

# Professional Practice in Action

A guide to professional practice at  
Alberta Health Services

2016

Strong “I” + Strong “We”  
= Excellence in Care

## INTRODUCTION

*Professional Practice in Action* outlines how Alberta Health Services (AHS) supports excellence in professional practice. It illustrates the expectation of how people work at AHS so they can provide patient and family centred, quality care to Albertans. Professional Practice in Action is part of Our People Strategy and supports the Patient First Strategy.

Evidence demonstrates that staff are happier when an organization clearly defines expectations of how people are to practice, and how they work together to achieve shared goals. In turn, this improves quality of care, patient safety, and efficiency. *Professional Practice in Action* speaks to the relationship and expectations of the organization and individuals in relation to practice. It recognizes the impact of this relationship on the quality of patient and family centred services delivered with the mission, vision, and values of AHS.

AHS' definition of professional practice speaks to professionalism in approach and behaviour, and builds upon key elements identified in the literature and set within the Alberta context:

***Professional practice is defined as practice that reflects the commitment to caring relationships with patients and families and strong ethical values; utilization of specialized knowledge, critical inquiry, and evidence-informed decision making; continuous development of self and others; accountability and responsibility for insightful competent practice; demonstration of a spirit of collaboration and flexibility to optimize service.***

*Professional Practice in Action* asks individuals to commit to elements reflected under the *Role of Individuals* section of this document. As well, all AHS staff and leaders will collectively support professional practice through the *Role of Alberta Health Services*.

This foundational guide was created for AHS by Health Professions Strategy and Practice, a division in AHS that provides leadership related to professional practice. It is the result of extensive literature reviews, consultation, and input from staff and leaders. It is designed to: support individuals to reflect on and fully enact professional practice; to support operational leaders in discussions about/planning for professional practice; and to help AHS leaders and provincial programs align their efforts with professional practice.

## PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE IN ACTION GUIDE

The **goal** of professional practice at Alberta Health Services is to have:

**Caring, competent, committed healthcare professionals collaborating to create quality outcomes and positive patient and family experiences**

To achieve this goal, specific actions are required individually and collectively. Individual actions are: creating, caring, competence, commitment, and collaboration. These are known as the 5C's. Organizational actions are developing structures and processes to support: an enabling environment, evidence, encouragement, engagement, and evaluation. These are known as the 5E's.



## ROLE OF INDIVIDUALS – the 5C's

The 5C's define the behaviours expected of individuals at AHS that support professional practice.

I **CARE** about...

- Patients – Each encounter is an opportunity to convey compassionate, empathetic care through listening, learning from, coaching, and teaching patients and families.
- Self-Awareness, self-reflection, and self care – I recognize the impact of my insight and well being on my practice
- Relationships on my team – Each encounter is an opportunity to support another's wellbeing and practice. I foster respectful, constructive interactions, and celebrate other's successes.

I am **COMPETENT** because I...

- Reflect on my practice and develop a continuing competence plan to improve patient outcomes.
- Invest time, effort, and resources to improve my knowledge, skills, clinical reasoning, and judgment.
- Take responsibility for my professional development, incorporating evaluation, new knowledge, and evidence in my practice.
- Am confident to lead in my practice and share knowledge with others, including students.

I **COMMIT** to practice in alignment with...

- The role, functions, and expectations of my position.
- The AHS vision, mission, values, and policies.
- My Professional Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics and my professional role.
- Regulation and legislation.

I **COLLABORATE**...

- With patients and families in all of their health care decisions, every time, respecting their decisions.
- To deliver patient and family centred care, engaging patients and their loved ones as full partners in their care, and as part of the health care team.
- With other health care providers, leaders, communities, and educational groups.
- To understand and actualize AHS' Collaborative Practice Principles in order to support patient and family centred care.
- To support smooth patient transitions between providers, programs, and settings.
- By identifying, pursuing and promoting opportunities for patient safety, quality, and continuous improvement.

## I CREATE...

- Successes with my patients for my patients – I deliver the best possible outcomes and positive interactions, including advocating on their behalf when necessary.
- A safe, welcoming, and engaging environment for patients, families, coworkers, and students.
- Opportunities to contribute to my profession by participating in professional and workplace opportunities, including research and evaluation.

## ROLE OF ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES – the 5E's

Five actions describe how we, as AHS, will collectively strive to support individuals to optimize their professionalism and practice. Examples of how these actions may be accomplished follow each action.

We create **ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS** to support individuals to provide optimum patient and family centred services, participate in decisions that impact care, and to recognize their practice excellence.

We will:

- Encourage and support individuals' participation in continuous learning and skill (including leadership) development.
- Consider practice needs when allocating resources.
- Establish care delivery models that maximize standards of care.
- Continue to apply *Just Culture Principles*.
- Create opportunities for shared decision making between operational leaders, clinicians and practice leaders. Involve professionals in identifying and leading patient care improvements and formalize decision making processes to involve both operational and practice leaders.
- Support the wellness of healthcare professionals and create a psychologically safe workplace.
- Acknowledge and celebrate successes.

We facilitate the use of **EVIDENCE** to support individuals to implement and develop standards-driven, evidence-informed practice, research and innovation.

We will:

- Provide user-friendly access to policy and procedures, evidence and decision making tools, and support for interpretation of legislation, regulation, and standards.
- Model and support a willingness to test, modify or discard, and implement practice innovations.
- Provide teams and individuals with information, tools, and access to support their practice and research activities.
- Allocate time and support to build skills in reflective practice and research/evaluation related activities.

We provide **ENCOURAGEMENT** to individuals to develop practice leadership and optimize their roles.

We will:

- Create shared understanding of professional roles including and beyond performance of specific tasks.
- Provide a unified voice for each health discipline, with dedicated practice leadership
- Encourage participation in professional and role related activities and initiatives

We promote **ENGAGEMENT** to support individuals in their accountability to practice professionally and collaboratively.

We will:

- Create a collaborative practice culture guided by AHS' *Collaborative Practice Principles* and the National Interprofessional Competency Framework.
- Support an Interprofessional Professional Practice Council that supports cross discipline initiatives.
- Have people, tools, and processes in place to clarify unique and overlapping scopes of practice, and each role's responsibility, accountability, and authority.
- Strengthen the role and connections between local and provincial professional practice councils.
- Provide support to staff to help them be accountable to patients and the public.

We use **EVALUATION** to collect and evaluate outcomes that impact patients and their care.

We will:

- Create processes to provide timely information and feedback to providers so they can improve their practice.
- Identify and require the use of quality clinically-relevant measures in everyday practice.
- Optimize technological systems to capture, measure, and evaluate this data.
- Provide teams and individuals with information communication technology tools and access to support their practice and professional activities.

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