

Virtual Patient Engagement Network

YEAR-END SUMMARY REPORT

Summary of VPEN Patient Engagement Activities • 2022 - 2023

What's inside

- Summary of patient engagement activities
- Patient & family advisor project involvement
- New resources co-designed with patient & family advisors
- Projects patient & family advisors have impacted

Who & What is the VPEN?

The Primary Health Care Virtual Patient Engagement Network connects patients, families, and caregivers with people and teams working in primary healthcare. Patient and family advisors are matched with projects based on their experiences, interests, and availability. These partnerships demonstrate collaborative work with patients, families, frontline staff, clinicians and leaders co-designing healthcare integration solutions together.

Overview

This report is a recap of patient and family advisor engagement with Primary Health Care over the 2022-2023 fiscal year. It showcases the diverse range of projects where patient and family advisors have been involved and are impacting the transformation of primary healthcare in Alberta.

From April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023, the Primary Health Care Virtual Patient Engagement Network received 31 requests for patient and family advisor support, resulting in 25 engagement opportunities shared with members.

Patient and family advisors from all areas of the province are engaged in various activities across the Alberta Health Services Primary Health Care provincial program and with the Primary Health Care Integration Network, a Strategic Clinical Network™ (SCN).

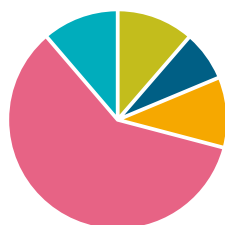
The Virtual Patient Engagement Network also recruits advisors to support work with our many partners, including Primary Care Networks, Zone primary care initiatives, other SCN projects, Alberta Health priorities and academic partners.

This year's report showcases several mini-stories highlighting the significant involvement and impact advisors are having by co-designing new resources and partnering with Primary Health Care in Alberta.

Thank you, patient & family advisors, for your ongoing commitment to partner with Primary Health Care!

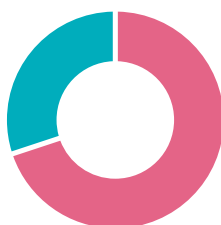
VPEN Data March 31, 2023

Members by Zone



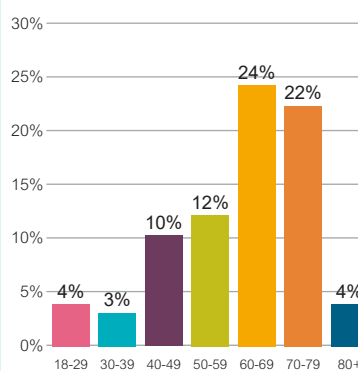
South Zone 11%
North Zone 11%
Edmonton Zone 8%
Central Zone 10%
Calgary Zone 60%

107 Participants



77 Advisors (AHS registered Volunteers) 72%
30 members 28%

% of Members by Age



25

Engagement Opportunities
shared over the past year



919.3

Total volunteer hours recorded
with PHC. A 41% increase
in PFA hours from 2021

To engage patient and family advisors, plan and support patient engagement activities, or record advisor volunteer hours, contact PHC.IntegrationNetwork@ahs.ca or call Joanne Ganton at 403-870-5872

Patient & Family Advisor Project involvement 2022-2023

Primary Health Care Integration Network

- ▶ Home to Hospital to Home Transitions Guideline Patient Transition Resources Team: 4 advisors
- ▶ Alberta Surgical Initiative (ASI) Patient Personas workshop & working group: 13 advisors
- ▶ ASI Patient & Family Advisory Council: 16 advisors
- ▶ ASI Patient Resource Team co-designing patient resources to support ASI: 4 advisors
- ▶ ASI Surgical Load Levelling focus group
- ▶ Patient & Community Engagement Researcher student-led Home to Hospital to Home research project: 5 advisors
- ▶ ASI Universal Surgical Guide working group: 1 advisor

Primary Health Care

- ▶ What Matters to You Day (June 2022)
- ▶ Patient & Family Centred Care Week (November 2022)
- ▶ Reducing the Impact of Financial Strain webinar: What Matters? Working Together to Address the Biggest Factors Impacting Health (March 2023)
- ▶ Patient & Family Advisor Peer Mentoring Program: pilot project (December 2022 to March 2023)

