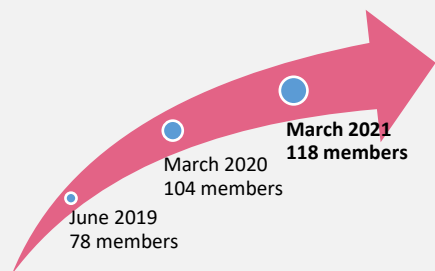
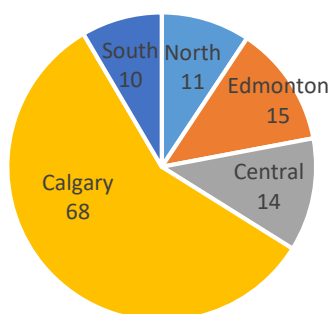


# Virtual Patient Engagement Network (VPEN) 2020/21 Annual Summary Report

## VPEN Members March 2021



## VPEN Members by Zone



49% of advisors actively participated in PHC engagement activities over the past year

## Summary of VPEN patient advisor engagement activities



From April 1, 2020, to March 31, 2021, nearly 30 different projects presented a wide variety of engagement opportunities to patients and families who are members of the Primary Health Care (PHC) Virtual Patient Engagement Network (VPEN).

The VPEN engages patient and family advisors in activities with the Primary Health Care Integration Network (PHCIN), a Strategic Clinical Network within the Primary Health Care Program and also across the AHS provincial Primary Health Care Program. The VPEN also recruits advisors to support work with our many partners, including Primary Care Networks and Zone primary care initiatives, other Strategic Clinical Network (SCN) projects, Alberta Health priorities, and academic partners.

Despite the pandemic significantly impacting how we work in Primary Health Care, our engagement with patients and families continued and even accelerated in 2020. VPEN started holding monthly online sessions in April to help advisors gain skills and comfort using the various features of the Zoom platform. Much of our engagement was already held over Zoom, so our advisors were quite comfortable and capable continuing in a virtual environment. Advisors have appreciated the frequent Zoom communications, which offer opportunities to stay informed and involved with PHC

and the PHCIN.

The Zoom socials also help build connections and support mentorship, encouraging veteran advisors to partner with health system leaders, while guiding and supporting new advisors.

**Thank you, patient & family advisors, for sharing all your amazing stories and your ongoing commitment to partner with Primary Health Care!**



Watch for more information in 2021 to get involved in new engagement and mentorship opportunities within Primary Health Care and the Virtual Patient Engagement Network.



# Virtual Patient Engagement Network (VPEN) 2020/21 Annual Summary Report

## Patient & Family Advisor Project Involvement: April 1, 2020, to March 31, 2021

The following graphic shows the diverse range of projects where patient and family advisors have been engaged with Primary Health Care from April 1, 2020, to March 31, 2021.



**Read on for stories focusing on three initiatives where patient and family advisors worked collaboratively with Primary Health Care over the past year**

To recruit patient & family advisors, plan and support patient engagement activities, or track advisor volunteer hours, contact [PHC.IntegrationNetwork@ahs.ca](mailto:PHC.IntegrationNetwork@ahs.ca) or call Joanne Ganton at 403-870-5872



**Get involved**  
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# Virtual Patient Engagement Network (VPEN) 2020/21 Annual Summary Report

## More than 15 patient and family advisors were involved in the Home to Hospital to Home Transitions Guideline initiative



[Read the full report](#)

One team, co-led by four patient and family advisors, explored what patients and families need for safe, patient-centred transitions, and created a report called [“Transitions through Patients’ Eyes: Recommendations to Support Patients and Families.”](#) The report outlines recommendations for Alberta’s health system leaders to use in implementation of the

guideline.

The report reflects key themes from patient stories and gathers feedback from their transition experiences, as well as identifying/analyzing current transition tools in the province.

And to support patients during the pandemic, the Patient Transitions Resources (PTR) team was called on to develop a patient resource for those hospitalized with COVID-19 to help them prepare for discharge. In a few short weeks, the team launched the [COVID-19: My Discharge Checklist](#), as part of the Safe Discharge Home package for acute care teams.

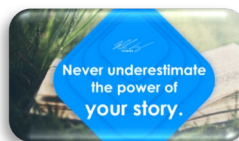
This patient self-management resource was designed with patient advisors, for patients. The checklist is organized into sections for patients to use when getting ready for discharge conversations. The purpose is to help patients feel confident about leaving hospital and managing their health after a COVID-19 acute care admission.



The PTR team continues to receive feedback on the checklist from patients discharged from hospital. This feedback will be used to improve the checklist and make sure it is a valuable resource that meets patients’ needs.

**Next Steps:** The Patient Transitions Resources team is now developing a general discharge checklist for all adult patients, which will be implemented in summer 2021.

## Everyone has a story



In November 2020, in celebration of Patient & Family Centred Care Week, AHS Primary Health Care (PHC) hosted a Zoom Storytelling

session: **Everyone has a story.** Participants in the session included patient and family advisors, a number of PHC staff and leaders, other AHS staff, and staff from Primary Care Networks in Alberta.

Listening to the stories of patients and families helps us to understand the impact of care we provide, and

the experiences of the people we serve. Storytelling helps bring the emotional connection of everyday activities of healthcare to the forefront.

