



A key component in evaluating the success and benefits of patient medical homes involves collecting stories of health care change from doctors, patients, and allied care providers. These stories take readers on a journey toward understanding how patient medical homes are improving care around the province.

Change Snapshot: How teams and networks help support physician recruitment and retention.

[Listen to an audio version of this story here.](#)

Convening the Conversation; Building a Community Network of Support for Group Practice

I'm the Executive Director of a Division of Family Practice with a strong sense of community, but also with its challenges.

Last year, we had a crisis with our inpatient program. We lost almost all the hospital service provided by family physicians, and this forced us to look at what makes our community attractive for physicians to want to continue to practice or move here and establish themselves and practice. This was a big challenge as we were unable to recruit and replace the physicians as we were losing through retirement. While we were considering these questions we started looking at larger practices and teams as a potential solution.

The Patient Medical Home (PMH) initiative introduced the idea of not just a physician network but asking who else is on the team, including nurses and pharmacists. Physicians started to see the benefits of PMH for smaller clinics, with close networks to serve patients even when physicians are on vacation. It also really helped us to get information from resident program surveys about what new physicians were looking for in a practice and community. We worked with a number of practices to help introduce LPNs and pharmacists into the care teams.

The most significant change was for us to be able to identify teams and to become part of a support network for physicians. This also helped recruitment. The goal of every conversation we had with the Division membership was to make our Division as attractive as possible, so we would have enough providers for our community. This was very compelling. Patient care drives everything. When patients are feeling the brunt of not having enough providers and support, that motivates you to look at different solutions.