

The Digestive Health SCN was launched in November 2016. This Transformational Roadmap sets out our course for the next three years.

Digestive Health SCN™

Transformational Roadmap Summary 2017-2021

Our Vision:
The best digestive health for all Albertans

Our Mission:
Innovate and collaborate to create a person-focused, high quality digestive health system through prevention, research, and best practices

Why a Digestive Health SCN?

- Patients referred to specialty gastroenterology care are experiencing unacceptable wait times and limitations to access the specialty care they need.
- There is a need to support primary healthcare providers with new models of care to reduce the need for gastroenterology referral for some patients with digestive diseases.
- According to 2015 data, the prevalence of Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) in Alberta was amongst the highest worldwide and was expected to increase even more by 2030.
- Endoscopy is performed in over 65 sites across the province. At this time, there is no provincewide approach to endoscopy quality for this high volume procedure.
- It is estimated that 17,000 Albertans with Hepatitis C virus are undiagnosed. If treated the cure rate for Hepatitis C is over 95%.
- The most common forms of liver disease—viral hepatitis, fatty liver disease, and liver cancer – are all on the rise. It is estimated that one in 10 Canadians have some form of liver disease.

About Strategic Clinical Networks (SCNs)

SCNs are responsible for generating innovation, implementing best evidence into practice, utilizing change management strategies to improve quality of care and outcomes, and ensuring long-term sustainability of all initiatives.



Digestive Health
Strategic Clinical
Network™

To achieve our vision, we will:

Integrate Primary/Specialty Care Approaches to Digestive Diseases and Improve Access

- Support primary care physicians to seek advice and care from a gastroenterologist through methods such as eReferral Advice Request, Consult Request and Specialist LINK
- Collaborate with primary care to develop clinical pathways to support primary care providers caring for patients with digestive diseases
- Work with the Alberta Coding Access Targets for Surgery (ACATS) team to include endoscopy procedures in their wait time management solutions

Deliver High Quality, Standardized Digestive Healthcare

- Develop and implement a strategy to improve the quality of endoscopy care, which includes broad implementation of the Canada - Global Rating Scale (C-GRS)©
- Strengthen and standardize patient education resources that align with clinical pathways, procedures and treatments

