



Exploring Community Leadership

Introduction to
the Board of Directors

HiM

HEALTH
INITIATIVE
FOR MEN

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

HIM honours the territories of the many nations on the west coast of Turtle Island, on whose unceded and stolen land we live and work. We encourage any people reading this acknowledgement to learn more about these unceded territories. For more information about the Nations on whose lands HIM operates, please visit www.checkhimout.ca/land

HIM acknowledges that this land is and always will be Indigenous land. Historically, these lands had culture, stories, and context for “queer” and “gender-diverse” people, but white-settler colonization brought concepts of binary gender, and limited sexuality. Therefore, the work that HIM does in reducing health barriers for GBQ+ on Turtle Island must include anti-colonial efforts. HIM’s anti-colonial efforts involve (1) the implementation of Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) principles at all levels of the organization, and (2) building unique and strong relationships with the First Nations, Metis and Inuit people both individually and as an inter-connected network.

HIM also acknowledges the loss of life that has occurred amongst GBQ+ and our communities as a direct result of HIV, oppression, and violence. HIM exists because of the efforts of heroes, elders, and ancestors who died before being allowed to receive fair and equitable healthcare. This loss of life is magnified in communities of colour, Indigenous communities, black communities, trans women, and amongst all trans and gender diverse people. HIM does not forget the lives lost and continues to fight for inclusive, and meaningful healthcare.

For more information about how HIM implements Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at all levels of the organization, please see our logic model found in Appendix A.

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WELCOME

If you're reading this document, it means you're considering a leadership opportunity with HIM—and we're so glad you are.

At HIM, the Board of Directors is made up of individuals from the same communities we serve. Our Directors work collaboratively with staff and volunteers to support HIM's mission and goals. This means our Board is composed of gay, bi, queer men, and gender diverse people who are passionate about health and well-being in our communities.

In recent years, HIM introduced a refreshed Community Leadership Model designed to make board service more engaging, inclusive, and rewarding. This structure has since taken root, guiding how our Board operates and how we support one another in leadership.

Today, Board Members join a dynamic and collaborative environment where creativity, relationship-building, and shared leadership are valued. This may mean that serving on HIM's Board feels different from more traditional or corporate board experiences.

Each Director is encouraged to bring their unique skills, perspectives, and lived experience to the table. We believe everyone has something valuable to contribute, and we are committed to providing training and ongoing support to help you succeed in your role.

You'll find more information on our Community Leadership models starting on page 10.

Thank you for considering this important role. We look forward to building something meaningful together.

Aaron Purdie, Executive Director

A photograph of two men lying down, smiling at each other. They are holding a white cloth between them. The image is overlaid with a solid blue color. The text "ABOUT HIM" is written in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters in the lower-left quadrant.

ABOUT
HIM

HIM PROFILE

The aim of the Health Initiative for Men (HIM) is to strengthen health and well-being in communities of gay, bi, queer men and gender diverse people (GBQ+) through trusted, tailored, targeted, evidence-based and evidence-informed health promotion. We foster mutually beneficial relationships between GBQ+ people and health professionals to ensure the best possible outcomes.

We value a comprehensive approach to healthy living; we value our community's ability to make informed decisions; we value a non-judgmental, sex-positive, and strengths-based philosophy; we value scientific research; we value capacity-building and collaboration; we value the role of our communities.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

HIM's primary objectives is to reduce the transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections and to diminish the stigma associated with the same. HIM's programs are guided by a population health approach (informed by Syndemics Theory) that encourages GBQ+ to participate in activities that promote health and supports the well-being of individuals and communities on multiple levels.

We believe that the best and only way to reduce the impacts of HIV and reduce stigma is to simultaneously promote the physical, sexual, social, and mental health of our communities.

OUR METHOD

HIM's methods are guided by harm reduction and population and public health principles. We use a holistic and comprehensive approach in line with Syndemics theory, which posits that there is a synergistic interaction between co-occurring epidemics. This is reflected in the multifaceted approach to physical, sexual, social, and mental health services that HIM takes to reduce HIV, other sexually transmitted infections, and their associated stigma.

