



# COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

**A primer on the Board of Directors  
of MAX Ottawa Community Health**

## **WE ARE RECRUITING**

**Interested in community leadership through non-profit governance?  
This brochure is for you. Read on!**

As a community-based organization, we share in the work of recognizing the sovereignty of Indigenous nations, taking responsibility for the atrocities of the past, and prioritizing Indigenous-centred guidance in ongoing efforts at decolonization and community building.

In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge that MAX Ottawa and the communities it serves are located on the unceded and unsurrendered lands of the Algonquin and Anishinaabeg people. We pay our respects to their elders, past, present, and emerging.

MAX offers a wide array of navigation services and programming to improve sexual health, mental health, and community health more generally. Its harm reduction program is one of the most successful in Canada. MAX relies on the hard work of a dedicated staff and countless volunteers with strong links to the community. Members of the community are involved at all levels of program planning and development.

MAX operates on an annual budget of around one million dollars and receives funding from all three levels of government and from a variety of generous donors.

# ABOUT MAX

MAX Ottawa is a charitable organization that grew out of the Gay Men's Wellness Initiative, created over 20 years ago by community members advocating for a more holistic vision of gay men's health. It is a community-based organization that focuses on maximizing the health and wellness of gay, bisexual, Two-Spirit, queer, and other guys who are into guys, both cis and trans, in the Ottawa region.

## MISSION

To champion health outcomes of guys into guys in the Ottawa area, living with HIV or not, through building awareness and improving system responsiveness within a dynamic networked and partnership model.

## VISION

A community of self-affirming guys into guys caring for ourselves, caring for each other, and enjoying complete health equity.

## VALUES

### 2GBTQ SEX POSITIVE

We have a right to satisfying sex lives and health care services free from guilt, stigma, coercion, violence and shame. We endeavour to support this right through a culturally competent queer harm reduction lens.

### HOLISTIC AND ASSETS-BASED APPROACH

As a community-serving organization, we build strength on traditions of overcoming historical adversity and oppression. We believe that health and wellness are encompassed by physical, mental, spiritual, sexual and social well-being.

### COMMUNITY BUILDING AND HASSLE-FREE APPROACH

We seek to foster intergenerational connections to create mentorship opportunities and address ongoing issues facing our community. Our services are delivered in a congenial environment that is respectful, non-judgmental, and affirming.

### PARTICIPATION

We work regularly with other health and community partners to achieve a care network that is grounded in the past, organizing in the present and planning for a future where all our communities will thrive.

### DIVERSITY

We acknowledge, embrace, and celebrate our diverse communities as a source of strength and insight. We serve trans, gender fluid and cis guys into guys and strive to free ourselves of bias.

# Introduction to the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is the legal authority for MAX Ottawa. As such, it represents, leads, and serves the best interests of MAX. Working collaboratively with the Executive Director, the Board sets strategic priorities and goals based on the vision, mission, and values of the organization. The board is ultimately responsible for the management of MAX's affairs and for all aspects of MAX's performance.

Under its model of governance, the Board has the following distinguishing features:

- It is focused on setting clear direction for the organization and getting the best results for the money invested. It is generally not involved in the day-to-day operations of the organization.
- For the general management of finances, human resources and program operations, it sets the ends, and the Executive Director decides on the means to meet those ends.

## The main areas of focus for the Board's work are:

- Policy making and planning
- Financial stewardship
- Human resources stewardship
- Performance monitoring and accountability to stakeholders
- Community representation and education
- Risk management
- Public relations and communications

The Board meets eight times per year, for an approximate duration of 2-3 hours per meeting.



## Board Standing Committees

At MAX, the Board uses standing committees to bring the experience, expertise and judgment of interested and informed individuals to bear on a specific area of MAX's responsibility.

Committees research and consider matters in greater depth than would be possible by the whole Board, and make recommendations for consideration by the Board.

Board committees meet several times per year, as required. Board Directors are strongly encouraged to contribute to the work of a Board committee.



**As the newest** Executive Director for MAX Ottawa, I'm excited to work with folks who care deeply and are ready to bring their talents and experiences to our mission. With a strong Board, we can transform and expand the services available to improve the health and well-being of our community.



**Adam Awad**

### Governance and Board Development

- Review MAX's bylaws, governance policies and practices
- Provide general oversight of MAX's performance as an organization
- Manage Board recruitment, development, and evaluation

### Finance and Risk Management

- Ensure appropriate financial oversight
- Mitigate risks to MAX's material, financial and human resources

### Executive

- Support the Board in its key responsibility for strategic planning
- Manage the recruitment process for the Executive Director
- Support the Executive Director and evaluate their performance
- Handle communications and urgent matters



## Directors of the Board

Directors are nominated by the Board of Directors and elected at the Annual General Meeting.

