
Local Health Integration Networks: Building a True System

Bulletin No. 25 – February 8, 2007

LHINs begin taking on the role of planning, funding and integrating local health services in less than two months.

The LHIN Coordination Project is currently engaged in a readiness assessment exercise, under the direction of the Deputy Minister and working with the LHIN CEOs and a Risk Management team from the Ministry of Finance.

The results will identify areas where additional work needs to be done or resources should be focused so LHINs, the ministry and health care providers will have a smooth transition on and after April 1.

The readiness assessment focuses on the ministry's and LHIN's capacity, knowledge, business processes, authority and resources. Initial focus will be on "mission critical" components – things that must be done for April 1. If work on any mission critical pieces seem to be falling behind, a mitigation strategy will quickly be put into place to remedy the situation.

The ministry's part of the assessment is underway now and scheduled to be completed in early February

A full-day working session for LHIN senior directors will be held tomorrow, February 9, in Toronto. This session will provide the opportunity for LHIN and ministry representatives to discuss the transfer of authorities and accountabilities in more detail.

Following tomorrow's session, the Risk Management team will be visiting individual LHIN offices to gather information for the assessment. Once complete, an overall report will be compiled for the Deputy Minister, the ministry and LHIN CEOs.

New Branches Highlight Ministry Stewardship Progress

Last August and September, Deputy Minister Ron Sapsford announced several fast-track projects, designed to prepare the ministry for its new role of working with the LHINs.

Through these projects, the ministry has been reviewing and redefining its business processes and functions to align with the ministry's new stewardship role.

By April 1, 2007, the following new or re-scoped branches will be in place:

- LHIN Liaison Branch
- Health Reform Implementation Team
- Compliance Branch
- Financial Management Branch

LHIN Liaison Branch

The new LHIN Liaison Branch will formalize the relationship between the LHINs and the ministry. Located in the Health System Accountability and Performance Division, the branch will be led by Director Carrie Hayward.

The branch's mandate is to identify, design and implement the new processes and structures that will support the ministry's working relationship with LHINs. It will ensure that the obligations of the Local Health System Integration Act, 2006 and related legislation are met by the LHINs and the ministry through the development, negotiation and management of relationships and accountability agreements.

Over the next few months the branch will assume more of the responsibilities of the LHIN Project Team, led by Tracey Mill, which has been supporting LHIN startup operations in conjunction with Regional Office staff.

Located in Toronto, the LHIN Liaison Branch's role will be phased in over a period of time. The branch is expected to be 25 per cent operational by the end of February and 50 per cent operational by the end of March.

The branch will be the primary contact for the LHINs that will, in turn, be responsible for relationships with local health service providers, including hospitals, home and community care, mental health and addictions, long-term care homes, and community health centres.

The branch will also manage the provincial priority programs that will continue to report directly to the ministry and will work with ministry agencies, such as Cancer Care Ontario. French Language Health Services and the AIDS Bureau also will be part of the LHIN Liaison Branch.

Health Reform Implementation Team

The responsibility for more than 100 capital projects that are currently led by Regional Offices will now be centralized in Toronto within the Health Reform Implementation Team, in the Health System Investment and Funding Division. David Stolte is the director of the branch.

The primary focus of the branch will be to lead the review, negotiation and approval processes for health capital projects for Ontario's hospitals. Capital projects for community facilities led by the Community Health Division, such as community health centres and long-term care homes, are not included in this transfer at this time.

The transition of the functions of the Health Reform Implementation Team will take place over the next three months.

The ministry will ensure a smooth transition of projects from the Regional Office to the Health Reform Implementation Team and is committed to timelines for capital projects as announced in the government's five-year infrastructure plan.

Compliance Branch

The Compliance Branch, in the Health System Accountability and Performance Division, will work with the LHINs and other branches across the ministry, as well as other provincial ministries with compliance mandates.

The ministry will continue to be responsible for all long-term care (LTC) compliance and inspection functions across the health system. This includes monitoring and enforcing standards; licensing, educating and handling appeals; and providing support for long-term care home closures, re-developments and sales.

LHINs on the other hand, will be responsible for signing and monitoring the service agreement for each long-term care home, including LTC home performance accountabilities and funding.

In the future, the branch mandate will expand beyond long-term care. Over time, it will develop, implement and manage a comprehensive program to ensure that the province's health care providers are in compliance with legislation.