Powerful stories from **four storytellers** were brought to life on screen by the artistic talents of AHS graphic recorder Aaron Russell. The illustration below highlights many gems of wisdom and **“what matters to patients and families”** in their healthcare experiences.

“Facts bring us to knowledge, but stories lead to wisdom.”

Dr. Rachel Naomi Remen



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# Virtual Patient Engagement Network (VPEN) 2020/21 Annual Summary Report

## What matters to patients and families in their journeys through specialty services?

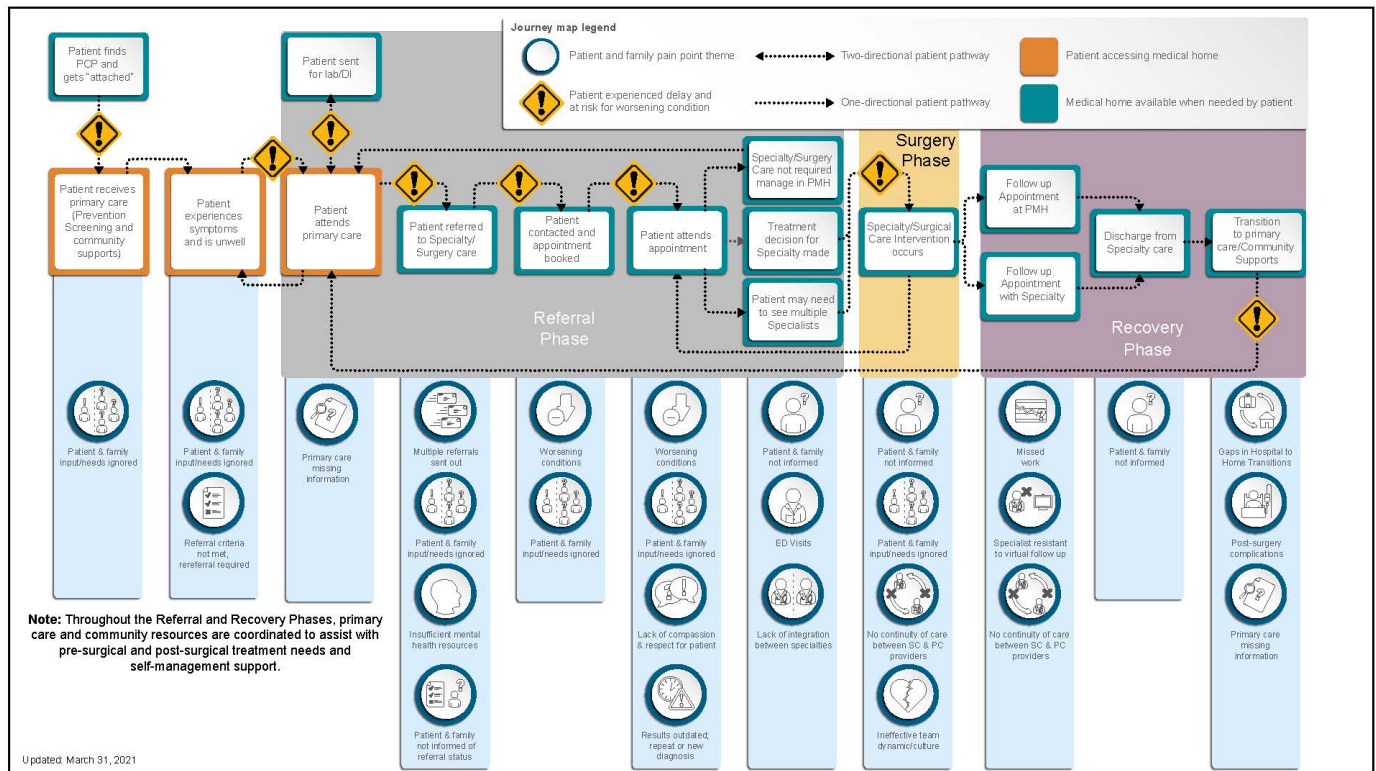
“The patient should be CEO of their healthcare”

To explore patients’ experiences with specialty service access, we recently asked fourteen patient and family advisors to map their journey through services like cardiology and orthopedics. The map itself depicts the flow in the health system, from the patient’s medical home in primary care, through referral to specialty services, to receiving specialty services, and then follow-up care in the medical home and community. Layering on pain points experienced by patients and family members in each stage of that journey brings the map to life, and puts a spotlight on the improvement opportunities that matter most to them.

Each advisor was interviewed individually, focusing on a recent specialty access experience of their choice, either as a patient or as a family member/caregiver. These conversations uncovered their experiences with wait times, trust, staying informed, shared decision-making, confidence that their needs were being met, empowerment to take on an active role in their health, and others. Strong themes emerged from this interview process, some arising consistently across the whole journey. In addition to harnessing each advisor’s individual story, it was important to represent their collective and common experiences visually on the journey map.

This patient journey map is now being used in the Alberta Surgical Initiative project, to help create a common understanding of the patient and family experience, and to ensure that what matters most to patients and families informs the improvement work being done.

Alberta Surgical Initiative: Patient journey visual with pain points and phases



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