Directors are provided with governance training and other supports to help them develop the skills and confidence required to fully engage in organizational decision-making.

MAX's Board of Directors strives for consensus in its decision-making. Formally, questions arising at any Board meeting are decided by a majority of votes, in accordance with MAX's bylaws and the *Democratic Rules of Order*.

Directors serve for a two-year, renewable term.



### Joining the MAX Ottawa board

was truly an enriching experience for me as a young professional. Not only did I get to give back to the 2SLGBTQ2+ community, but I also learned about non-profit board governance first-hand.

Most importantly, I made great friendships!



**Daniel Daliri**

As members of the Board, directors act in a position of trust for the community and are responsible for the effective governance of the organization. In addition to assisting the Board in its governance tasks, directors have a legal obligation to exercise due diligence, loyalty and care in the performance of their duties.

Directors are expected to:

- Attend Board meetings, serve on committees, contribute personal, professional and life experience to the work of the Board
- Keep generally informed about the activities of the organization, the community issues that affect it, and general trends
- Act with honesty and good faith, in the best interests of the organization
- Exercise vigilance for and declare any personal conflict of interests
- Exercise the same degree of care, diligence and skill that a reasonably prudent person would show in comparable circumstances
- Participate in special events, including the yearly retreat and annual general meeting
- Positively promote the work of the organization

## Officers

Some Board directors take on additional duties as Officers of the corporation.

- The **Chair** of the Board of Directors provides leadership to the Board, ensures the faithful execution of the Board's processes, exercises interpretive responsibilities of the Board's policies, and serves as the Board's official spokesperson.
- The **Secretary** keeps records of the organization's key information, including minutes of meetings, records of decisions, and correspondence.
- The **Treasurer** chairs the Finance and Risk Management Committee, provides regular reports to the Board on financial matters, and speaks to the annual budget and audit in partnership with the Executive Director.



**After a rewarding career** in the federal public service, it was time for me to give back to the community and share my expertise with an organization whose mandate I support and that makes a big difference in people's lives. I've joined a network of consummate professionals and haven't looked back.



**Brent McRoberts**

## Board composition

The composition of the Board of Directors varies from year to year. Board members are selected for community representation, expertise, and commitment to the organization's purpose. Individual directors come from a variety of backgrounds, and the diversity of experiences and knowledge they contribute is essential in ensuring the sustained health of the organization.

Essential qualifications include:

- Commitment to the work of the organization
- Lived experiences as a member of the queer community
- Knowledge of the social determinants of health
- Ability to communicate effectively with queer people from an array of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds
- Ability to work as part of a team

Other valuable qualifications include:

- Expertise in areas such as law, non-profit governance, financial management, human resources management, project management and evaluation
- Experience in the field of public health
- Experience in the field of equity, diversity and inclusion
- Bilingualism (French/English)

## Equity, diversity, and inclusion

MAX Ottawa recognizes the importance of adequately meeting the needs of the diverse communities it serves.

Accordingly, in every aspect of its activities, MAX subscribes to, and the Board is deeply committed to, principles of equity, diversity and inclusion, and reconciliation with Indigenous communities.

People with lived experiences that lie at the intersection of multiple inequities, including people who are Indigenous, racialized, trans, newcomers and refugees, street-involved, substance users, HIV-positive, or living with disabilities, are strongly encouraged to apply and to self-identify.



**I have been part** of the MAX Board for a year now. There have been a few challenges, for sure. Engaging with the community and making decisions for the organization are matters that I take seriously. But I also have enjoyed making friends with fellow board and staff members and getting to know the queer scene in the NCR through them.

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**Teilhard Paradela**

## Why join the Board of Directors?

- Make Ottawa a better place for guys into guys to receive the health and wellness resources they deserve
- Meet interesting people and expand your professional network
- Expand and sharpen your skills as a leader and strategic thinker
- Improve your credibility as a professional.
- Feel rewarded for lending your talents to a cause aligned with your values
- Have your voice heard and be there to recognize its impact



## Become a Director

- Do you represent a voice that is not or has not been heard at the Board and that should be heard?
- Do you have in-depth knowledge of the issues facing MAX's service users or share lived experiences similar to those of MAX's service users?
- Are you committed to MAX's values and do you have enough time to devote to the activities of the Board?
- Do you have a working understanding of board processes and procedures, either through serving on or working with other boards or through working on policy, programming, or governance issues?
- Do you have specific skills, competencies, or connections that are particularly sought by MAX at this time?

If you can answer yes to one or more of the above, consider applying to become a Director at MAX Ottawa!

## More information

Visit the MAX website to learn how to apply:  
[maxottawa.ca](https://maxottawa.ca)

Contact the Chair of the Board of Directors at  
[info@maxottawa.ca](mailto:info@maxottawa.ca)

Connect with us online