HIM is data-driven and our work is informed by both quantitative and qualitative data from a diverse set of studies. HIM uses scientific evidence and literature to make a case for the unique health needs of GBQ+. In addition to this, data is derived from direct community consultation, surveys, and other feedback mechanisms from GBQ+. This community-led, science and evidence-based method is reflected in the programs and projects that HIM designs and implements, as well as how they change alongside with our communities.

Rather than working from a perspective of being experts, we work to **host, promote, and support** the connection between GBQ+ and the healthcare services they need and want.

OUR HOST, SUPPORT, PROMOTE MODEL

HIM's model is based on our ability to host, promote, and support local GBQ+ in services that are offered by their local health care providers. HIM acts as the bridge and context builder between our communities and the communities of healthcare providers by relying on lived experience as well as our strong programs.



A photograph of two men on a beach. The man in the foreground is wearing sunglasses and a blue tank top, smiling broadly with his mouth open. The man behind him is also wearing sunglasses and a white t-shirt, embracing the first man. The background shows a body of water, a bridge, and some buildings under a clear sky. The entire image is covered with a semi-transparent blue overlay.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP MODEL



The Broader Healthcare System

The Broader Healthcare System are the many nurses, doctors, social workers, policy makers, and other professionals who plan and provide healthcare services and programs. They are sometimes employed by the regional health authorities but may also be independent professionals such as therapists, healers, and Elders.

HIM staff are paid employees who are each tasked with specific jobs within specific portfolios. The portfolios at HIM are:

- Health Services
- Programs
- Administration

There are four levels of staff at HIM: Coordinators, Managers, Specialists, and Directors

The staff are paid to deliver on organizational commitments, such as:

- Delivering programs
- Promoting health
- Building community
- Ensuring smooth operations

HIM Board Members are community volunteers who are each tasked with leadership and support in areas where they have interest and/or experience: Those areas are:

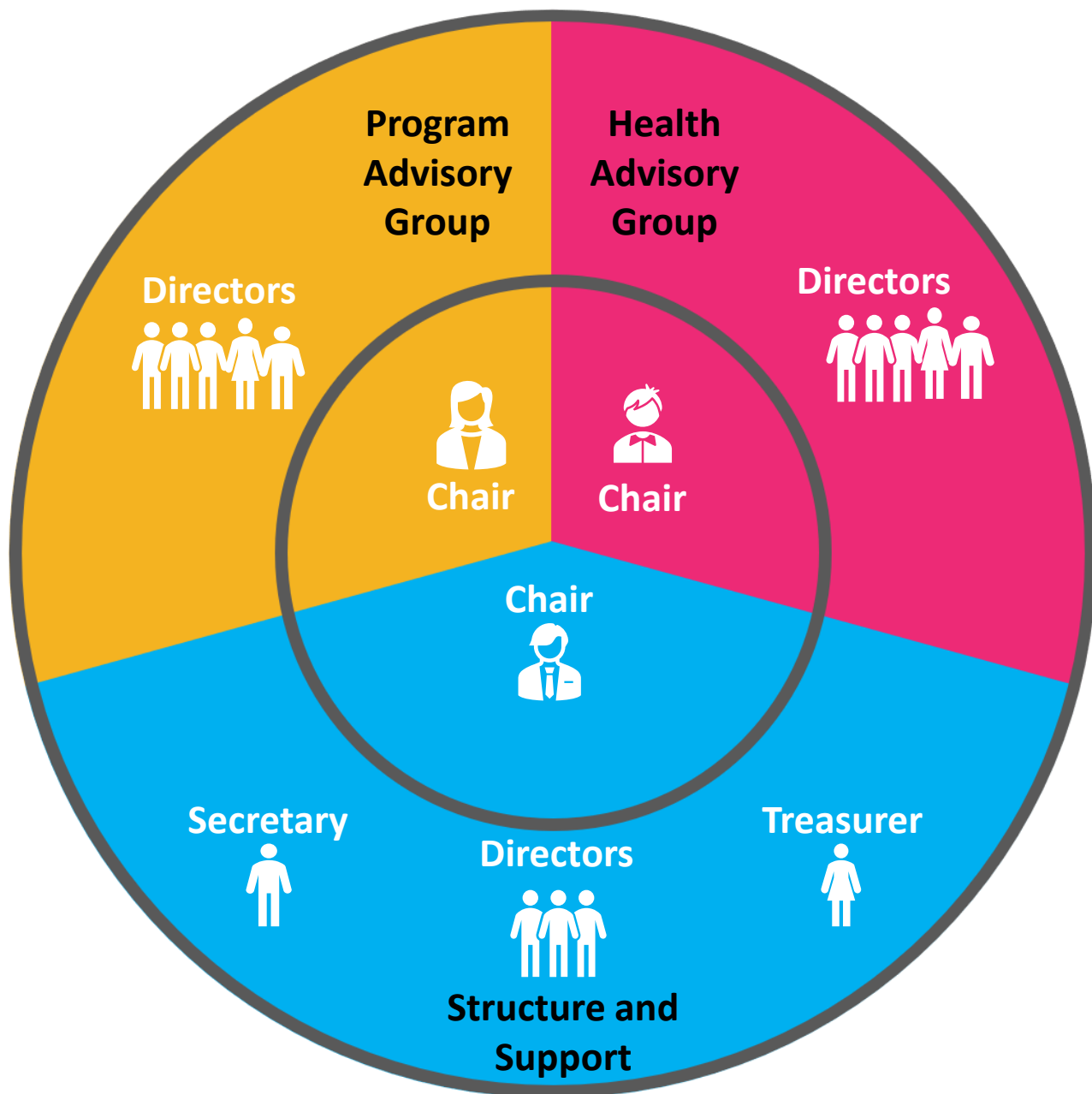
- Health Advisory
- Programs Advisory
- Structure and Support Governance)

