

## UPDATE FOR MEMBERS: TRI-PROFESSION FORUM

On May 23 and 24, 2014, the senior leadership of our organizations (board and council members, executive officers) participated in *Strengthening the Bond: Alberta's Tri-Professional Forum*, an opportunity to better understand each profession's complex needs and challenges in order to benefit patient care. Our discussions form the basis for an action plan to improve continuity of care and collaborative practice.

Forum participants used the Health Quality Council of Alberta (HQCA) *Continuity of Patient Care Study* and the patient story that underpinned the report to consider key issues concerning continuity of care. They also discussed ways the three professions can work together to improve continuity of care and overall care delivery. Three key issues were identified:

*Communication:* Communication must be improved by

- employing concrete strategies to support the development of effective teamwork
- collaborating in the development and implementation of better processes in our practice settings around sharing plans of care and patient information
- creating tools to support collaborative practice (such as common standards of practice)
- exploring more opportunities to discuss professional issues.

*Silos/Fragmentation:* Eliminating silos and addressing fragmentation of care requires leadership at all levels. At a high level, we will explore common professional guidelines and collaboration when it comes to raising policy issues. Clinical leadership must support practice settings in raising the quality of teamwork, and ensure that quality improvement efforts happen in an integrated way, with a single-minded focus on improving health-care delivery. We support creating the opportunity for every Albertan to have a relationship with a consistent team in a primary health-care home, and strongly believe this would enhance continuity of care.

*Teams:* Teamwork is the right model for care, and teams need to be constituted to meet the needs of the population. The patients we serve play a leading role on the team, and all roles need to be clearly defined and understood.

We then considered our preferred vision for healthcare delivery that improves the continuity of care for patients and contributes to personal and professional satisfaction for members of our professions. Participants agreed that a vision must be clear, inclusive, work in different environments and be backed by quality improvement and performance management systems that take an integrated, team-based approach. It needs to include:

1. The patient voice and the patient experience



2. Communication among health providers and the patient/public
3. Respect and trust between professions and amongst professionals
4. Working collaboratively

As the Forum concluded, we shared our commitment to continue to build relationships, to learn from one another, and to support one another in advocating for systems that support and ensure continuity of care. We will continue to meet to develop more specific action plans with initiatives at different levels: patient/public, professional and government. Future discussions may consider the possibility of developing resources to foster inter-professional practice and best practices to ensure continuity of care.

We look forward to working together to create a patient-centered health system that effectively balances and coordinates patient and population needs across the continuum of care. The forum showed us how much common ground we share and the opportunity before us if we work together to create the health system we all want in Alberta.

Regards,

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Brad Willsey, President  
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Dr. Allan S. Garbutt, President  
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