The branch's compliance functions will be regionally based and dispersed across the province. The director as well as the licensing, education and appeals functions will be located in Toronto. There will be five service area offices, located in Ottawa, Toronto, Hamilton, London and Sudbury, as well as eight work locations in Windsor, Kingston, Peterborough, Thunder Bay, Owen Sound, Newmarket, Barrie and Mississauga.

The new compliance organization structure has been developed to ensure a minimum of disruption to staff, as well as make sure that they can be onsite at a long-term care home within 24 hours. Recruitment for the Director is under way. Current reporting relationships remain in effect.

Financial Management Branch

The new Financial Management Branch began operations in January and will consolidate some of the financial functions previously performed by the Regional Offices. Pier Falotico is the branch's director.

On April 1, LHINs will be directly responsible for making funding allocation decisions for approximately 3,000 health service providers in their communities, with the exception of the programs being retained by the ministry.

The Financial Management Branch will provide financial support to the LHINs for programs under their management, as well as to the Health System Accountability and Performance Division for ministry-retained programs.

The new mandate of the branch includes processing transactions, including claims-based funding initiatives; gathering, validating and distributing in-year and year-end reporting; reconciling annual health service provider funding; and performing controllership-related functions.

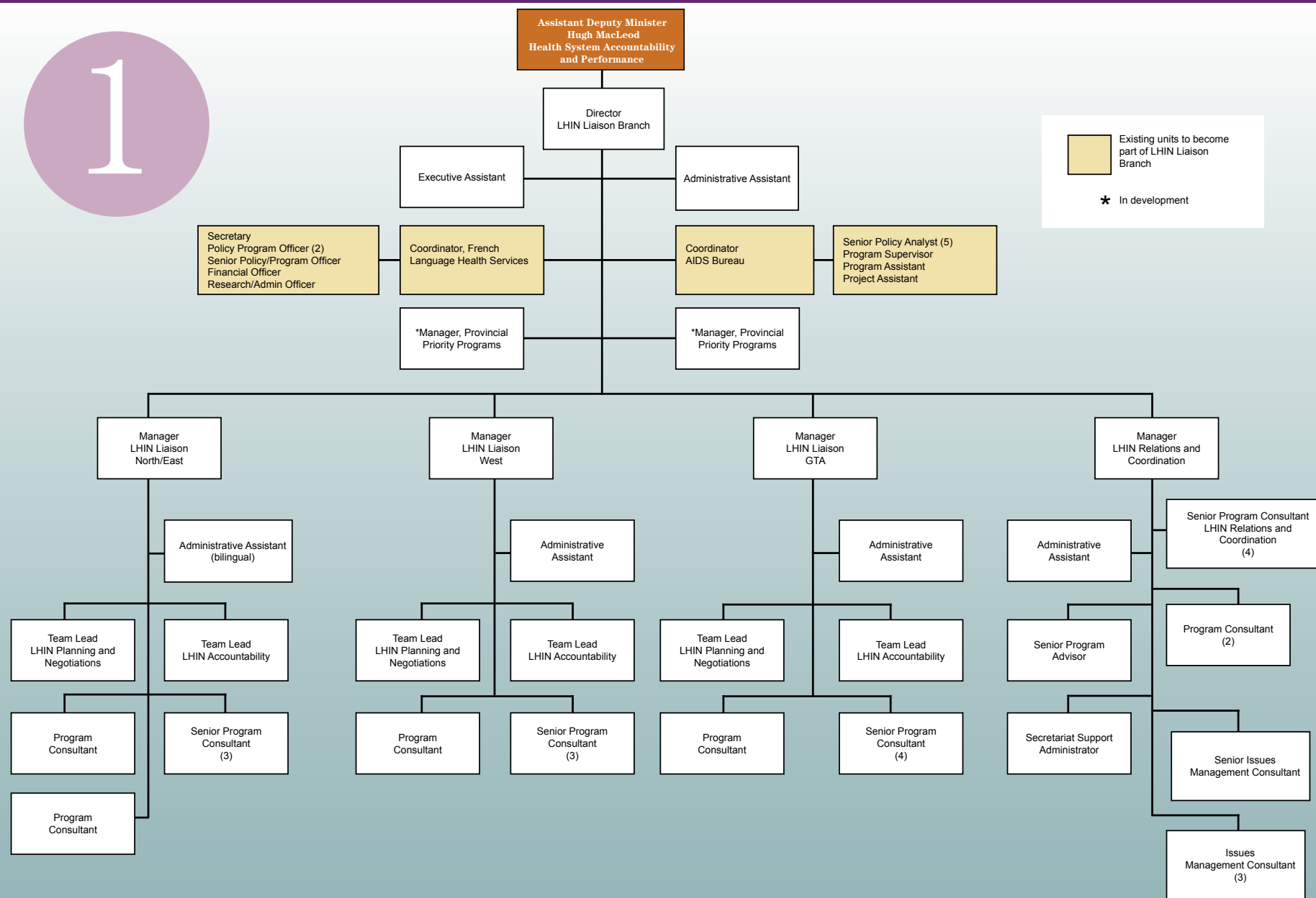
The branch's new central facility, in Toronto, is being established and transitional operations are up and running. With all staff in one location, there will be greater efficiency, better work load balancing across staff and a faster transition to a stewardship culture.

