IHSP, MLAA, SAAs
- Continuously communicated
- Understood and credible

The criteria that comprise the WWLHIN decision-making framework are grouped as follows:

- Population Health
  - improves clinical effectiveness
  - improves quality care
  - supports specific populations per IHSP
  - evidence of (better) health outcomes
  - enables individual and community to take responsibility for health

- System Performance
  - invest in areas of innovation
  - support appropriate gaps/struggles in the system
  - opportunity to collaborate with other resources within WWLHIN
  - efficiency of utilization of WWLHIN resources
- Community Capacity
  - opportunity for collaboration
  - short term gain as well as long term benefits
  - supports system sustainability within our means
- Strategic Fit (also known as the WWLHIN's strategic drivers, as per the IHSP)
  - system transformation
  - system performance improvement
  - enhanced community capacity
  - enhanced health and wellness
- Risk: minimize negative risk (harm) and maximize opportunities
- Economic: best value for money
- Effect: the right service to the right individual at the right time
- Ethical: resources are allocated fairly among competing needs

### **Information Applying to Each Criterion**

In following the above process the WWLHIN reserves the right to gather additional information and input to better inform its decision-making about the set of items it is considering. The WWLHIN will make reference to clinical, financial, and any other data or information, especially as it relates to creating and sustaining a sustainable local health system, that it deems relevant to the issues raised in the light of its decision-making criteria.

### **Rating Scale and List of Priorities**

As a matter of operational preference, and as appropriate to the nature of any particular priority-setting or decision-making activity, the WWLHIN seeks to use the analytic hierarchy process, which entails arranging criteria in a hierarchical structure, carrying out a series of one-to-one pairwise comparisons, synthesizing results, and providing a clear rationale.