

Research interests re. PIHCI Programmatic Grants

Alberta's Digestive Health Strategic Clinical Network (DHSCN) is interested in potential partnership opportunities with other jurisdictions whose research interests are aligned with ours. Our research interests relevant to the PIHCI Programmatic Grants include:

- Primary/specialty care integration
 - Effective approaches to develop, implement, spread, and sustain new models of care and/or resources to support primary care providers in caring for patients within the medical home (e.g. enhanced primary care pathways, telephone or electronic access to specialist expertise without a formal referral)
 - Efficacy of different models of care and resources to support primary care providers
 - Acceptability of these models of care and resources to primary care providers and patients
- Self-management for patients with chronic disease
 - Development and efficacy of patient education resources/tools to support self-management of chronic disease
 - Effective approaches to address psychosocial factors related to chronic disease, particularly in vulnerable populations
- Use of technology to improve access to specialty care for patients in rural/remote locations and/or to improve access to expertise for primary care providers in rural/remote locations (e.g. expanded use of telehealth, telephone/electronic access to specialist expertise without a formal referral)
 - Effective approaches to maximize the use of technological solutions for patient care and/or primary care consultation/support
 - Approaches to engage Indigenous communities in using technology to improve access to care/specialist expertise

Potential Research Approaches

Iteratively evaluate the performance and refine healthcare innovations using three approaches:

1. Key performance indicators of quality of care (as defined by acceptability, accessibility, appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, and safety) will be measured pre- and post-intervention.
2. The plan-do-study-act (PDSA) cycle will systematically analyze and iteratively revise interventions.
3. Using administrative healthcare databases to track outcomes (e.g. hospitalizations, ED visits), pre- and post-interventions.

Background

About the Digestive Health SCN

Formed in November 2016, the Digestive Health Strategic Clinical Network (DHSCN) is an Alberta-wide collaborative team of health care professionals, researchers, administrators, patients, community organizations, and others committed to improving the care of patients with digestive diseases, liver diseases, and cancers of the digestive system across the lifespan. Visit

<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/scns/Page13224.aspx>.

Vision: The best digestive health for all Albertans.

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

Our strategic goals are to:

- Prevent digestive diseases
- Integrate primary/specialty care approaches to digestive diseases and improve access
- Delivery high quality, standardized digestive health care
- Provide clinically appropriate and efficient care

Current initiatives

There are many initiatives currently under way in Alberta that are aligned with the above noted research interests and objectives. These include:

- Enhanced primary care pathways: These pathways provide direction for primary care physicians on the management of certain digestive diseases. The pathways promote quality care within the medical home and prevent unnecessary referrals to specialty care. These pathways have already been implemented in the Calgary Zone, and plans are under development for spread across Alberta. See <http://calgarygi.com/index.php?mode=webpage&id=794&pp=792>.
- Specialist Link: This service is available within the Calgary Zone and provides primary care providers with telephone access to GI specialist consultation within 30 minutes. See <http://calgarygi.com/index.php?mode=webpage&id=795&pp=792>.
- eReferral: Alberta is in the process of spreading eReferral, an automated referral system that will include Advice Requests and Consult Requests. Advice Requests will allow primary care physicians to access specialist advice electronically within 5 days, improving quality of care in primary care, and preventing unnecessary referrals to specialty care. Consult Requests will automate referrals to specialty care for assessment and procedures, improving referral quality and the selection of an appropriate receiving provider. See <http://www.albertanetcare.ca/eReferral.htm>.
- Group medical appointments are being used within selected primary care networks to allow for more rapid access to specialist assessment and consultation, group patient education, and peer support.
- A Calgary hepatologist is training primary care providers to appropriately care for patients with Hepatitis C through onsite training/mentoring and bi-weekly case conferencing via a web-based platform. Opportunities to increase the number of participating physicians and to connect with Indigenous communities are being explored.

Contact

To explore potential opportunities for research collaboration with the Digestive Health SCN, please contact:

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