



**Executive of the Northwest Centre of Responsibility (ECOR)  
Visioning Day – February 22, 2023  
Summary Report**

### **Introduction**

The Executive of the Northwest Centre of Responsibility (ECOR) met on February 22 with the following three objectives:

- Bring members of the ECOR together for an in-person visioning day.
- Review the recent history of the COR, the current situation, and progress on a range of initiatives.
- Consider the future of the COR, its objectives and priority areas.

The meeting was facilitated by Ian McCormack of Compass and the following provides an overview of the work done by the group and the key outcomes and decisions made by the ECOR.

### **Background**

The Ontario government's policy framework for people with clinical needs who come in conflict with the law, *A Provincial Strategy to Coordinate Human Services and Criminal Justice Systems in Ontario*, was approved in June 1997.

Human Services and Justice Coordinating Committees (HSJCCs) were established in response to the above Provincial Strategy to better coordinate services for people with complex needs in conflict with the law. Regional and local/district committees were established to improve and coordinate service planning and communication between health, criminal justice, and developmental service organizations. Given the composition and mandate of the HSJCCs, it was ideal to transform the local/district/regional structure and incorporate principles of a situation table model.

In 2016-2017, this transformation resulted in the launch of the North West Community Mobilization Network. The Network consists of the Northwest Regional Centre of Responsibility (formerly known as the Northwest Regional HSJCC), the Kenora Rainy River HSJCC, and people with lived experience. It engages several local Situation Tables in the Northwest Region.

Further to this background, in 2021, the ECOR, after completing a current situation analysis and environmental scan, established the following strategic priorities for 2021 and 2022:

1. Identify potential sources of core funding for the sustained operation of the NWCOR over the long-term, including a description of what sustained operation entails, annual operating costs and budget requirements, and for what period. Prepare and submit required funding requests and operating plans to the identified funder(s), with the goal of successfully securing sustained core funding by March 2022.
2. Develop and implement a strategy to ensure that mental health and addictions services, as well as the contribution of the NWCOR as part of the Human Services and Justice Coordinating Committees are recognized during Ontario Health Team planning efforts and are part of OHTs being formed and

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announced across the region. This work is to be underway and contributing to the creation of OHTs by fall 2021.

3. Address the 'state of confusion' that exists between the two parallel streams of regional Situation Table support and COR issue identification and management. This work will include both the assessment of the issue, as well as a plan which when implemented, will resolve the issue and ensure both activities will be done successfully going forward. This work will be completed by the fall of 2021.
4. Develop and begin the implementation of an advocacy, government, and community relations plan focused on all three levels of government. The objective of the plan will be to both inform and educate policy and decision makers tied to specific objectives and asks, as well as key events and activities of the 2022 government budgets planning cycles. The plan should be in place and ready to implement prior to Christmas 2021.

With this background and recent strategic priorities in mind the ECOR turned their attention to the future and considered the following 3 'big questions:

- 1) *How can we enhance the structural integrity of the COR?*
- 2) *How can we build on current Situation Table models to ensure they remain relevant within the 'system'?*
- 3) *Which priority areas should the COR need to be focusing on for the next 2 years?*

### **Visioning Day Highlights and Outcomes**

We began our work with a brief history of the Northwest Centre of Responsibility, an overview of the work since the winter of 2021 including initiatives, work undertaken, and accomplishments, what work has yet to be completed, and any new priorities and plans that are underway.

This was followed up by reviewing the highlights of the recently completed Environmental Plan with a focus on what has changed since 2021, the key external drivers to consider when planning the future of the COR, and recent and forecast trends and pressures in the coming years. The group then tackled our three big questions, and what follows were the key takeaways and decisions:

#### **Assessing and Enhancing the Structural Integrity for the COR**

1. The current terms of reference are still relevant although may require some updates. The group does feel that the membership should be reviewed and renewed, as well as how to engage with new and big 'players' such as Matawa, Nokiwin, and the Ontario Provincial Police.
2. ***'Get back to our roots', meaning re-establish the Thunder Bay and District HSJCC and have the ECOR or a new Executive NW HSJCC focus on providing strategic oversight to the HSJCCs' and address strategic system wide issues.***



3. There was a very strong sentiment that given everyone's time, resources, and energy constraints, that the ECOR and HSJCC members must stop sitting on tables that don't act to address duplication.
4. The ECOR needs to revisit the inter-Ministerial agreement of 1997 and ask the Provincial HSJCC to revisit and assess the agreement, its continued relevance, and funding committees attached to the agreement.
5. ***The group made the decision to rebuild the Thunder Bay and District HSJCC and mirror the Kenora model, effectively disbanding the NWCOR.*** With this decision, Thunder Bay and District HSJCC membership will be assessed, ensuring the right people are committed to this group and that it is made up of operational staff and key 'discipline' leaders with organizations' CEO's and ED's serving at the ECOR level.
6. Existing NWCOR members will be re-assigned to the 'right table' across the region where it makes sense.
7. This work will also include an assessment and determination of what the current ECOR needs to stop doing.

#### **The Relevancy of Situation Tables**

1. Highlights were shared as to the current state of situation tables, along with a proposed non-AER referrals process.
2. ***The group decided to conduct a one-year pilot project of the proposed non-AER referral model with the Thunder Bay situation table.***
3. It is felt that a Thunder Bay Situation Table Steering Committee should be established, and with the right people and agencies.
4. Going forward, the function and make-up of the situation tables should be data and evidence driven.

#### **Priority Areas for the Next Two Years**

1. We need to assess and decide what to stop doing.
2. Work with the Provincial HSJCC to determine its role and contribution to the local HSJCCs.
3. Determine what we are doing with, and are we effectively using all of the great information and data we are collecting?
4. We need to revisit and determine the role of the coordinators job and funding supports.



5. We need to get back to bringing Justice-related issues back to the HSJCCs, making them effective, instead of once again making something new.
6. **Map out the redesign of the NWCOR, re-establishment of the Thunder Bay and District HSJCC, and plan to do this redesign and manage the process and implement the plan.**
7. **We need to work with Ontario Health NW and do needs based planning for our future work. If we are expected to do justice related work, then it must be supported and funded appropriately.**

### The Parking Lot

*(There were several items put in the 'parking lot' for future consideration, some of which may be addressed by the decisions taken above)*

1. Address the participation, and in some cases, lack of participation in NWCOR working groups.
2. The chronic underfunding of MHA agencies and the broader system must be identified and addressed. There appears to be plenty of program funding, but the 'backbone' of the system and agencies are not funded adequately today, or for projected need.
3. Are there any implications to existing MOA's and related funding agreements to the decision to rebuild the Thunder Bay and District HSJCC?
4. We must continue to lobby for 'safe beds' and supporting funding.
5. How can we be creative and replicate the 'Kenora/Henry Wall' model of finding solutions in other communities?

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the big decision taken by the group was to get back to their roots, re-establish the Thunder Bay and District HSJCC, and populate an Executive NW HSJCC with the right people. The focus will be on providing strategic oversight to HSJCCs across the region, addressing system wide strategic issues, and working with Ontario Health NW to ensure the system is properly funded and supported. Many other action items and issues noted come out of that decision and will be addressed in the coming two years.

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For/The Executive of the Northwest Centre of Responsibility  
March 6, 2023