



Opioid Crisis Corner

Opioid Use Disorders (OUDs) are a major public health crisis affecting an increasing number of Albertans. Since January 1, 2016, a total of 920 individuals in Alberta have died from an apparent accidental drug poisoning or death related to fentanyl as [reported](#) by Alberta Health. Emergency Departments (EDs) continue to play an important role with OUD patients as the rate of ED visits related to opioid use and substance misuse increased by 118% from January 1, 2014 to September 30, 2017.

As part of the response to the opioid crisis, AHS President and CEO Dr. Verna Yiu issued a directive in early February 2018 to authorize all healthcare providers working in an AHS EDs and Urgent Care Centres (UCC) to distribute potentially life-saving overdose response kits (Naloxone), without requiring a physician order and to provide education about how to use the kits to patients at risk of overdose, their families, and friends.

In early March 2018, the Canadian Research Initiative in Substance Misuse (CRISM) released the first [national guideline](#) for managing OUDs. The guideline describes the optimal strategies for the treatment of opioid addiction and recommends opioid agonist treatment (OAT) with buprenorphine/naloxone (Suboxone®) as the preferred first line treatment when possible.

Aligned with this guideline, the ESCN team has started a project called the “Initiation of Suboxone® in EDs in Alberta”. Our goal is to work with all stakeholders to develop a province-wide ED strategy and program for appropriately screening and initiating Suboxone® for OUD patients, and then enabling effective transfers to community or primary healthcare providers for continued follow-up and patient care. Central to the success of this project is integration with other facets of the response to the opioid crisis in Alberta and developing a model that is sustainable over time.

By Ken Scott, Senior Project Manager, ESCN

Keep in Touch with the ESCN



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Conferences:

[Western Emergency Department Operations Conference \(WEDOC April 19–20, 2018\)](#)

[National Emergency Nurses Association \(NENA\) April 20–22, 2018.](#)

[Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians in Calgary \(CAEP May 26–30, 2018\)](#)

Check out this [fully accredited CFPC & RCPSC Acute Stroke online course](#):

CARNA will also accept this for CME hours.

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Vision: Build an inclusive network that supports the advancement of evidence informed emergency care for all Albertans.

Mission: To support quality patient and family centered emergency care driven by education, innovation and practice changing research through collaboration.

Researchers Study First Nations Patients' Emergency Department Quality of Care

Congratulations to Assistant Scientific Director Patrick McLane, and Bonnie Healy - Operations Manager for the Alberta First Nations Information Governance Centre. They are co-leading a funded Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) project titled "Understanding and Defining Quality of Care in the Emergency Department with First Nations Members in Alberta." This project is a partnership with the Alberta First Nations Information Governance Centre; Population, Public and Indigenous Health SCN; Addictions and Mental Health SCN; and First Nations organizations from across the province. The award was recognized nationally by the Government of Canada in their funding announcement for the competition.

For more details please click [here](#).

Congratulations to the following Emergency SCN research community members on their recent success in CIHR competitions:

- **Dr. Sara Davison**, whose proposal titled *Development, Implementation and Evaluation of an Integrative Supportive Care Pathway by Primary Care across Alberta* was successful at Phase II of the Rewarding Success Initiative.
- **Dr. Stephen Freedman and Dr. Mandi Newton**, whose proposal titled *Transforming healthcare for children and youth with acute mental health and substance use needs* focuses on emergency departments and was also successful at Phase II of the Rewarding Success Initiative.
- **Dr. Rhonda Rosychuk** whose proposal titled *Understanding Frequent Emergency Department Visitors in Alberta and Ontario through Advanced Statistical Modeling Techniques* was successful in the CIHR Secondary Data Analysis grant.

The Strategic Clinical Networks™ are pleased to support these promising projects.

ESCN Supported Publications

Several ESCN supported summer students have published their work in 2018:

Rashi Hiranandani on [Computed topography ordering for low risk headache patients](#).
Shashwat Desai on [Interventions to reduce C-spine imaging in the emergency department](#).
Harry Liu on [Interventions to reduce lumbar-spine imaging in the emergency department](#)

Nursing Education Corner

Emergency Nursing Provincial Education Program (ENPEP)

Orientation:

- 2456 new hires from urban, regional and rural ED/UCCs have successfully completed the orientation program. In addition, 120 new hires have completed Pediatric ENPEP at the Stollery and Alberta Children's Hospital.

Continuing Education

- There are 800 existing staff with an active seat in the program (access provided upon request for professional development).
- Special acknowledgement goes out to the following staff for the commitment to their own professional development, demonstrated by completing over 40 ENPEP on-line lessons.

On completing 80 Hours of ENPEP Training!!!

