

Know Your Data

SCNergy, Spring 2021

Physicians will now be better equipped to identify improvements they can make to the patient care they provide through a new data-driven initiative called “Know Your Data.”

Led by Dr. Jim Eisner, Section Lead of the Hospital Medicine Section of the Medicine Strategic Clinical Network (SCN), “Know Your Data” is a physician-led audit and feedback structure that aims to better inform patient care by providing physicians with regular reports on the care they provide.

Through the initiative, physicians will have access to more in-depth personalized data, including information on hospital length of stay and rates of readmission to hospital for patients. Physicians will then be supported in their local teams to collectively make improvements in the care they provide.



Dr. Eisner feels that as Albertans we are fortunate to have a healthcare system in which physicians continually reflect on available evidence to improve patient care, and that being provided with more information about the way they practice will benefit patients positively. “We need to encourage our providers to deliver the care we believe Albertans deserve from us,” said Dr. Eisner. “Our vision is for every physician working in Alberta Health Services to “Know Your Data.”

The initiative is designed to provide front-line physicians with data on their own patient population. Dr. Eisner describes the initiative as, “Equipping front-line physicians with data that offers a snapshot of the care they provide, within the context of the multidisciplinary team.” He also feels that this will empower physicians to consider ways in which they can improve that care.

Following the publication of the AHS Review in December 2019, there has been considerable discussion around how the care provided to Albertans can be improved.



Through conversations about improving patient hospital stays, it became clear that physicians across Alberta typically do not have line of sight to how long their patients stay in hospital; how that compares to an expected length of stay; and how often their patients are readmitted. These high-level metrics reflect the care received, and how efficiently and safely patients are readied for a return to their homes, where patients would prefer to be.

The initial focus of the project is on supporting hospital medicine physicians (hospitalists and general internal medicine physicians) working at the busiest adult acute care sites across the province. Physicians at these sites will receive personalized data reports showing their individual data; the data of the clinical team with whom they typically work; and site-level data. It is anticipated that additional measures will be added to the reports through ongoing feedback by the physicians using them.



“Know Your Data isn’t only about delivering data to front-line physicians, it’s part of the puzzle,” explains Dr. Eisner. “It is another tool in the physicians’ toolbox to continuously improve and refine their practice. And, like any other tool, we need to ensure the metrics that we choose to report are relevant to physicians working at the bedside.”

A critical component of the project is creating a safe environment for physicians to discuss their data with their peers. These discussions, facilitated by local site-level champions, will see physicians review how their team is doing and what opportunities the team has to improve. Each physician team will be able to identify what actions they feel they could take to improve care for Albertans, and then be empowered to make these changes in tandem with other AHS improvement initiatives.

Since launch of the project in early 2021, the “Know Your Data” team has been working with Alberta Health Services’ (AHS) Analytics Team to develop a data dashboard in order to provide physicians with relevant information, presented in a way that will create possibilities for exploration of further curiosities during the facilitated discussions.

The project team will be piloting this dashboard at two sites – Chinook Regional Hospital (South Zone) and Foothills Medical Centre (Calgary Zone). Through the pilot, the dashboard will be further refined to support local, team-level quality improvement discussions and to scale up to the remaining busiest adult acute care sites. Physician champions have been identified at these pilot sites and preparations are underway to begin testing the dashboard and co-design supporting processes in the coming months.

Dr. Liberty Liu, a Hospitalist at the Foothills Medical Centre and one of the Site Physician Champions for the “Know Your Data” project says she is always looking for ways to improve her patient care. “Having these data points will help me reflect on my current practices and work with my team to improve the quality of care that my patients receive in the hospital.”

As roll-out of “Know Your Data” continues, lessons learned will be captured in an implementation guide and will be made available to additional clinical teams to for use with their own patient population.

To find out more about the “Know Your Data” Initiative, please contact MedicineSCN@ahs.ca