

Podcast Transcript: Collaboration

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Hi, I'm Deb Gordon, Vice President & Chief Health Operations Officer Northern Alberta with Alberta Health Services (AHS).

Thank you for joining the discussion on the proposed value of collaboration. Our values are really important as they guide how we choose to interact with patients, families, communities and each other.

The new AHS vision – *Healthy Albertans. Healthy Communities. Together.* – comes to life through our values and how we live them.

Our proposed definition of collaboration is working together with patients, families, communities and each other through teamwork and in partnership. Collaboration is at the heart of our vision – together.

The other day we pulled a group of Zone leaders together to collaborate with the Strategic Clinical Network (SCN) leadership to tackle the scale and spread of the great work being done on ERAS – enhanced recovery after surgery.

The goal of the enhanced recovery after surgery work is to improve the patient's overall experience, decrease their time in hospital, and reduce complications and readmission rates. The protocols include standards around enhanced nutrition, anesthesia, pain control and earlier mobilization of patients after surgery.

The challenge before us was to come up with a way to make sure more patients and families could benefit from the positive impact ERAS has been proven to have. Sometimes initiatives like this feel like... "just one more thing"; however, who doesn't want to come to work every day to make a difference for patients and families.

In order to spread this wonderful work we needed strong involvement of the Zone leaders and the SCN leaders in collaborating together to commit to spreading ERAS for the sake of better patient care and outcomes. The SCN leaders brought the knowledge, tools and methodology expertise. The Zone leaders

brought the ability to engage the Zone and hospital-based teams in the work. Without one or the other, well... the initiative would not likely be successful. Through collaboration... together...anything is possible!

Collaboration is about seeking out partnerships with patients, communities, and across AHS departments and sites. In Our People Strategy consultations, we heard people need to be engaged. That it's fundamental to know how each of us contributes to the health of Albertans.

I regularly have the opportunity to join the Greater Edmonton Health Advisory Council at their meetings. Health Advisory Councils provide meaningful opportunities for public engagement with Alberta Health Services and they exist all around the province. Acting in an advisory capacity, the role of these councils is to engage community members, gathering input and feedback on local health service delivery in communities across the province, and providing venues for Albertans to communicate with us and provide insight on local health issues.

At one of the recent meetings the group focused on Mental Health. Experts from across the Zone had a chance to showcase the outstanding work they are doing in the area of mental health and the HAC members had the opportunity to ask really compelling questions, gain new knowledge, and offer insightful opinions and advice.

What really resonated with me was how much better we are together! The dialogue was rich and resulted in all of us who were present gaining new perspectives on mental health.

It is really important to take advantage of these chances to collaborate meaningfully as collaboration results in access to perspectives, skills, knowledge and strengths we would never have all on our own. Collaboration also allows us to come up with ideas and solutions we might never had generated on our own.

Research shows that in healthcare, when all of us are highly engaged, patient satisfaction goes up and adverse patient events go down. That's the power of collaboration.

Let's open up the conversation, what does collaboration mean to you? How do you collaborate with patients, families, communities and with each other?