Alberta Health Services & Strategic Clinical Networks™

- ▶ Alberta Health Services (AHS) i4 virtual conference
- ▶ AHS Shared Commitments feedback
- ▶ AHS National Caregiver Day
- ▶ AHS North Zone: engagement in Local Health Neighbourhoods in Wood Buffalo and Peace Country
- ▶ AHS Provincial Patient & Family Advisory Group recruitment
- ▶ AHS Provincial Rehabilitation Client and Family Advisory Group recruitment
- ▶ Foothills Medical Centre: Women's Health Quality Council
- ▶ Medicine SCN: Patient & Family Advisory Council recruitment for Respiratory Health patient advisors
- ▶ Medicine SCN: Medicine hospitalization patient digital stories
- ▶ Neurosciences, Rehabilitation & Vision SCN: Post-COVID follow-up study
- ▶ Swallowing Clinical Care Pathway

Other Partners

- ▶ Alberta Health: Modernizing Alberta's Primary Care System Innovation Forum
- ▶ Alberta Health: Provincial Primary Care Networks Committee recruitment
- ▶ Alberta Health: Provincial Respiratory Testing and Swabbing Strategy Working Group recruitment
- ▶ Health Quality Council of Alberta: Take an active role in your healthcare webinar
- ▶ Health Quality Council of Alberta: Patient & Family Advisory Committee recruitment
- ▶ Mosaic Primary Care Network: recruiting for Patient and Family Advisory Committee
- ▶ National Knowledge Translation event: Primary Health Care Policy Project
- ▶ University of Calgary - Arthritis in the Emergency Room; Canadian Institutes of Health Research primary care research grant
- ▶ University of Calgary - Patients with hearing loss hospital experience research project



New resources co-designed with patient & family advisors

My Next Steps: Getting ready to leave the hospital

As patients get ready to leave the hospital, they may feel unsure about what to expect and how to continue getting better at home.

The Patient Transitions Resources team has been working with the Home to Hospital to Home



Transitions Guideline team to co-design a new guide that will help adult patients and their support person(s) be active participants in their transitions from the hospital to home. The team sought broad input through patient focus

groups and an online feedback survey to gather input on the initial prototype from more than 70 patients, families, providers, and stakeholders across Alberta.

[My Next Steps](#) has now been integrated into Connect Care for easy access by healthcare providers to support patient and caregiver involvement in discharge and transition planning conversations. It is being tested in hospital units in the Spring of 2023, with feedback and evaluation informing the provincial implementation and communications strategies.

The guide is intended to help patients think about what questions to ask their healthcare team, so they feel ready and confident to transition home. Scan the QR code to open My Next Steps.

Patient Partnerships: Lessons learned through co-design

Since September 2019, the Patient Transitions Resources team, comprised of four patient and family advisors and two AHS staff members, have worked to support the Home to Hospital to Home Transitions Guideline initiative by looking at what patients need for safe, efficient transitions. From this work, many lessons were learned about what a true co-design approach is in developing and implementing patient resources. The team wanted to share their learnings with others desiring to co-design and work at an empowerment level so the [Patient Partnership: Lessons learned through co-design](#) toolkit was developed.

This resource contains useful tips and tools to enhance engagement from the very beginning of a project. It has been shared with other SCNs and patient engagement groups across Alberta and was presented to the AHS Clinical Operations Executive Committee.



Patient personas: New diversity tools for supporting ASI

Provincial-based services must be designed to support health equity in that all Albertans should have the fair opportunity to reach their fullest health potential. The Primary Health Care team used a



blend of data and experiences gathered from 13 patient and family advisors, surgical provider experts, researchers, decision makers, and the AHS Diversity and Inclusion team to develop three diverse patient personas.

"Personas are fictional reality. They are characters that represent the needs, goals, and behaviours of a specific group of users."
- Scotty Kupsch (Patient Advisor)

For example, Luke had emergency surgery due to a workplace accident and is overwhelmed with the stress of losing his hand, his income, and paperwork while managing rehab. Vira lives on a farm and cares for her husband who had surgery in rural Alberta. She relies on her son for transportation and navigating the internet. They are examples of situations that must be considered when planning for improved surgical services.

