

SIGNATURE INITIATIVES EVIDENCE-INFORMED HEALTH CARE RENEWAL

EVIDENCE IN THE MAKING SUPPORTING TEAMS AND COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE IN PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

What Are the Policy Options?

THE CHALLENGE:

Team-based primary care has been a hot topic in jurisdictions across Canada. It is thought to deliver better health outcomes for patients in a more cost-effective manner. But no two provinces or territories share a vision of what team-based care should look like. Often, they differ in a number of areas, such as structures to support team-based care, including compensation models. There are also different interpretations about who should be on a team – physicians, nurse practitioners, allied health professionals – the team structure, and the roles of various team members.

Research: A research team operating within Alberta Health Services, led by Dr. Esther Suter, examined three provinces in Western Canada to explore the evolution of team-based primary health care in each jurisdiction. The team's goal was to examine the similarities and differences in the provinces' policy frameworks and to identify feasible and realistic policy options for moving team-based primary health care forward. Based on the team's preliminary work, these potential policy options will likely focus on themes such as scope of practice, liability and regulatory issues, system alignment, concepts of team-based care, and compensation models. The team has identified four policy options with the greatest potential to advance team-based care and had the opportunity to present and discuss them with policy makers from the provincial health ministries, senior health authority representatives, physicians and academics. The involvement of policy makers from all three provinces increases the likelihood of this research having an impact, says team member Dr. Renée Misfeldt.

Sources: Misfeldt, R., et al. *An exploratory study of interprofessional teams in primary care networks in Alberta* (Calgary: Workforce Research and Evaluation, Alberta Health Services, 2013). Mickelson, G., et al., "Inter-professional collaboration as a health human resources strategy: moving forward with a Western provinces research agenda," *Health Care Quarterly* 15, 4 (2012): 41–6.

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