Until the LHINs are fully operational, the Regional Office finance staff will remain in their current locations and continue to perform existing financial functions to maintain business as usual with stakeholders.

Please regularly check the ministry's website at <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/transformation/lhin/lhinmn.html> for the latest news on the ministry's transformation.

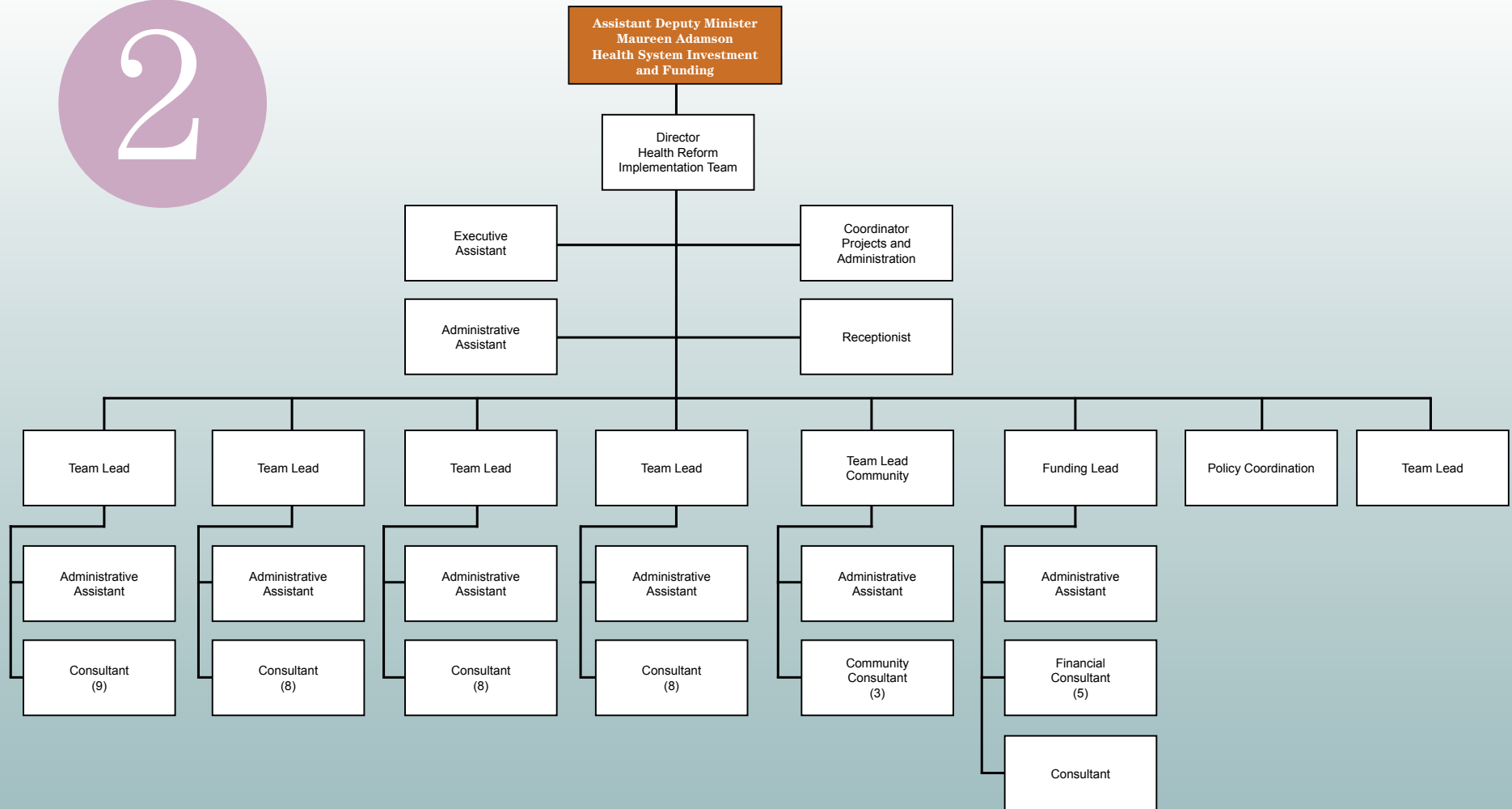
LHIN Liaison Branch Organizational Chart