- Renee Pippin, RN, Crowsnest Pass Health Centre
- Kristine Magpantay, RN, Lamont Community Health Centre
- Roberta Salter, RN, Cold Lake Health Care Centre



Work in development!

- Searching the At-Risk Patient – Training module for ED/UCC
- Intraosseous Learning Module

Information about how to access new resources will continue to be posted on the Provincial ED/UCC Education internal Insite webpage.

Submitted by Monique Fernquist, RN, BScN, MEd, ENC(C), Educator/Coordinator – Emergency Nursing Provincial Education Program

Using Information Design in Helping Patients to Choose Wisely

Dr. Shawn Dowling and Chris Rice, ESCN Information Design Student, recently presented their work on innovation in patient communications at the *Choosing Wisely Alberta Symposium: Integration for Appropriateness* (Calgary, March 2018). While the national Choosing Wisely Campaign has identified common tests and procedures that are being used beyond the evidence-base for appropriateness, they also recognize that educating patients is essential to engage them in shared decision making.



Chris Rice & Dr. Shawn Dowling

To advance this end, the Physician Learning Program (PLP), the Emergency Strategic Clinical Network (ESCN), and Mount Royal University Department (MRU) of Information Design embarked on a partnership two years ago to use best design practices and a patient centered approach to advancing patient education on Choosing Wisely recommendations. The recommendations addressed to date include the use of CT imaging for head injuries, headaches, low back pain, and suspected blood clots in the lungs, as well as the use of antibiotics for sinusitis, and hemoglobin transfusions for iron deficiency anemia.

Choose Wisely:
Treating iron deficiency anemia

What is iron deficiency anemia?
Iron deficiency anemia is when your body doesn't have enough iron to produce enough red blood cells to carry oxygen throughout your body. Without enough oxygen, your body cannot function through energy. Iron deficiency anemia can be caused by other, more serious illnesses. Discuss any concerns you have with your doctor.

What can cause iron deficiency anemia?
 Blood loss, Lack of iron in the diet, Medications interfering with iron absorption, An increase in your body's need for iron, A decrease in your body's ability to absorb iron.

What are the symptoms of iron deficiency anemia?
 Pale skin, Tiredness, Weakness or dizziness, Shortness of breath, Cold feet, Decreased exercise tolerance, Craving for ice, chalk, or other non-foods, Pica.

What is the goal of treating iron deficiency anemia?
 When treating iron deficiency anemia, there are two goals:
 1. Restore your body's iron levels & red blood cell count.
 2. Find and fix the underlying cause of the iron deficiency anemia.

Communications platforms including patient handouts, infographic storyboards, and one minute videos have been developed through collaboration between clinical experts and a patient advisory committee. The engagement of patient advisors has proved invaluable, as early versions failed to deliver intended messages and were sent back to the drawing board.

The first topic to roll out, *CT Scans for Mild Traumatic Brain Injury*, was evaluated through over 100 patient surveys that found a significant impact on knowledge and beliefs, and increased willingness to discuss the appropriateness of tests and procedures with their doctor. This topic has now been rolled out across Alberta in a variety of different communication forums. Additional topics and evaluations are planned for the future, as we continue to build upon this platform for helping our patients to choose wisely.

Submitted by Daniel Grigat, Dr. Shawn Dowling, Chris Rice, Dr. Eddy Lang, and Dr. Stephanie Vandenberg

Commitment to Comfort QI Collaborative Reaches 50 Alberta ED's!

Kids are feeling a little more comfortable during their ED visits this year, now that over 50 Alberta ED's are working together to reduce their pain and distress.

The Commitment to Comfort QI Collaborative began in the Alberta Children's Hospital (ACH) ED in 2015 when a small group of physicians and nurses developed a program to promote best practices in pediatric pain management and to engage patients and families as partners. The program includes resources such as posters to promote topical anesthetic before needles and comfort positions to reduce distress during procedures, pain scales and reference materials for measuring and treating pain, and comfort kits with distraction items to make procedures less scary for kids.

After seeing improvement in pain outcomes at ACH, the team created a quality improvement collaborative to share the program with other ED's. The program spread to Calgary area ED's in 2016, and in 2017 all Alberta ED's were invited to participate. Fifty-one ED's have participated to date, representing rural and urban ED's in all zones of the province. Sites participate in monthly webinars to review best practices in pediatric pain management and to learn basic QI methods. Each site develops its own project team and sets improvement aims. A small amount of chart auditing is done to measure progress. Improvements have been seen in use of pain scores, time to analgesia, and the proportion of young children who receive topical anesthetic before needles.

The Commitment to Comfort QI Collaborative received a 2017 Patient Experience Award from the Health Quality Council of Alberta and has been nominated for a 2018 AHS President's Excellence Award. For more information, please contact project manager Suzanne Libbey at Suzanne.Libbey@ahs.ca.

