

Medicine SCN and Integrated Provincial Teams

SCNergy, Winter 2021



Since 2012, the SCNs have been an important resource for Alberta's health system and a conduit for clinical improvement and innovation on a provincial scale.

Operational leaders, clinicians and front-line staff, patients and families, and academic and community partners have come together as part of these networks to focus on and support the health needs and priorities of Albertans, by finding efficiencies, and by strengthening health and care across the province.

Excellence requires evolution, and the networks, like each of us, must be change ready, agile and open to new opportunities.

As a learning health system, we are committed to reviewing our priorities, measuring and evaluating our progress using data and feedback, and applying lessons learned to ensure we continue to allocate resources in a way that delivers the best value for our people and our province.

Post review and consultation, the resulting changes include a realignment of several SCNs, ensuring a more integrated structure. Although the names and organization will look a bit different, the transition is expected to create new and exciting opportunities for collaboration, provincial coordination, innovation and impact.

Launch of a Medicine SCN

This change brings together the Respiratory Health and Kidney Health SCNs as part of an integrated Medicine SCN. The Medicine SCN will include three sections: Respiratory Health, Kidney Health, and a newly formed Hospital Medicine section. This new structure will ensure continued focus in the areas of respiratory and kidney health, and new opportunities to work with other operational partners and address gaps common across the three sections.



Integrating these specialties within a single network is expected to create synergies that extend our reach, enable integrated approaches to common needs (e.g., clinical utilization, patient safety, virtual health, seamless hospital discharge), and orient resources to improve care, outcomes and patient experience.

The transition is currently underway, including consultation with key stakeholders and early discussions of shared priorities and structures. The Medicine SCN launched on October 30, 2020 and is co-led by Louise Morrin (Senior Provincial Director) and Dr. Jeffrey Schaefer (Senior Medical Director). To learn more or get involved, contact [Anita Kozinski](#), Executive Director for the Medicine SCN.

Shared Model for SCNs and Provincial Programs

The other key change, launched last spring, involves aligning the Addiction and Mental Health, Senior's Health and Population, Public and Indigenous Health SCNs to their respective provincial program.

This shift to a shared model was made to bring together the expertise and capabilities of the provincial programs and their respective SCN to support clinical excellence. In these areas of health, the SCNs have always worked closely with their provincial programs to advance common goals. Each area includes broad services and programming that requires provincial oversight and strategic focus.

The new, integrated model features shared leadership and an organizational structure designed to strengthen existing linkages and enable greater integration of knowledge resources such as data analytics and policy support.

These structures will continue to support operational needs, quality improvement, health innovation, and strategic priorities such as virtual health, care in the community and chronic disease prevention. By working together to advance key priorities, these integrated provincial teams will provide a more powerful engine to drive innovation and more rapidly implement health system improvements on a provincial scale.

Work is underway to reflect this new model, including combined strategic plans, and further information will be shared as the transition continues this year.

Over the past year, our experience with COVID-19 and other organizational priorities has reaffirmed the importance of being agile and ready to adapt to new ways of working. Front-line providers, operational leaders, patient advisors, clinician researchers and SCNs are all vital parts our health system, and these changes provide new opportunities to align our work and leverage our expertise. We've demonstrated that working together, we can take on new changes and these changes reflect another step in our evolution as a fully integrated provincial health system.