There are two levels of leadership on the board: Directors, and Chairs.

The Board serves as representatives of the community, providing leadership, such as:

- Setting goals and targets.
- Providing advice.
- Reporting back to community.

GBQ+ Communities are the many different people who make up the collective of people who receive our services. These people might be gay, bi, queer, two-spirit, asexual or any other sexual and gender orientation that is different than straight and cisgender. Community members can become both staff or board members.





**Healthcare
providers**



HIM Staff



HIM Board



GBQ+

Health Services

- Clinics and pop-up testing
- Vaccination/immunization
 - Health promotion
 - Health advocacy
 - Quality assurance

Health Advisory

- Health and clinical advisory
- Health advocacy and leadership (e.g. advocating for policy change, vaccines etc.)
- Community report back

Administration

- Central operations
 - Finance + HR
- Reporting and legal requirement
 - Strategy
- Risk management

Governance

- Board Operations
- Financial oversight/supervision
- Reporting and monitoring
 - Fund development
- Risk management

Programs

- Social programs
- Mental health
- Substance use
- Harm reduction
 - Outreach

Program Advisory

- Bringing community feedback
 - Setting targets and KPIs
- Quality assurance for programs
- Suggestions and brainstorming
 - Community champions

**3
portfolios**

**3
portfolios**

Boards of Directors are small groups of people who work to govern or operate an organization. Sometimes there is a disconnect between the work the board does and the actual outputs of the organization. In 2022, the HIM Board and Staff decided to invest time and effort into transforming the conventional ways that Boards of Directors and staff work together. By creating mirrored portfolios on the Board and with the staff, we increase accountability and open more opportunity for people with diverse experiences to share their skills in ways that meet the needs of the organization and community. Each person will know their role and will have clear ways to contribute. This model is a new way of doing community leadership and it will require leadership from both sides of the organization to ensure that it continues to develop. The reason for this work relates, in part, to our ongoing commitment to decolonizing and engaging better with indigenous people and indigenous ways of knowing.

How does the Board of Directors do their work?

Full Board meetings and gatherings

When the full board (which includes the Health, Governance and Program Advisory groups) meet together, they will **report back to each other on their respective work**. There will also be gatherings that will provide opportunities for **connecting socially and creating strong relationships**.

Committees

Committees are formal groups that will remain consistent throughout the year. These groups are the **main opportunity to provide leadership on specific components (e.g. finance)**. These groups work alongside the HIM staff on our goals and ensure that we are meeting our targets.