Provide Clinically Appropriate and Efficient Care

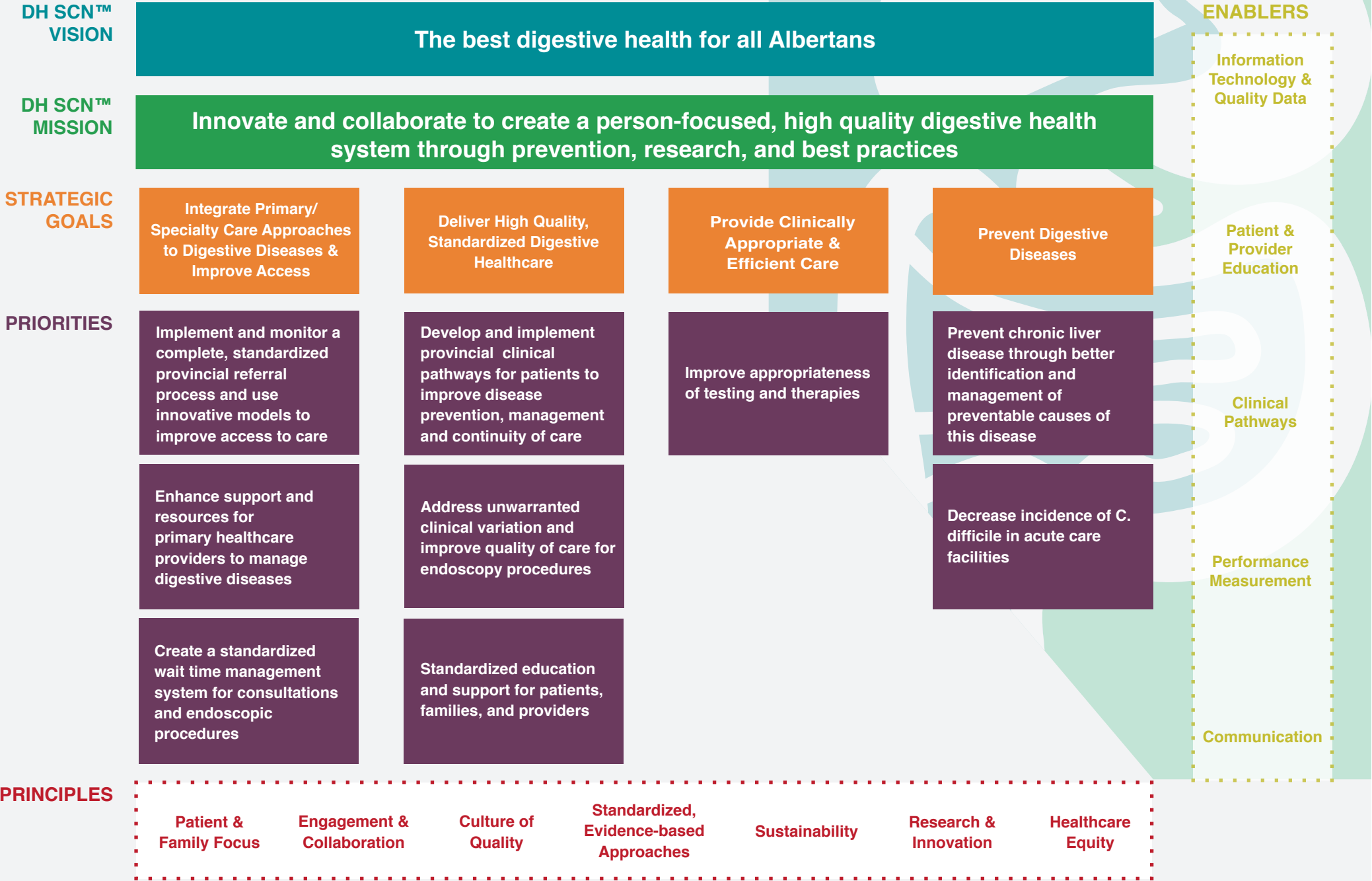
- Develop and implement an appropriate Proton Pump Inhibitors (PPIs) prescribing strategy for primary care, acute care, community care and pharmacies
- Support and develop strategies to operationalize effective and timely treatment strategies such as Fecal Microbiota Transplantation (FMT) for recurrent Clostridium difficile infection (CDI)

Prevent Digestive Diseases

- Implement effective screening, diagnostic, and treatment options to address the preventable causes of liver disease
- Develop a provincial strategy to efficiently screen, treat and monitor patients diagnosed with Hepatitis C

Digestive Health Strategic Clinical Network

Transformational Roadmap Summary



How was the plan developed?

Building this transformational roadmap was a collaborative effort of a broad network of almost 400 stakeholders with an interest in improving digestive health across Alberta. This included gastroenterologists, hepatologists, surgeons, internists, family physicians, researchers, nurses and other front-line staff, administrators, policy advisors, community members, and most importantly, people with digestive diseases and their families.

Derek Drager

Patient Advisor
Digestive Health Strategic Clinical
Network Core Committee



“I’m a survivor of two liver transplants and a longtime patient with gastrointestinal disease. I’m incredibly grateful to be an Albertan and to have received the finest care from a broad spectrum of expert healthcare professionals. That said, I’ve also experienced the frustration, and at times serious depression, that can come from trying to find your way in our huge, intimidating healthcare system.

To be on the core committee for the Strategic Clinical Network™ for Digestive Health is a wonderful opportunity to help in driving change. I’m involved in this great project because I hope in some small way that I can make things easier for those patients who have similar journeys to mine. I believe in the strategic value of what we’re doing, and that we can make a difference over the long term. And I’m heartened by the receptiveness of the healthcare professionals I’ve met, who are so open to hearing my voice and those of other patients.

We’re going to make things better!”