

# Virtual Patient Engagement Network

# YEAR-END SUMMARY REPORT

Summary of VPEN Patient Engagement Activities • 2023 - 2024

## What's inside

- Summary of patient engagement data
- Project requests and consultations
- Patient & Family Advisory impacts

## What is the VPEN?

The Primary Health Care Virtual Patient Engagement Network (VPEN) connects patients, families and caregivers with primary healthcare professionals. Patient and family advisors are matched with projects based on their experiences, interests, and availability. These partnerships demonstrate collaborative work, involving frontline staff, clinicians, leaders, patients and families in co-designing healthcare integration solutions.

## Leadership Message

We are so fortunate and grateful to have an amazing virtual network of patient and family advisors (PFAs) and community members who have partnered with us in our Primary Health Care (PHC) improvement initiatives over the past year. Advisors play an essential role in helping AHS deliver quality patient and family-centred care to Albertans.

This summary recaps PFAs engagement with AHS PHC and the [Primary Health Care Integration Network \(PHCIN\)](#) over the 2023-2024 fiscal year. It showcases the diverse range of projects where advisors have been involved and are impacting the transformation of primary healthcare in Alberta.

### Highlights:

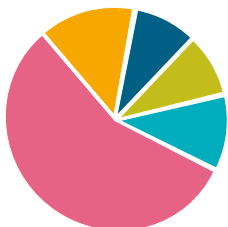
- From April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, the PHC VPEN received **40** requests and consultations for support and advisors were invited to participate in **27** engagement opportunities.
- Page 2 captures the projects and partners PHC VPEN supported during the fiscal year.
- Page 3 includes a snapshot of key projects highlighting the involvement and impact advisors are having by co-designing new resources and solutions with PHC.

It is rewarding for us as leaders to get to know the patients and families who are equally as passionate about improving Alberta's health care system. We look forward to reading more PFA profiles and engaging even more patient advisors in transformational work in the months ahead.

*Thank you, patient & family advisors, for your ongoing commitment to make Primary Health Care initiatives more integrated and better meet the needs of Albertans!*

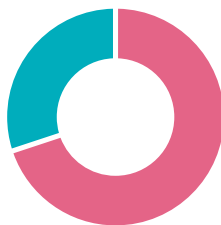
Dan Marchand, Senior Program Director, AHS PHC  
Dr. Linda Slocombe, Senior Medical Director, AHS PHC  
Mona Delisle, Executive Director, AHS PHC

### VPEN Members by Zone



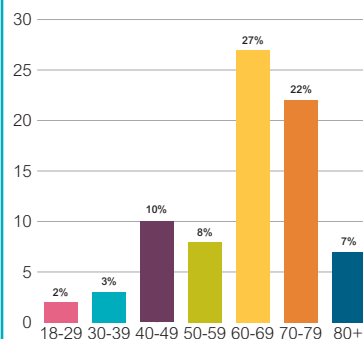
South Zone 11%  
North Zone 9%  
Edmonton Zone 9%  
Central Zone 14%  
Calgary Zone 57%

### 107 VPEN Participants



32 General Members 30%  
75 Patient Advisors (AHS registered volunteers) 70%

### % of VPEN Members by Age



# 27

Engagement Opportunities shared with VPEN over the past year



# 1002

Total volunteer hours recorded with PHC a 9% increase in PFA hours from 2022/23



### Get involved

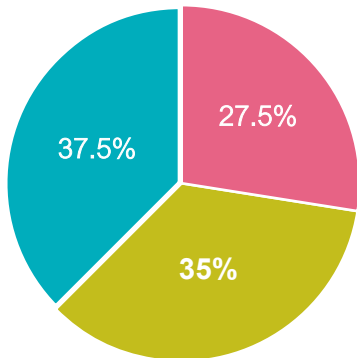
Learn more, contact  
[PHC.IntegrationNetwork@ahs.ca](mailto:PHC.IntegrationNetwork@ahs.ca)



Inspiring solutions. Together.

# VPEN Project Requests 2023-2024

**40** engagement requests and consultations to VPEN  
(**24%** increase from 2022)



## 15 External Partner Requests

- ▶ Alberta Find a Doctor steering committee
- ▶ Alberta SPOR: Exploring Health System Integration of Public Health and Primary Care in Alberta
- ▶ Alberta SPOR: Youth with Neurodevelopmental disorders collaborative on sleep research
- ▶ Calgary Foothills PCN: Engagement in design of lease strategy
- ▶ Calgary Foothills PCN: New PFAC support and consultation
- ▶ Calgary Foothills PCN: PFAC recruitment
- ▶ Calgary Zone ZOCC: Consultation for setting up PFACs
- ▶ CanTreat COVID Study: Recruitment support request
- ▶ Edmonton Zone PCN Addictions and Mental Health Subcommittee: Recruitment of Individual with Lived Experience
- ▶ Mosaic PCN: PFAC recruitment
- ▶ Mosaic PCN: New Sunridge clinic focus groups
- ▶ PCN 2023 Strategic Forum
- ▶ UofC Patient Navigation Study: Nurse navigator supports consultation
- ▶ UofC Research Focus group: Opportunity for people with hearing loss
- ▶ UPTAKE Project: Patient partner recruitment

