

# BUILDING CAPACITY FOR CHANGE

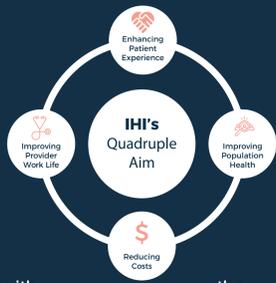
## ADVANCING HEALTH SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION IN ALBERTA

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### BACKGROUND

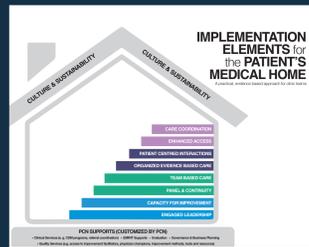
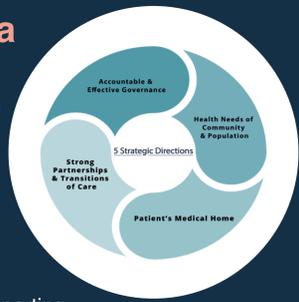
The province of Alberta has recognized that health system transformation is key to achieving the quadruple aim of improving patient outcomes, patient satisfaction, improving provider work-life, and controlling the rise of health care expenditures.

For almost two decades there has been a growing commitment to transform Alberta's healthcare system, with a focus on primary health care. It began with the development of structures leading to the formation of Primary Care Networks (PCNs) with the first networks launching in 2005. PCNs are groups of doctors working collaboratively with teams of health care professionals, such as nurses, dietitians and pharmacists; these health care providers work together to meet primary health care needs in their communities.



### The Foundations for Health System Transformation in Alberta

There are 4 PCN Objectives guiding the Networks to achieve system transformation. These recognize the need for effective governance, a population health focus, system partnerships, and implementing a Patient's Medical Home model. The focus for several years has been on supporting the advancement of the Patient's Medical Home (PMH) at the level of system supports and at the clinic level.



PCNs have been investing in supporting member physicians in implementing changes into practice and are paving the way to increasingly supporting community specialists and the medical neighborhood. Much of the work to achieve the PCN objectives will ultimately trickle down to the practice level for implementation.

*In order to spread change, a workforce of change agents with a common vision, goal - and above all - set of skills is required to transform the Alberta primary care system.*

#### Alberta Context

- » 4.2 Million Albertans
- » 41 Primary Care Networks
- » ~870 Primary Care Practices
- » ~3800 Family Physicians
- » ~1100 Team Members

## CHANGE AGENT EVOLUTION

### What is a Change Agent?

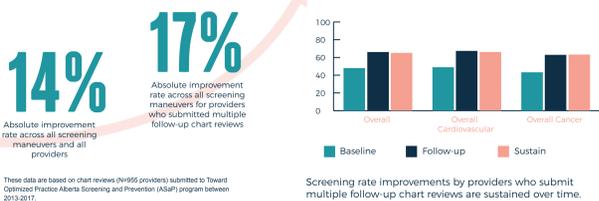
A change agent is someone who promotes and enables change to happen in an organization or system. Alberta has been purposefully building a workforce of change agents since 2012.



### Change Agent: Improvement Facilitator

Improvement facilitators emerged supporting primary care clinics in the early 2000's in small numbers. In 2013, driven by a goal to provincially scale a screening and prevention improvement initiative, many more IFs were hired, trained, and deployed. The widespread IF investment resulted in statistically significant improvements.

This IF group developed a transferrable skillset to apply to future improvement efforts.



### Change Agent: Physician Champion

Physician champions have always been leading change in their own clinics and PCNs. They became increasingly visible through various clinical improvement initiatives, driving engagement with their change behaviour and peer-to-peer influence. Formal organization and support of these champions was critical to accelerate the journey toward PMH. In 2017, the Alberta Medical Association formally invested in the development of a Physician Leaders' Network.



### Change Agent Blueprint

The vision, plan, and supports for each change agent role have existed for many years; the Change Agent Blueprint unites the previously independent strategies. It documents the plan for recruitment, development, deployment, and ongoing support of change agents.