Working Groups

Working groups are ad hoc (they happen periodically and possibly not for the entire year) made up of any member who is interested. These groups tend to focus on **time limited and/or subject matter specific projects**.

Board member portfolio

Who is involved?

Sub-Committees (if applicable)

Health Advisory group

1 Chairperson + 4 members

Doctors, nurses, social workers, Elders, and other healthcare leaders.

Structure and Support group

1 Chairperson + 4 members

Accountants, lawyers, business owners, Elders, and people with board experience.

Finance Committee

Fund Development committee

Program Advisory group

1 Chairperson 4 members

Service industry, artists, performers, sex workers, students, Elders.



POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

HIM Board of Directors

Position Description (1/2)

STATEMENT OF EQUITY

Board members represent the community of which we are a part, and HIM values a diverse board from a wide range of backgrounds, who understand and support HIM's mission, vision, and values. It is anticipated board members will be self-identified members and allies of the GBT2Q community with an appreciation of the experiences faced by users of HIM's programming and services. We are always seeking diverse board members to build upon our dynamic membership. We are especially encouraging Black, Indigenous, people of colour, transgender, non-binary, and two spirit people to apply. These communities have been historically (and continue to be) marginalized within queer spaces and we are working actively to change this at the board level.

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Board of Directors at HIM represent the interests of the communities that HIM serves. Directors on the Board work collaboratively with each other and with the HIM staff towards mutually agreed upon goals, strategies, and desired outcomes. The Board plays an advisory role and champions the ways that HIM reports back to the community on our progress and status.

The Board of Directors has a critical governance role in the organization: it ensures that the Society meets requirements under the *BC Societies Act (2016)*, that HIM achieves the goals approved in its 2019-2024 Strategic Plan, that organizational risks are addressed, and the Society is managed with fiscal prudence. The Board of Directors hires, supports, and holds the HIM Leadership Staff Team (Executive Director, Program Director, and Director of Health Administration) accountable for the delivery of the plans and goals of the organization.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

- Act as the representative of the community.
- Assist HIM in executing our mission, vision, and practicing our values.
- Govern the management of resources, particularly approval and oversight of the annual budget and development of funding strategies.
- Enhance HIM's public image in the community and with associated peer groups
- Be alert to health concerns within the GBT2Q community that can be addressed through HIM's Mission, Vision, and strategic plan
- Act in the interest of HIM and make recommendations based on experience and perspective in the community
- Prepare for, attend, and participate at monthly Board meetings and Board committees as scheduled
- Represent HIM at community events throughout the year.

REQUIRED EXPERIENCES

- Experience and familiarity with the ways that gay, bi, queer men and gender diverse people move through the world.
- Commitment to, interest in, and engagement with GBT2Q health
- Leadership experience
- Willingness to collaborate, communicate clearly, and create a safe space.

PREFERRED EXPERIENCES / BACKGROUND

- Healthcare and wellness (medical, sexual, mental, social, and physical)
- Nightlife, service industry, performance, and applicable "gay culture" experience
- BPOC lived experience
- Indigenous lived experience
- Advocacy and promotion, public relations, community feedback and communications
- Financial management and accounting
- Fundraising and Development
- Human resources and performance management
- Board and governance
- Experience with collaboration and productivity tools (such as Office 365, Google Workspace, etc.)

HIM Board of Directors

Position Description (2/2)

TRAINING OFFERED

- Orientation to HIM Board of Directors (3 hours)
- HIM Institute Volunteer Training (8 hours)
- Anti-Oppression training
- Anti-Racism training (when applicable)
- Board Governance training (1.5 hours)

COMMITMENT EXPECTATION

- Monthly Commitment: 6-10 hours per month (Meetings and work in between meetings)
- HIM's Board of Directors meets monthly from September through July.
- Committees of the Board meet bi-monthly or as needed based on the committees' work agenda.
- Directors are expected to participate in a minimum of one (1) Board committee. Committees include:
 - Finance Committee, Health Advisory Committee, Community Engagement Committee.
- The term length is **two years**, at the end of which, and at an Annual General Meeting a Director may be re-elected.
- No Director can be elected beyond a maximum of three (3) consecutive terms (6 years).

