

Head & Neck Cancer Perioperative Pathway – Release of Automated Dashboard Report

Providing appropriate care for head and neck cancer patients is complex, crossing multiple program areas and health disciplines. Patient transitions between care providers can be challenging and less than ideal management of these transitions may result in sub-optimal outcomes for patients and system inefficiencies. To improve the patient experience and address care gaps, a provincial perioperative clinical pathway for major head and neck cancer surgery was designed and successfully implemented.

This initiative brought together clinical teams from across the province to discuss best practices and share local successes and challenges. Building on successes of foundational work in Calgary, this work was led by Dr. Joseph Dort and Dr. Jeffrey Harris (clinical champions from Zone-based surgical programs), with support from the Cancer, Critical Care, and Surgery SCNs. Over 70 stakeholders including clinicians, operational leads, front-line staff, and patients were involved in this project. Teams reviewed best practices, performed patient interviews, and bench-marked standards with other leading head and neck cancer centres. Provincial components and performance metrics were developed and clinical teams adapted their patient care processes with the goals of:

- Reducing ventilation and sedation, while promoting early mobility in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU);
- Standardizing order sets to better coordinate care between providers

This initiative has led to better post-surgical care for over 200 head and neck cancer patients per year in Alberta. It has also generated capacity at the Foothills Medical Centre and University of Alberta Hospital without new resources.

To encourage on-going sustainability of this work, an automated monthly dashboard report was created with strong leadership and support from the Cancer Measurement Outcomes Research and Evaluation (C-MORE), Enterprise Business Intelligence (EBI), eCritical, and clinical teams. These dashboard reports provide valuable information to the clinical teams on a variety of key performance indicators including length of stay, re-admission to ICU, avoidable bed hours, and ventilation utilization.

In addition to serving as a key tool for the clinical teams to monitor performance, the methodology used and lessons learned when developing these reporting tools will be foundational for future pathway work.

For further information about this work and the Cancer Strategic Clinical Network, please contact Angela Estey | angela.estey@ahs.ca.