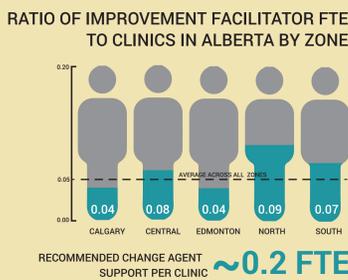


## KEY APPROACHES FOR CHANGE

### Increased Investment in Change Agents

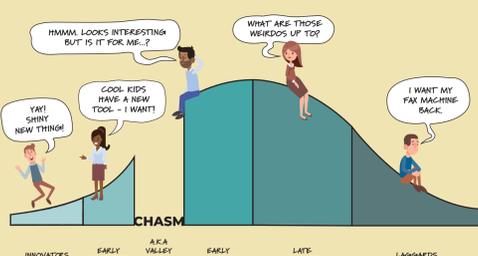
Emerging international literature suggests that a ratio of one improvement facilitator to five clinics is recommended to accelerate the pace of change. Increasing the investment is a strategic priority.

While the literature doesn't specify the optimal ratio of physician champions to clinics, we know from our experience that we need more physician champions in various stages of their PMH journey to engage and support their peers. Burnout and over-exposure are risks with too few champions to support the work ahead.



### Reaching the Tipping Point

International and local research, as well as our experience confirms that the early majority (as per the Diffusion of Innovations Theory) conceptualizes change differently from their innovator and early adopter peers. If we are to spread innovations and reach the tipping point for change, then engaging the early majority is crucial.



Thinking Like the Early Majority:

- Break change into small incremental steps
- Show me the evidence
- Define how the change will have a positive impact on patient outcomes
- I need to trust the source of information
- Make the big picture clear
- Support me along the way

A skilled workforce of improvement facilitators, along with credible, persuasive, and relatable physician champions are key ingredients for success.

### Providing Practical Supports

Change Agents are equipped to do their work in the field with a variety of practical supports:

- Change packages for supporting clinical improvements
- The Model for Improvement is the endorsed approach
- A sequence to achieve change
- Dosing approach to knowledge transfer and building skills

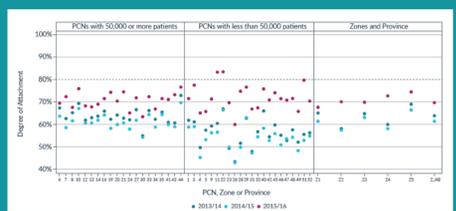
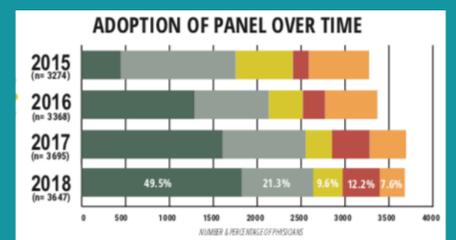


## SCALE & SUSTAINABILITY

To date, Alberta has experienced success scaling and sustaining initiatives, with large credit to the change agents who strategically support, champion, and facilitate this work.

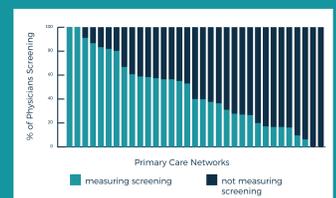
### Panel & Continuity

To reach scale with paneling in a highly-autonomous fee-for-service environment, physician leaders maintained a focus and promoted a shared value proposition. Groups of provincial physician leaders coached local physician champions and improvement facilitators to engage primary care practices to advance this focus and report on progress. Together, PCNs have made remarkable progress in supporting member practices to implement panel processes, contributing to strengthened provider-patient continuity.



### Preventative Screening Behavior Change

The number of primary care providers who are measuring and reporting their screening care continues to increase year over year.



*Alberta's success to date with scaling primary care improvement initiatives proves we are well positioned to support primary care practices to take the next steps in the Patient's Medical Home journey.*