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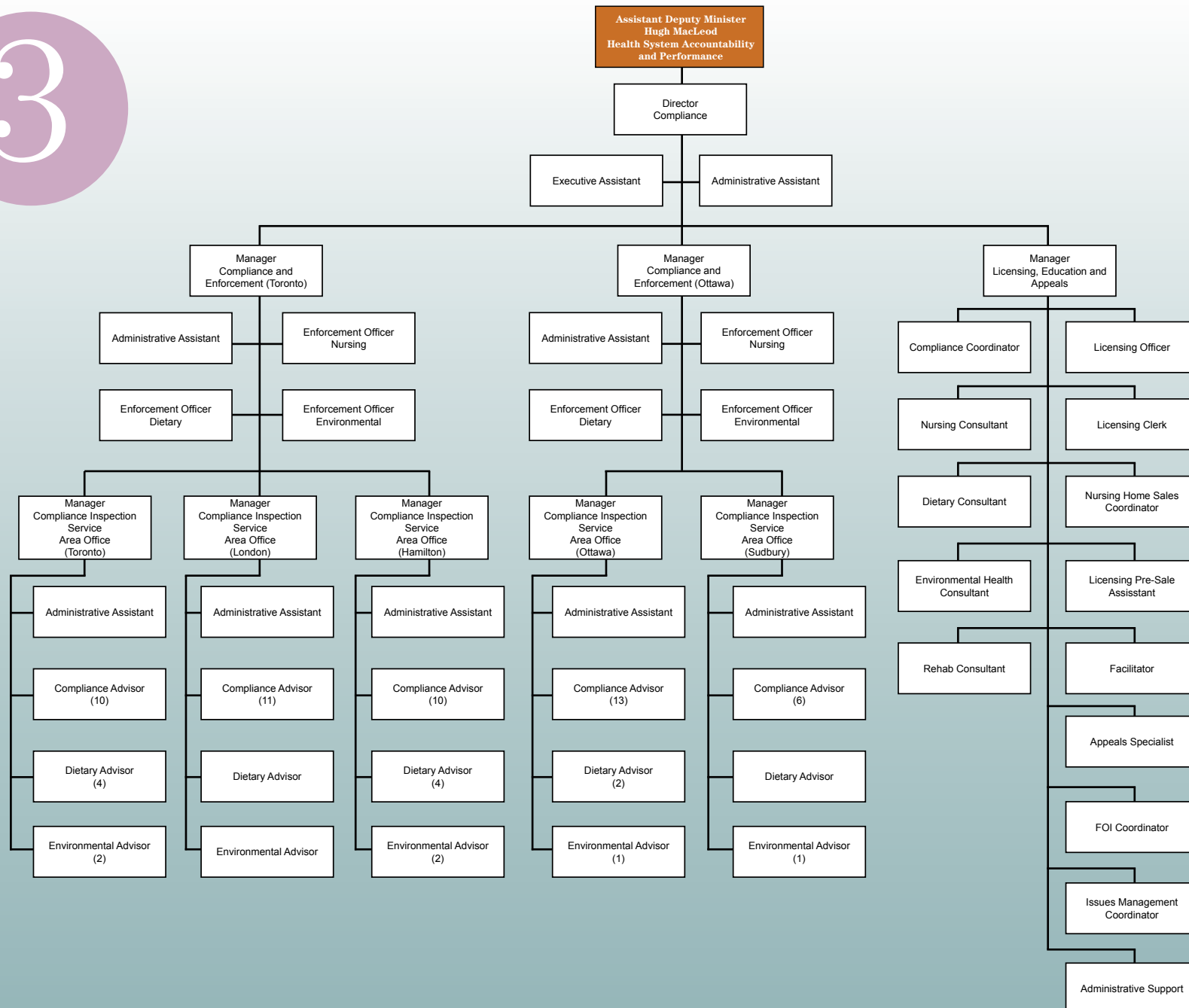
Health Reform Implementation Team Organizational Chart

