



Strategic Clinical Network

Research Project

The Bone and Joint Health Strategic Clinical Network (SCN) has been successful in their application for funding through [The Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Health System \(PRIHS\)](#) from Alberta Innovates Health Solutions.

Optimizing central intake to improve arthritis care is a three year, \$750,000 project that will identify, implement and evaluate innovative models of care to improve access to arthritis care in Alberta starting with osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis.

Project Description

Optimizing central intake to improve arthritis care

Approximately 400,000 Albertans, both young and old, suffer from osteoarthritis and another 40,000 more with rheumatoid arthritis. These individuals experience reduced mobility and often a loss of independence. They are also more likely to suffer falls and fractures placing additional strain on their health as well as adding to the cost and capacity issues of our health care system.

The rate of osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis is expected to increase significantly over the coming years but early diagnosis and treatment can help prevent and reduce permanent joint damage and improve quality of life.

As part of their overall goal of transforming musculoskeletal care (any health care related to muscles and bones), the Bone and Joint Health SCN has identified the need to improve access to arthritis care through early recognition and intervention as a critical change required within our health care system.

To realize this change, the Bone and Joint SCN will undertake a three year research project with PRIHS funding that is focused on creating a more streamlined and efficient way of getting arthritis patients to the right provider at the right time.

Optimizing central intake to improve arthritis care will look specifically at developing, implementing and evaluating a centralized system for triaging and referring patients with osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. This will allow for the better integration of services by creating collaborative teams of specialized care providers to make sure patients can live the best quality of life with high levels of mobility and less pain.