Submitted by Dr. Jennifer Thull-Freedman



Thanks to the Emergency SCN Scientific Director Dr. Brian Rowe

Thanks to Dr. Brian Holroyd, Dr. Susan Jelinski and Dr. Patrick McLane for their contributions to this article.



The Emergency Strategic Clinical Network would like to extend its profound appreciation to Dr. Brian Rowe for his outstanding service in his role as the Scientific Director (SD) of the ESCN. Dr. Rowe will complete his term as SD on March 31st, 2018. Brian started as the inaugural SD of the ESCN in 2013, and he has contributed significantly to the success of our SCN since that time.

Brian is a Professor in the Department of Emergency Medicine and the School of Public Health at the University of Alberta. He continues to have a very distinguished research career in Emergency Medicine that has resulted in his authoring 496 peer-reviewed publications and success in obtaining many peer-reviewed grants from provincial and national agencies. Brian holds a Tier 1 Canada Research Chair (CRC) in Evidence-Based Emergency Medicine, and has been honored in being admitted as a Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences. Brian's outstanding research accomplishments and abilities have been recognized in his being named as the Scientific Director of the Institute of Circulatory and Respiratory Health (ICRH) with the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR). Brian has excelled as a teacher and mentor for many summer students and graduate students in Master's and PhD programs and has received major awards acknowledging his skills as an educator.

Under Brian's leadership, along with the significant contributions of Dr. Maria Ospina and Dr. Susan Jelinski (former Assistant Scientific Directors of the ESCN), and Dr. Patrick McLane (current Assistant Scientific Director of the ESCN), the Scientific Office of the ESCN has contributed significantly to the overall SCN program, as well as the ESCN.

Brian, as one of the original SDs, played an important role in developing the scope and focus of the SCN Scientific Offices in their primary areas of activity; advancing knowledge, building research capacity, knowledge translation, building research networks, establishing research priorities and research facilitation. Brian was innovative in dedicating ESCN Scientific Office funds to undergraduate studentships and systematic literature review competitions, both of which supported ESCN priorities. The success of these initiatives has led to other SCNs developing similar programs. Through a series of accomplishments, Brian has led the development of research priorities for Emergency Medicine for the ESCN and in Alberta. Instrumental in this process was an external review by Dr. Matthew Cooke from the UK, and the subsequent creation of the ESCN Scientific Office Research Advisory Board to provide expertise and strategic advice on scientific matters. These initiatives have also facilitated communication between the emergency research community in Alberta and the ESCN Scientific Office.

Brian's commitment to excellence, his passion, enthusiasm and ability to deliver meaningful contributions, have all been very evident during his role as our Scientific Director. We are very grateful for the profound impact he had on the development and accomplishments of the ESCN. We wish him all the best as he continues with his program of Emergency Medicine research, clinical practice, and the position as the Scientific Director of the ICRH.

Accreditation Trauma Distinction for Alberta's Trauma Sites

On February 28, Alberta Trauma Services, the Surgical SCN and the Emergency SCN teamed up to provide the first Trauma Innovative Learning Collaborative (ILC) with the goal of aiding our Trauma sites in the pursuit of Trauma Distinction by Accreditation Canada in the fall of 2019. All 10 Trauma sites across Alberta were represented, both adult and pediatric. The day started with a challenge to focus on continued improvement in trauma services from Judith Hockney, Senior Operating Officer of the Royal Alexandra and Sturgeon hospitals, building on the excellent work already occurring.

Dr. Sandy Widder, Trauma Surgeon and co-chair of the Alberta Trauma Services Core Leadership Team, shared a patient story that was a vivid reminder of the importance of coordinated, high quality trauma care. Catherine Jones and Dr. David Evans provided great insight as they shared British Columbia's experience with Trauma Accreditation and system wide improvements. Chris Vis and Rosmin Esmail from Alberta Trauma Services, and Jerry Causier from Accreditation, gave an overview of the data available and the requirements for achieving Trauma Distinction accreditation.

Tracy Wasylak, Sr. Program Officer of the Strategic Clinical Networks, led the teams through understanding Balanced Score Cards and action plans, then gave each site an opportunity to review their processes and devise concrete plans for improving care for every trauma patient. These plans will be put into practice over the coming months and the teams will gather again this fall to share their experiences in the second Trauma ILC. To close out the day, Dr. Sandy Widder and Dr. Rohan Lall encouraged the teams to continue their improvement efforts as they seek Trauma Distinction accreditation in the fall of 2019!

Submitted by Tim Baron, Manager, Surgery Strategic Clinical Network™