## 11 PHCIN & Other PHC Requests

- ▶ ADAPT patient experience survey development
- ▶ ASI PFAC Central Zone recruitment
- ▶ ASI PFAC North Zone & Edmonton Zone recruitment
- ▶ ASI Patient Pathways Unit evaluation survey
- ▶ Going deeper – Beyond the walls; discussion opportunity
- ▶ IBS Management in Primary Care engagement
- ▶ Master's Research: Video project to build capacity of primary care clinics to address Social Determinants of Health
- ▶ Master's Research: Co-design and diversity of patient engagement project
- ▶ THINC grant integrated care pathway evaluation
- ▶ Universal Surgical Guide
- ▶ VPEN Evolution Project

## 14 SCNs & Other AHS Requests

- ▶ Acute Kidney Injury study: Patients review of proposed handouts
- ▶ CAYAC: Child and Youth Advisory Council recruitment
- ▶ Aging in Place: Engagement Session for Older Albertans and caregivers/partners
- ▶ Alberta Virtual Chronic Pain Program Design of web-based platform
- ▶ AHS Edmonton Zone Ambulatory Care strategic plan; request for patient advisors
- ▶ AHS Provincial PFAC recruitment
- ▶ Foothills Medical Centre: Day Medicine Quality Improvement project
- ▶ Pan-SCN Patient Engagement Survey
- ▶ Pediatric Constipation Pathway: Request to reach out to community families through PCNs
- ▶ PEPP TALKS recruitment: Survey for health care providers on partnering with patients
- ▶ Provincial Addiction & Mental Health: Individuals with lived experience engagement
- ▶ PRIHS application: Patient readmissions stories
- ▶ UPTAKE trial: Patient representation
- ▶ Virtual Province-Wide Surgery Rounds: Surgery SCN Spotlight on Patient-Centric Projects

“Support from the VPEN was instrumental in helping our PCN develop its own patient engagement strategy. The resources provided helped to move our strategy along, and the advice from the team allowed us to think differently about how we should carry out this work.

Their support allowed me to feel like I wasn't starting at the beginning when developing our plan, but that I had a team of experienced and knowledgeable patient engagement specialists ready to help wherever they could.

The volunteers we were able to recruit through the VPEN network bring with them a wealth of knowledge and an eagerness that have already benefited our strategy. I would highly recommend utilizing the tools available through this team!”

Liz Deneer, Program Manager  
Calgary Foothills Primary Care Network



Watch for more information in 2024 to get involved in new engagement and mentorship opportunities within Primary Health Care and the Virtual Patient Engagement Network.

# Patient & Family Advisor Impact 2023-2024

## ASI

### Alberta Surgical Initiative

- The ASI Patient & Family Advisory Council (PFAC) is now co-chaired by Joel Bermack, patient advisor.
- There are currently 10 advisors participating in the ASI PFAC, with representation from four of the five zones, recruitment is ongoing.
- As members of provincial and zonal co-design teams, PFAs participated both virtually and in-person to draft referral, clinical and patient pathways and develop a plan to deliver non-urgent advice across Alberta.
- ASI PFAC and APaRT advisors participated in validating content for a resource called the Universal Surgical Guide.

## H2H2H

### Home to Hospital to Home Transitions

- In 2023, the My Next Steps: Getting ready to leave the hospital patient guide was tested, revised, and finalized by the Patient Transitions Resources team.
- My Next Steps is available in Connect Care and being implemented in hospitals to improve patient discharge conversations across Alberta in Spring/Summer 2024, and will be translated into multiple languages.
- Three patient advisors were members of the H2H2H Provincial Implementation Network (PIN) in 2023 and continue to actively support My Next Steps implementation.
- Two advisors are working with the Calgary Zone Transitions of Care committee to inform strategies that will help Albertans to know their primary care provider.
- One advisor supported the evaluation of the Camrose PCN and St. Mary's Hospital Transition Nurse Pilot by gathering patient experience data via interviews.

## MAPS

### Modernizing Alberta's Primary Care System

- In January 2023, three advisors participated at the MAPS Forum in Edmonton.
- Recommendations in the MAPS final panel reports will be government's guideposts for action to create more access to primary health care. Several are moving forward immediately, prior to longer term improvements that will refocus the system on community-based primary health care.

## PaCER

### Patient & Community Engagement Research

- In 2023, the H2H2H PaCER team's poster on "What matters most to Albertans from rural, remote, or isolated communities when returning home after being hospitalized" was presented at conferences locally, nationally and internationally.
- The team won 'best general poster' at the October 2023 Alberta SPOR conference in Edmonton.

## Prehab

### Prehabilitation "Ready, Set, Surgery!"

- A core team of three patient partners reviewed and recommended improvements to patient-facing resources including the Prehab4Me web page/app and webinars on various Prehab topics.
- Additional patient partners provide input as able.
- One patient partner was a member of the Prehab steering committee and the Education working group.

## PPU

### Provincial Pathways Unit

- In 2023, five patient pathways were co-designed and launched on MyHealth Alberta.
- At least two Patient/Family Advisors participate in every pathway co-design project.
- Standard Operating Procedures for patient pathways developed and implemented.
- Patient Pathway Evaluation underway.

## PCN Strategic Forum

### Primary Care Networks Strategic Forum

- Five advisors participated at 2023 PCN Strategic Forum in Calgary in November.
- Patient Partner reflections were shared to close the Forum with powerful patient perspectives.

## PPCNC

### Provincial Primary Care Network Committee

- In 2023, two patient advisors joined the Provincial Primary Care Network Committee (PPCNC).
- They bring essential perspectives of Albertans to discussions on primary care priorities in Alberta.