These personas will be used by various surgical projects to help provide valuable insights and reminders into the experiences and perspectives of diverse Albertans. Teams can mockup how their decision or output will meet the preferences of each of the persona characters, allowing teams to better understand patient needs and tailor their services accordingly.

Navigating your healthcare journey

The Virtual Patient Engagement Network launched a new patient resource, [Navigating your healthcare journey: With the right information](#). This one-stop-shop collection of resources and links was developed in collaboration with patient advisors and Health Link, to help people easily find healthcare and information they need – making these resources more accessible to more people.



Patient & family advisors have engaged and impacted...

ASI Specialty Access:
Patient and Family Advisory Council + ASI Patient Resource Team

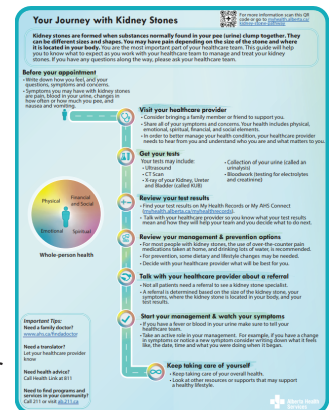
The [Alberta Surgical Initiative \(ASI\)](#) focuses on improving a patient's surgical journey, from the time a patient seeks advice from their family doctor, to when they are referred to a specialist, to their surgery and rehabilitation. To successfully improve a patient's surgical journey, we need to hear what matters to them. This will help ensure that we are designing solutions that work for patients and their caregivers. The Specialty Access is using a co-design model to bring 16 patient and family advisors to the table as equal partners, along with other stakeholders.

The ASI Patient and Family Advisory Council has contributed to several successes within Specialty Access work this past year. Council members have been part of the co-design working groups and have participated in several focus groups.

Together, we:

- Launched Facilitated Access to Specialized Treatment in all five zones
- Created provincial referral pathways and forms for Orthopedics and Urology
- Created provincial clinical and patient pathways for Non-Obstructing Kidney Stones

The ASI Patient Resource Team was a separate team of patient and family advisors from across the province who led the development of the provincial patient pathway template. This template is now used to develop condition-specific pathways that guide patients and their families in their healthcare journey.



"The AHS team's willingness to consider all ideas and their flexibility makes it easier to contribute in a meaningful way."

– ASI Patient Resource Team member

Work is ongoing with the ASI Specialty Access and the ASI Patient and Family Advisory Council. A hybrid model of virtual and in-person sessions will be used over the course of the year to engage with the remaining surgical specialties and to build on the successes with Orthopedics and Urology.

Modernizing Alberta's Primary Healthcare System

The [Modernizing Alberta's Primary Health Care System](#) initiative was established to strengthen primary healthcare in Alberta and ensure all Albertans have access to timely, appropriate primary healthcare



services. This work engaged Alberta primary healthcare leaders, national and global experts, along with patient advisors and citizens to identify

immediate and long-term improvements that can build on the many primary healthcare successes in Alberta.

Three patient advisors from the Virtual Patient Engagement Network attended the in-person Innovation Forum in January 2023, with one advisor bringing their patient voice to a discussion panel. It was a pivotal event for the future of primary health care in Alberta that gathered more than 115 stakeholders and community members to explore ideas for modernizing Alberta's primary healthcare system.

Patient and Community Engagement Training & Research

In 2022, a team of six individuals with lived experiences in the Alberta health system was sponsored by the SCNs to receive training in patient-engaged health research methods through the [University of Calgary Patient and Community Engagement Research program](#).

The team's research focus was: To understand what matters most to patients who live in rural, remote, or



isolated communities in Alberta when they transition from hospital back to their home.

Their research highlights patient-identified themes about what matters most to patients who live in rural, remote, or isolated communities in Alberta when they transition from hospital back to their home.

Findings focused on:

- Unique transition needs rural/remote Albertans can experience when they return home after being hospitalized;
- Gaps in the healthcare system experienced most often at time of discharge and during transition home; and
- Supports outside the healthcare system that were most helpful during and after transition home.

The advisors are continuing to share their research findings through posters, publications and presentations with SCNs and other health system stakeholders.



Watch for more information in 2023 to get involved in new engagement and mentorship opportunities within Primary Health Care and the Virtual Patient Engagement Network.

On behalf of the Virtual Patient Engagement Network team...



Thank you, we couldn't have accomplished this without all of you!