ABOUT HIM

HIM has been active in Vancouver's GBT2Q community since 2008, and we have watched the organization grow every year, expanding throughout the Lower Mainland and other parts of British Columbia. HIM provides trusted, tailored, targeted, and evidence-based health promotion and clinical services by engaging the community through various methods, including volunteer involvement, online access, and events. We foster mutually beneficial relationships among self-identified GBT2Q people and health professionals to ensure the best possible outcomes. We do this because we value the ability of GBT2Q people to make informed decisions, we value the role of our community in supporting the foundations for healthy living, and we value scientific research.

WHICH PORTFOLIO?

The HIM Board allows for members to take part in a Portfolio that best suits the person's experience. By following this method, each Board Director is empowered to bring their personal experience to the table and are not be required to have the same experience as all other Board Members. The intention with this board structure allows for a more equitable experience and does not favour people who have previous Board and/or management experience. No one group will hold more power than another, and major issues will be brought to the full board (all three groups combined) for democratic review and to ensure consent and consensus. Each Portfolio will develop their own culture, and terms of reference.

Health Advisory

**1 Chairperson
+ 4 members**

Ideal for:
Doctors, nurses, social workers, Elders, and other healthcare leaders.

Governance

**1 Chairperson
+ 4 members**

Ideal for:
Accountants, lawyers, business owners, Elders, and people with board experience.

Program Advisory

**1 Chairperson
4 members**

Ideal for :
Service industry staff, Elders, nightlife staff, management, artists, performers, sex workers, students.

If you are interested in becoming a member of HIM's Board of Directors you can contact the Executive Director, Aaron Purdie (he/him) at aaron@checkhimout.ca

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with HIM!

HIM Board Chairs

Position Description

ADENDUM

DEFINING CHAIRPERSONSHIP

Chairpersons are the three representatives chosen by the Board to lead each Portfolio of the Board's activities: Health Advisory, Program Advisory, and Governance.

Each of the 3 Chairs will play a key role in leading the culture and practices of their specific portfolio and will collaborate with their fellow Chairs in the leadership of the entire Board.

Chairs are people who have experience in and/or willingness to practice leadership in a way that **does not harm, enact violence, or dominate any other person, program, or objective.**

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The purpose of the position is to share leadership of the Board of Directors. In many other Boards this responsibility is often assigned to one person. This shared leadership allows for more diverse voices and representatives to lead the organization together with the staff.

The secondary purpose of the position is to provide the staff at HIM with leaders with whom they can consult in a trusted and supportive environment and so ensure accountability among the leaders at HIM. The Chairs hold an important role in ensuring that their counterparts, the Directors at HIM (Executive Director, Program Director, Health Services Director) are upholding their commitments to the organization and to the community.

Shared leadership

RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

- In addition to the responsibilities and duties listed in the HIM Board of Directors Position Description, Board Chairpersons will also:
 - Organize and facilitate meetings.
 - Encourage and demonstrate positive and helpful collaboration.
 - Maintain safety by maintaining group agreements and actively interrupting behaviours that might contravene safety.
 - Serve as the "emergency contacts" for important matters.
 - Assess and report back on the performance of the HIM Staff Directors.
 - Meet regularly with the other co-Chairs.
 - Connect monthly with their counterpart on the staff team.
 - Represent the organization as leaders, and as the formally recognized chairpersons of the organization.
 - Serve as ombudsperson and ambassador for new members of the Board.
 - Maintain organization and order in any/all Board experiences.
 - Be trusted to make decisions in between meetings in collaboration with the other chairpersons.

REQUIRED EXPERIENCES

- In addition to the experience listed in the HIM Board Director Position Description, the Board Chairs will also require:
 - Willingness to lead and to represent the organization in both private and public settings.
 - Experience in conflict resolution and behaviour management.
 - Experience in leadership

Chair, Health Advisory

- + Healthcare professional
- + Leadership experience
- + Familiar with HIV and sexual health

Chair, Governance

- + Leadership experience
- + Experience with Boards
- + Familiar with non-profit act
- +Familiar with finance

Chair, Program Advisory

- + Involved in community
- + Leadership experience
- + Experience in community programming