

# Constitution Of First Step

## **I. Organization Name**

First Step

## **II. Purpose**

The purpose of First Step is to advance access to health care by providing travel assistance to people living on the northern tip of Newfoundland's Northern Peninsula (NTNPN). To carry out its purpose of providing medical travel assistance, First Step will pay part of community members' medical travel expenses such as gasoline, meals, lodging and other expenses related to the medical travel.

## **III. Background**

The NTNPN is a geographically isolated part of the Newfoundland Labrador (NL) province. It is home to approximately 4,000 people. Labrador-Grenfell Health (LGH) provides basic health care to the area via a small hospital and a dental clinic in St. Anthony. But, LGH's limited resources restrict the health care services it provides to the people of the NTNPN.

Because LGH care is restricted, people from the NTNPN often must travel to St. John's, NL (12 hour drive) or Corner Brook, NL (six hour drive) to obtain necessary medical care. This is especially true for long term care for diseases such as cancer and major surgeries. The travel for medical care lasts anywhere from a couple of days to weeks and months. Often a patient (and their family) must make multiple trips in a single year. In total, there are over a hundred medical trips from the NTNPN to St. John's and Corner Brook each year. Occasionally, people from NTNPN must also travel to major medical facilities in other provinces to receive specialized medical care.

Medical care travel from the NTNPN is an expensive proposition (e.g. car expenses, lodging, meals, incidental costs, lost wages, et. al.). It can, and frequently does, easily exceed several thousand dollars for a single trip. Those forced to make multiple trips often must face costs of tens of thousands of dollars. This cost burden falls most heavily on those who can least afford it. It is not

unusual to see some people from NTNNP forced to make the hard decision of whether to seek medical care or provide for their basic needs of shelter and food. The concept for First Step was born following a series of meetings over a couple of years with civic leaders, business people, health care providers, religious leaders and community members.

First Step is grounded in the belief that the lack of resources should never obstruct the right to access necessary medical care. First Step will work with businesses, civic organizations, care providers, and individuals to raise money and provide travel assistance to those in need from the NTNNP. There is no other charitable organization doing this kind of work in or near the NTNNP.

#### **IV. Structure**

A Board of Directors (BoD) will act as the governing body of First Step. The BoD will consist of five to seven members (including President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer) selected from the community. BoD members will serve staggered three year terms to assure both infusion of new ideas as well as continuity. The BoD will select new members annually at its last meeting of First Step's fiscal year. Members of the BoD will be volunteers and serve without pay.

The BoD responsibilities will include setting policies, establishing guidelines for and distribution of assets, acting as the point of contact for First Step matters, and providing day-to-day management of First Step.

The BoD will establish committees of community volunteers to assist in the work of First Step.

#### **V. Assets**

To provide the necessary travel assistance, First Step will raise funds through a variety of events as well as direct solicitation. Fund raising activities may include concerts, craft fairs, bake sales, athletic events, meals/coffees/teas, and games. First Step will secure any necessary licenses for fund raising.

All activities will be conducted by members of the First Step BoD, committees established by the BoD, and interested community members. First Step will set up a special committee of interested community members to organize and coordinate fund raising efforts. First Step will not use paid fund raising professionals.

The BoD will set aside a portion of each year's fund raising total into a long term account for future travel assistance needs.

#### **VI. Distribution of Assets**

The BoD will establish written guidelines for the distribution of First Step assets. The BoD will design the guidelines to provide the maximum benefit to those with the greatest need.

First Step will require people requesting assistance to submit a written application detailing their travel expense need and their ability/inability to pay their expenses. A BoD established committee will then review applications and submit recommendations to the BoD. The BoD will decide on awards. Assistance awards will be based on need. First Step anticipates that requests for assistance will come from those directly in need or may come indirectly through care providers, health care officials, family and friends of those in need, or clergy. Those who receive support from First Step will not be required to pay for the support.

#### **VIII. Constitutional Revisions**

The BoD may make revisions to the Constitution based on a two thirds affirmative vote of the BoD. Any BoD member may submit a proposed revision. The proposed revision must be in writing and submitted to allow a full BoD discussion in the meeting prior to the meeting when the BoD takes a vote on the proposal.

#### **IX. Audit**

First Step will acquire an independent audit of its operation each fiscal year.

#### **X. Fiscal Year**

The Fiscal Year for First Step will run from October 1 through September 30.

#### **XI. Non-Profit Clause**

First Step will be operated without purpose of gain for its members, and any profits or other assets of First Step will be used solely to promote its objectives.

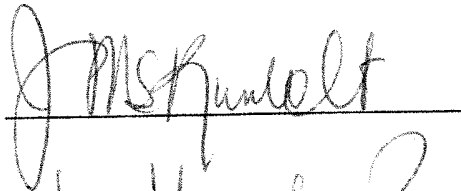
**XII. Effective Date**

This Constitution is effective on the date the Canada Revenue Agency approves First Step as a registered charity under the Income Tax Act.



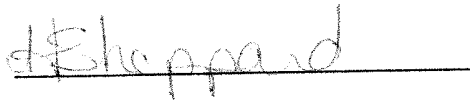
MARK O. Wilkoff

Date: January 10, 2017



Janice Muhlke Shears-Punbalt

Date Jan 10, 2017.



Hauma Sheppard

Date: January 10, 2017