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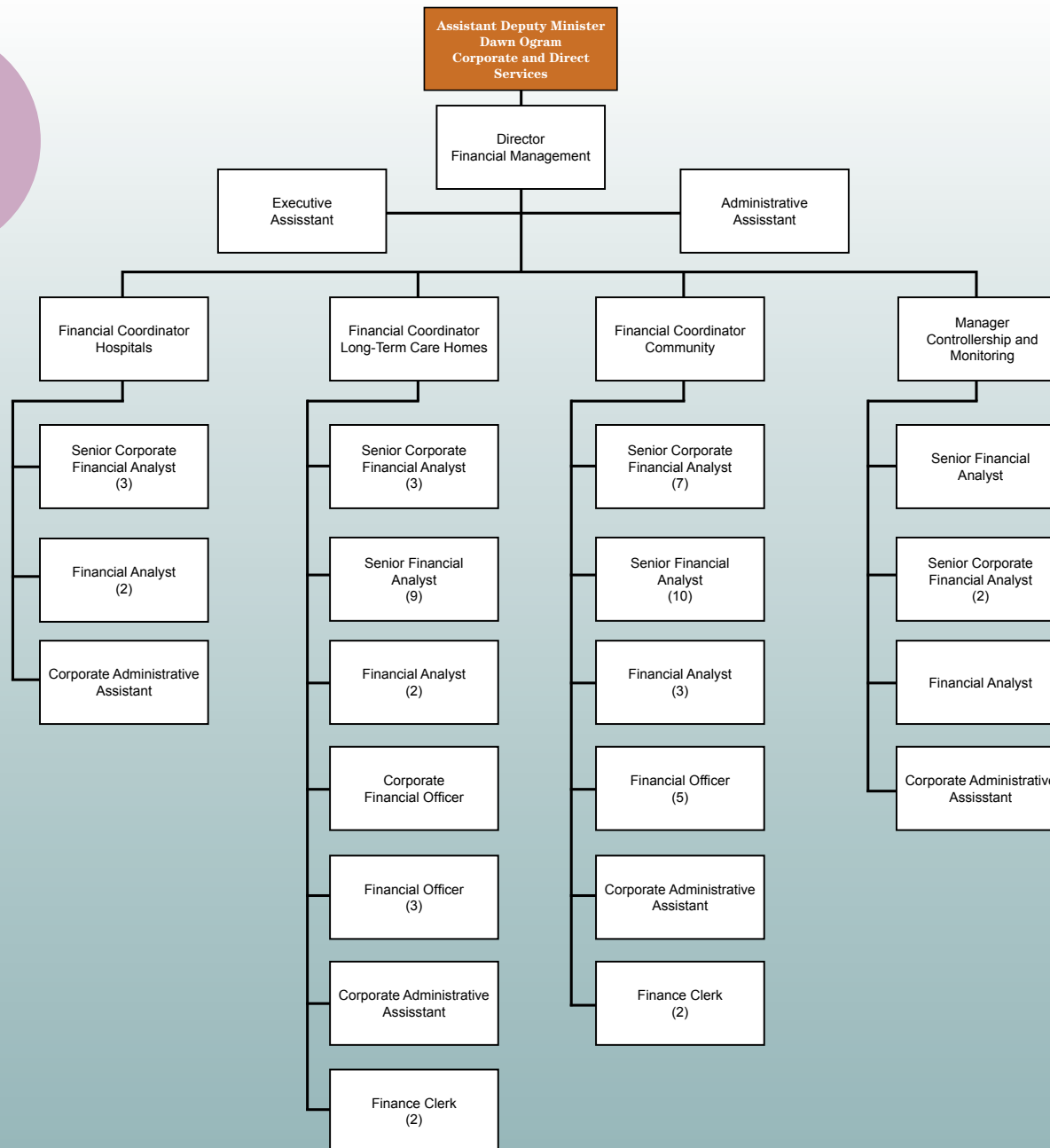
Compliance Branch Organizational Chart

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Financial Management Branch Organizational Chart

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Note: Positions labelled Corporate reflect former divisional Financial and Information Management (FIM) Branch positions.