



Exploring the Role of Collaborative Structures on Vancouver Island

Prepared for the Primary Care Network Steering Group

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Executive Summary

Key stakeholder groups including the Divisions of Family Practice (Divisions), Doctors of BC, First Nations Health Authority, General Practice Services Committee (GPSC), Island Health, Ministry of Health and other regional or local community organizations are working collaboratively to support the development and implementation of Primary Care Networks (PCNs)/Patient Medical Homes (PMHs).

The purpose of this report is to:

- Systematically measure the current collaboration between key stakeholder groups,
- Establish an understanding of how the structures in place support collaboration between key stakeholder groups,
- Facilitate learning and improvement within the collaborative structures on Vancouver Island, and
- Support learning across the province based on the strengths and challenges on Vancouver Island.

Evaluation Approach

Social network analysis was used to systematically measure the collaboration occurring between Interdivisional Collaborative Services Committee (CSC) members. Qualitative interviews of CSC members from two communities were used to identify structures supporting collaboration between Interdivisional CSC members at the regional and local level.

Summary of Findings

Information sharing among Interdivisional CSC members reflects a network model positioned to support the introduction and diffusion of innovations across all CSCs. The qualitative interviews identified structures that support information sharing and collaboration.

Table One: Summary of Findings

Network ¹ Pattern	Social Network Findings	Supportive Collaborative Structures	Application of Findings
<i>Birds of a feather flock together.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Division Co-Chairs, Division Executive Directors (ED) and CSC Support Staff seek PCN and/or PMH information from those in similar roles (within role information sharing). 	Division Co-Chairs, Division EDs and CSC Staff Support have recurring meetings with those in similar roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular (within role) meetings connect similar roles across CSCs and supports information sharing across CSCs. • Holding regular within role meetings facilitates information sharing.
<i>Diversity is important.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Authority (HA) Co-Chairs, HA Regional Directors, HA Community Directors connect more with those that have different roles (outside role information sharing). 	HA Co-chairs, HA Regional Directors and HA Community Directors and CSC Staff Supports have frequent communication as well as and regular planning meetings with Divisions Co-Chairs, Division EDs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent communication and co-planning with Interdivisional CSC members with different roles ensures new and innovative information is integrated locally into the CSCs. • Seeking information from different roles increases the integration of new and innovative information at the local level.

¹ Krebs, V., & Holley, J. (2005, Winter). Building adaptive communities through network weaving. *Nonprofit Quarterly*, 61-67.

Network ¹ Pattern	Social Network Findings	Supportive Collaborative Structures	Application of Findings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interdivisional CSC members seek PCN and/or PMH information both within their own CSC and from other CSCs. • Interdivisional CSC members with a Regional² role connect relatively equally with all CSCs but not all CSCs are connected equally to one another. 	<p>The Interdivisional CSC supports networking and information sharing between CSCs, First Nations Health Authority, General Practice Services Committee, Island Health and the Ministry of Health. The Interdivisional CSC has been meeting biannually since 2012 to support health system change in primary health care through regional coordination, networking and information sharing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sharing between CSCs ensures new and innovative information is introduced across the CSCs. • Multiple connections between CSCs ensures network stability. • CSCs that are less connected to other CSCs may consider strategies to strengthen their links to other communities.
<i>Those close by, form a tie.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interdivisional CSC members seek PCN and/or PMH information within their own CSC. • The number of stakeholder organizations represented at a CSC may influence how information is shared among CSC members. 	<p>CSC members hold regular monthly or bi-monthly meetings, CSC agenda planning meetings, co-develop priorities and identify shared work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The complexity of CSC membership influences flow of information between CSC members. • The breadth and complexity of CSC membership should be considered when engaging in new shared work.
<i>Some people are more prominent than others.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interdivisional CSC members seek PCN and/or PMH related information from 12% of all the possible connections between members. • The top five information sharing Interdivisional CSC members belong to the PCN Steering Group, indicating that the PCN Steering Group is meeting its objective to serve as a hub of PCN and/or PMH information for Interdivisional CSC members. 	<p>The PCN Steering Group supports Interdivisional CSC members by providing coordination and communication of PCN and/or PMH information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PCN Steering Group was identified as a key source of PCN and/or PMH information. • The PCN Steering Group serves as a hub for PCN and/or PMH information. • The PCN Steering Group maintains up-to-date knowledge on PCN and/or PMH information. • The PCN Steering Group serves as a regional source for PCN and/or PMH information.
<i>Most people are connected with one another by a short path.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On average, most IDC members have a short path length such that they are connected to each other within two degrees of separation. The largest path to connect 2 IDC members is four degrees of separation. 	<p>See description of Interdivisional CSC above.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The short number of connections, or path, between any two Interdivisional CSC members improves the speed and accuracy of information flow. • Ensuring all Interdivisional CSC members are connected with one another maintains the speed and accuracy of information flow.

² Interdivisional CSC members with a regional role are members that are not associated with one specific CSC and/or involved in more than one CSC.

Network ¹ Pattern	Social Network Findings	Supportive Collaborative Structures	Application of Findings
<i>People have more than one connection to each other.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some Interdivisional CSC members act as information conduits between many other members of the group. Most Interdivisional CSC members have multiple connections to the network while other Interdivisional CSC members only have one connection. 	See description of Interdivisional CSC above. Most interviewees noted having previously worked together with Interdivisional CSC members, mainly within their own CSC, on many similar collaborative projects over the years such as A GP for Me.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some Interdivisional CSC members connect two or more Interdivisional CSC members indirectly. Information dissemination strategies should target the people identified as key bridges. Strategies to increase the number of connections for Interdivisional CSC members that are loosely connected could be explored.

Key Learnings

For the Vancouver Island Region	For interorganizational partnerships and collaborations in other regions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holding regular meetings with those in similar roles facilitates information sharing across CSCs. Seeking information from different roles increases the integration of new and innovative information at the local level. Leveraging CSCs and Interdivisional CSC members that are highly connected facilitates the spread new and innovative information across CSCs. The PCN Steering Group is a source for regional PCN and/or PMH information. Strategies to increase the number of connections for Interdivisional CSC members that are loosely connected is an area to explore. Some CSCs include Division, Health Authority and GPSC partners. With a relatively small number of partners, identifying common goals and reaching consensus may be relatively straightforward. Other CSCs include more partners such as First Nations communities, community organizations, community health networks and municipalities. In these CSCs, the reach and strategic perspective may be broader; however, identifying common goals and reaching consensus may be more complex. As a result, the number and scope of CSC partners should be considered when engaging in new shared work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop supportive structures at the local, regional and provincial levels such as CSCs, Interdivisional CSC and the PCN Steering Group. Develop and leverage a group of highly connected individuals to be a source or hub of information such as the PCN Steering Group. Intentionally allocate human and financial resources to support collaboration such as dedicated staff to coordinate stakeholder engagement. Participate in regular co-planning and priority setting activities (CSC and Interdivisional levels) such as shared strategic planning days with key stakeholders. Ensure the value of membership and shared priorities for all partners by including all partners in strategic planning sessions. Allocate time for relationships to become established and re-established after change. Continuously tend to the partnership, especially during times of change. Consider participating in ongoing relationship building exercises.

Conclusions

Information sharing related to PCN and/or PMH between Interdivisional CSC members reflects the patterns of an effective network. The collaborative structures supporting information sharing at the regional and local levels include the Interdivisional CSC, CSCs, the PCN Steering Group, regular within role meetings, frequent communication, co-planning and collaborative strategic planning within and between roles.