



MATERNAL, NEWBORN, CHILD & YOUTH

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Major initiatives and achievements, 2021-2022

The Maternal, Newborn, Child and Youth (MNCY) SCN and its Scientific Office have advanced work on several important initiatives focused on improving health outcomes and health service delivery for mothers and children. Collaboration with patients, families, researchers and health partners across Alberta has been an important part of this work.

Helping Youth Transition to Adult Healthcare

1. Transition Navigator Trial

Children with chronic diseases and/or medical complexity are at significant risk of poor outcomes as they transition to the adult health care system. Going from pediatric specialty care (which may include heavy parental involvement and multidisciplinary patient-centred care) into the complex, patient-driven adult system can be stressful, and research shows that many children suffer declines in health and loss of follow-up at this stage. For this reason, improving the transition to adult care for children with chronic disease has been an important priority for the MNCY SCN.

Dr. Susan Samuel (Pediatric nephrologist, University of Calgary, and co-Principal Investigator of this project) has been studying this issue for years with colleagues Dr. Andrew Mackie (Pediatric cardiologist, University of Alberta, and co-PI) and Dr. Gina Dimitropoulos (Associate Professor, Social Work and Psychiatry, University of Calgary). The team obtained funding from the Health Outcomes Improvement Fund (MNCY SCN, AHS) and Canadian Institutes of Health Research for a large pragmatic trial of a Transition Navigator service. Transition Navigators are knowledgeable healthcare providers who help address barriers and challenges for patients by developing patient-specific transition plans. They assess readiness for the transition, help the patient prepare and organize key information, and assist with appointments and follow through while striving towards self-management.



More than 300 patients were recruited from pediatric specialty clinics in Edmonton and Calgary and randomized to receive usual care or access to a Transition Navigator service. Evaluation of the pilot will compare emergency department visits and other health care utilization measures between the two groups. Youth and family perceptions of the service and their reflections on barriers to successful transition will also be studied. [Learn more about the Transition Navigator Trial](#)

Recruitment was completed in 2021, and the final year of data collection is underway. To date, the service has been deemed so successful that permanent Transition Navigator positions have been funded in Calgary and Edmonton in advance of the final study results. This study highlights how the MNCY SCN is helping mobilize evidence into practice and the value of its research collaborations. Its Health Outcomes Improvement Fund supports interventions that address [MNCY SCN priorities](#), and helps advance research from the pilot stage to sustained action that benefits families across Alberta.

2. Well on Your Way Website

Supported by the MNCY SCN, the [Well on Your Way](#) website launched in early 2022. It offers youth, families, and healthcare providers a single source of comprehensive information, tools, and resources related to the transition to adult care. The [Health Professional Toolkit](#) includes screening tools and checklists, while [parents](#) can access concrete planning tools, conversation guides and legal information. [Youth](#) can access information on relevant health topics, videos and tips on health management, and resources to support independent living.

This resource delivers on the [MNCY SCN's priority](#) to facilitate transitions for children with chronic and/or complex care needs to adult services, by preparing youth and their caregivers for the changes ahead.

Alberta Family Integrated Care (FICare)

Alberta FICare started its scale and spread to 14 Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICUs) across Alberta in November 2019 and completed this work in June 2022 amid the COVID-19 pandemic and Connect Care implementation. This work was led by Dr. Karen Benzies (University of Calgary) and Dr. Deb McNeil (Scientific Director, MNCY SCN) and funded by a Health Innovation Improvement Scale and Spread (HIIS) grant from Alberta Health and AHS.

Data shows that provincial implementation of Alberta FICare is positively impacting patient and provider experience and value for Alberta's health system. To date, multidisciplinary implementation teams at all Alberta NICUs have been successful in creating positive experiences for parents and staff as well as contributing to health system costs averted of \$215,000/month (Figure 1) on average through reduced length of stay. There was also a significant reduction in emergency department visits and hospital readmissions (Figure 2). To learn more, visit www.ahs.ca/AlbertaFICare.

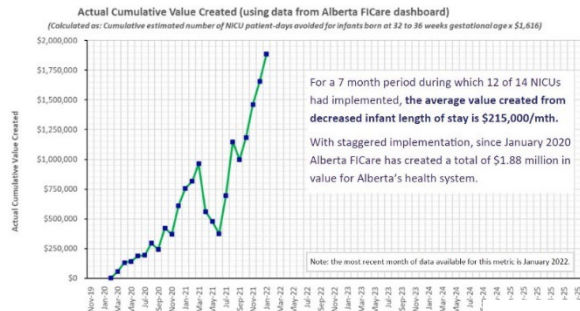


Figure 1

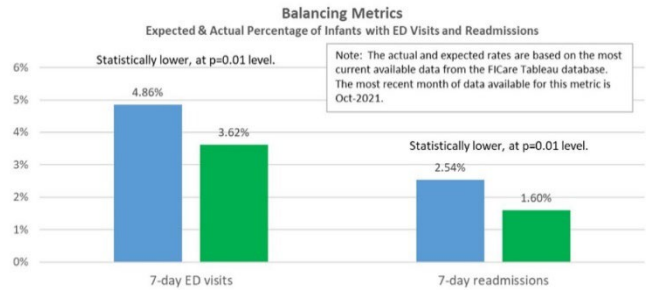


Figure 2

Fetal Health Surveillance (FHS)

Jeannie Yee, education consultation coordinator with the Alberta Perinatal Health Program (APHP), led the development of a Fetal Health Surveillance (FHS) toolkit that aligns with FHS guidelines released in 2020 by the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC). This work involved extensive collaboration by a diverse group of healthcare professionals from across AHS. The group also developed a provincial FHS education framework to ensure consistent content and delivery of FHS education province-wide to improve health outcomes of pregnant persons and newborns. These examples demonstrate how the merger of APHP and the MNCY SCN supports their mutual goal of creating evidence-informed education and clinical care tools to reduce variation in maternal and newborn care.

Actions and areas of focus

- Healthy mothers, newborns, children, youth and families
- Quality and sustainability
- Access to obstetrical care for rural, Indigenous, and marginalized women
- Optimized pediatric capacity
- Integrated and facilitated care transitions for children with complex needs

Impact on health and care in Alberta

The MNCY SCN continues to develop partnerships and build research capacity that positively impacts patient care for children, youth and mothers in Alberta. Over the past year, this work has contributed to:

- Improved supports for youth with complex and/or chronic health conditions transitioning from pediatric to adult health care services: transition navigators and well on your way website
- Alberta Family Integrated Care implemented in 14 NICUs across Alberta and demonstrates value to the health system of \$215,000 per month.
- Evidence-informed care is implemented for MNCY SCN populations.

MATERNAL, NEWBORN, CHILD & YOUTH

Grants and Publications



27

Peer-reviewed Publications



9

Workshops & Presentations

Outcomes and Impact

Reduced variation in maternal and newborn care through Alberta FICare implementation, FHS toolkit & education framework



\$4.5M

Research Grants



102

Research Members

Reduced infant length-of-stay, ED visits & hospital readmissions through implementation of Alberta FICare & Transition Navigator Service

www.ahs.ca/mncyscn