



BONE AND JOINT HEALTH

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Major initiatives and achievements, 2021-2022

The Bone and Joint Health (BJH) SCN and its Scientific Office continues work with a range of partners, including our Alberta research community, to advance care and improve outcomes for patients living with conditions that impact their bones and joints. The transition to 'post-COVID' operations has resulted in significant activity in two major areas of focus for the BJH SCN: (1) enabling access to effective conservative (non-surgical) assessment and treatment of bone and joint health conditions, and (2) facilitating appropriate and timely access to surgical care, particularly for osteoarthritis and conditions requiring orthopedic specialists.

MSK Transformation (MSK-T) Program

The MSK-T Program, a strategic priority of the BJH SCN, aims to transform the musculoskeletal (MSK) health system in Alberta, leading to improvements in the quality of care delivered to Albertans with MSK conditions. The MSK-T Program consists of several projects, each targeting a specific joint and/or MSK condition. Current projects are focused on shoulder, knee (soft tissue), and low back (spine).

A key component of the MSK-T Program are Rapid Access Clinics (RACs). RACs are specialized clinics that employ multi-disciplinary teams—allied healthcare providers working as non-physician experts (NPE) alongside supervising physicians—that use standardized, evidence-based clinical pathways, provide standardized MSK assessments, and offer standardized and centralized referral mechanisms. This model of care improves access to the right services in the community at the right time.



RACs are being implemented across the province and the BJH SCN is currently undertaking evaluation work, informed by the 'early adopters' of this model, to understand the impact of RACs on MSK care quality.

Alberta Surgical Initiative

The BJH SCN is working closely with the Alberta Surgical Initiative (ASI) to improve timely access to surgical care. Several initiatives are currently underway as part of the MSK Transformation Program, including development of evidence-based clinical pathways for shoulder, knee, and low back conditions, and multidisciplinary specialty clinics (i.e., RACs), which integrate with the ASI FAST centralized intake offices. The BJH SCN senior leadership has been working with ASI leadership, Alberta Health, and various stakeholder groups to establish efficient, pathway-driven care for all Albertans.

Impact Assessment of the BJH SCN Core Committee

The mandate of BJH SCN is to optimize the bone and joint health of Albertans and the care they receive. Its Core Committee is a vital part of the SCN and a key mechanism for engaging the broader community. The BJH SCN Core Committee is a mature entity, operational since 2012.

Over the past year, the BJH SCN undertook an impact assessment of the Core Committee to identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement in how the Core Committee is engaged, with the goal of optimizing communication, engagement and its influence in achieving strategic priorities. The BJH SCN leadership presented the findings to the Core Committee in early 2022 and has spent time developing strategies on how to enable committee members to not only inform SCN strategic priorities but also better champion SCN initiatives and share information within their communities.

Supporting wellness, disease prevention and digital health innovation

Through the BJH SCN Facilitation Funding opportunity, the Scientific Office supported initial pilot testing for **My Viva®**, an innovative digital health platform that aims to support healthy behaviours and choices related to nutrition and exercise. This tool provides a way to monitor and self-manage one's health and wellness, and encourage healthy, long-term lifestyle habits that can help prevent chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure.

Since the initial pilot testing, uptake of My Viva® has continued to spread and is being implemented in primary care clinics and pharmacies across Canada. The support of the BJH SCN and its Scientific Office has helped advance knowledge regarding the effectiveness of this digital health platform and drive change and innovation in our health care system.

Currently, My Viva is working with insurance companies to build a business case for implementing My Viva Plan® into disability management and coverage for individuals with osteoarthritis. It is also partnering with multinational digital health companies to deliver comprehensive digital chronic disease management to Canadians.

My Viva was one of four companies selected to represent Canada at the ITEA Smart Health meeting in the Netherlands (June 2022). This meeting provides a venue to collaborate with international researchers and digital health innovators on using technology to help solve current global healthcare challenges.



“The funding support provided through the BJH SCN Facilitation Funding Opportunity has had a significant impact for My Viva as it has provided clinical validation for utilizing My Viva Plan to support patients in managing their health at home. This is leading to national and international research and business opportunities for My Viva”.

Loreen Wells, CEO, MyViva & Revive Wellness Inc

Impact on health and care

The BJH SCN is focused on **‘Keeping Albertans Moving’** by promoting good bone and joint health, preventing injuries and conditions from developing, empowering Albertans to self-manage their conditions, and providing the highest quality health care. Our work is positively impacting health and care in Alberta by:

- Improving care pathways and access to care for hip fracture patients.
- Engaging and supporting provincial and system-level efforts (e.g. ASI and MSK-Transformation) to efficiently manage surgical demand and enable appropriate specialist access, to reduce the surgical wait times and improve overall care quality for Albertans with bone and joint conditions.
- Measuring and evaluating key metrics for patients with musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions, including leveraging new data capture mechanisms such as Map2Motion and ConnectCare.
- Creating self-management tools, programs & strategies that support patients and help maximize mobility, mitigate injuries and risk, and minimize loss of function.
- Implementing clinics that enable rapid access to MSK assessment by speciality multidisciplinary teams.

Actions and areas of focus



- Collaborate with patients, health and community partners to transform MSK care and create a person-centred, integrated system of care that optimizes bone and joint health and detailed review mobility and function
- Undertake an BJH SCN impact assessment to better understand the value of the network, relationships and collaborations facilitated through the BJH SCN leadership team and SCN activities. expand
- Support research and implementation of GLA:D Back in Alberta and the low back non-surgical management pathway in primary care.
- Continue pathway development under the MSK transformation strategy, focusing on knee assessment and the shoulder clinical care pathway.

BONE AND JOINT HEALTH

Grants and Publications



19

Peer-reviewed Publications

Engagement



20

Workshops & Presentations

Outcomes and Impact

Fracture Liaison Service (FLS) expanded to **11 sites** (4/5 zones), supporting osteoporosis treatment and fracture prevention in Alberta



\$1.02M

Research Grants



82

Research Members

Completed a **province-wide review** of MSK care provided by Alberta’s Primary Care Networks that **identified opportunities to enhance care in the community**

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