What’s the “Institute On Governance”?

- non profit think tank, founded 1990
- mission: better governance in public sector
- activities: create (research), share (public web site, learning events, publications), apply (practical advice)
- health governance an area of specialization
- no core funding, financed through contract work
Contents of this presentation

- What’s governance?
- Does health governance matter?
- Where governance in health occurs
- Governance tasks
- How to tell if it’s “good”?
Some questions for discussion:

■ Where is health governance ‘situated’?

■ To what extent does governance have a bearing on health outcomes? How?

■ What are the most important health governance issues we need to address in Canada?
Making a difference

- Where would work on governance issues have the most impact? ("leverage")
  - Tactical or strategic focus?

- Can we connect research with decision-makers such that something actually happens?
What’s “governance”? 

**Governance**: the art of steering an organization, society or system.

... the process whereby:

- strategic goals/priorities are set
- key relationships are maintained
- organizational or system health is safeguarded
- account is rendered for performance.
Does health governance matter?

- Relatively unexplored domain of health
  - “Classic” focus tends to be on clinical, technological, or financial “solutions” to health issues

- No recognized focal point in Canada for research, discussion on health governance
  - Lack of “evidence-based” approaches to health governance

- Current research can be valuable, but scattered, ill-connected to decision-makers

*Maybe it doesn’t matter much...*
Governance in health: a rough map
Impact of governance arrangements:

- Set frameworks, structures, context for decision-making
  - How will decisions be taken?
  - What focus?
  - What priorities get attention

- Allocate power

- Manage the tension between demand & available resources, balance quality and $$
Governance arrangements...(2):

- Determine who has voice, influence
- Determine nature, quality of ‘vertical’ links between health institutions
- Determine “horizontal” links between different spheres or systems of health - e.g.:
  - public health ↔ health care organizations
  - Aboriginal health ↔ provincial health
  - Difference spheres of clinical practice
  - Home care ↔ hospital care
Governance arrangements...(3):

- Provide structures for oversight of system & institutional performance
  - Establish standards & systems to monitor, evaluate performance
  - Determine who will exercise oversight and how well prepared, oriented those individuals are

- Provide processes for complaints management & professional discipline
The changing role of boards
What are a board’s particular roles?

1. Ensuring governance tasks are done - **well** *(see next slides)*

2. Recruitment, objective-setting, performance review of CEO - ED

3. Values leadership (setting the tone - values-in-practice)
Key governance tasks (1)

1. Defining, ensuring good performance (at a macro level)
2. Developing & pursuing a strategic agenda
3. Building strong stakeholder relationships
4. Anticipating, managing risk
Key governance tasks (2)

5. Ensuring financial and organizational health

6. Rendering account

7. Maintaining a sound governance system
How good is governance? 5 tests:

| Legitimacy            | - Participation & Voice  
                          | - Consensus Orientation |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Accountability       | - Transparency, Clarity  
                          | - Role-authority Accord |
| Performance          | - Responsiveness          
                          | - Effectiveness, Efficiency |
| Fairness             | - Equity                 
                          | - Balance of Interests   |
| Direction            | - Strategic Vision        |