

Three Integrated Clinical Care Teams from Canada Receive Global Recognition for Healthcare Excellence



Submitted by Colleen Strain, PhD, Scientific Manager at Abbott

Healthcare excellence can be challenging. Achieving healthcare excellence in a country as diverse as Canada requires substantial innovation, teamwork and strategic thinking to ensure patients across the country receive the care they need or hope to never need. Achieving these important and lofty goals requires collaboration across disciplines, novel thinking and a persistent drive to measurably impact the health of Canadians. For their commitment to patient care and extraordinary outcomes, three such clinical care teams in Canada were recognized across international organizations in partnership through the UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence award program.

Receiving a top global award is the “Kidney Check” program from Seven Oaks General Hospital lead by Paul Komenda, MD, Nephrologist, CDIC, AbdulRazaq Sokoro, PhD, Executive Director, Provincial Laboratory Operations, Shared Health, Barry Lavallee, MD, Manitoba Keewatinawi Okimakanak Inc., Adeera Levin, MD, Nephrologist, Can-SOLVE CKD Network, and Binh Nguyen, eQoL. Familiar to many as the keynote speaker from the 2020 CSCC conference, Dr. Komenda and his team strive to improve awareness, detection and treatment of chronic kidney disease (CKD), diabetes and hypertension in patients living in rural First Nations Communities in Northern Manitoba.

Since inception, Kidney Check has reached 11 First Nations Communities in Manitoba, resulting in more than 1,700 First Nations People opting-in for screening, of which, 1,168 patients have been identified as high-risk for CKD and subsequently linked to appropriate follow-up care. Importantly, Kidney Check also screens children and adolescents older than 10. Of the children screened, 21.8% had at least one risk factor for CKD identified, thus enabling an opportunity for early intervention and prevention or mitigation of downstream complications. These impressive results reinforce the importance of biomarker screening for preventative and routine health.

The Kidney Check program has now expanded to four additional provinces across Canada, further advancing their important outcomes and impressive recognition through the UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence award program.

West of Manitoba, at St. Paul’s Hospital in Vancouver, BC is another integrated clinical care team with recognition for healthcare excellence. This team sought to solve a common problem related to inpatient blood draws. As with many health systems, inpatients can experience automated and avoidable daily bloodwork. Upon comprehensive chart review, it was identified that approximately 30% of patients had months of identical daily bloodwork that was not deemed relevant to active care. Ultimately, Janet Simons, MD, Medical Director of Pre and Post Analytics, Laboratory Medicine, in partnership with Deborah Shaw, Unit Coordinator Education Coordinator, Mirjana Besir, Clinical Nurse Leader, Medicine Program, PHC, Astrid Levelt, Director, Medical Affairs at Providence Health Care, and Camille Ciarniello, BSN, LLB Director of Risk Management and Patient Safety for Providence Health Care sought to fundamentally change care through proactive policy improvements driven by laboratory insights.

Changes were enabled through process modifications and education via presentations at hospital grand rounds and to the Medical Advisory Committee. Policy changes subsequently mandated that daily orders could not repeat beyond 3 days without reassessment, thus reducing unnecessary testing and repeat orders. This change resulted in a 28% reduction in the number of patients undergoing daily phlebotomy for more than 10 consecutive days. This reduced patient risks of iatrogenic anemia, bleeding, hematoma and infection. With activation across the region, this care initiative could save a potential \$250,000 per year, while improving patient outcomes. Congratulations to Dr. Simons and her team.

The third integrated team of novel thinkers with recognition from the 2020 UNVANTS of healthcare excellence program was from Nova Scotia Health. The team of innovators sought to find a creative solution to a new problem- how to communicate COVID-19 results to patients in a manner that could maximize delivery and clinical resources during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. When the pandemic first hit, healthcare leaders recognized that the integral step of COVID-19 result communications would be challenging and could likely overwhelm capacity and resources if not optimized to meet the current demand. Consequently, Jamey Martell, *Director, Clinical Applications, Nova Scotia Health Information Management & Technology*, Amy MacDonald, *Manager of Healthy Communities, Public Health, Nova Scotia Health*, Pam Butler, *(Acting) Executive Director, Health Projects, Department of Health and Wellness, Province of Nova Scotia*, Don Doiron, *Manager, Pathology Informatics, Nova Scotia Health, Information Management & Technology*, Linda Plummer, *Director, Health Information Systems, Nova Scotia Health Information Management & Technology* developed an in-house application that enables email notification of negative COVID-19 results through a link to the Nova Scotia Health website. This consequently freed up resources for expedited communication of positive results by telephone.

These streamlined communications reduced the time to receive negative results to one day, reflecting an impressive 80% decrease in wait times. Additionally, an estimated 18,000 staff minutes over the course of 2 months have been saved, enabling optimization and re-direction of critical staff, while saving a conservatively estimated \$8,100 in only 2 months. Congratulations to Nova Scotia Health and to all those involved in this important and timely initiative.

It is evident that healthcare excellence comes in many forms and even more evident, is that innovation is occurring across Canada.



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L to R: Barry Lavallee, Paul Komenda, AbdulRazaq Sokoro, and Adeera Levin

Among the 24 sites with recognition this year, three teams were Canadian, making Canada the second most recognized country for teamwork and innovation in 2020. We are proud to see so many Canadians actively championing healthcare excellence and even more proud to know that they are being recognized for their valued efforts in achieving measurably better healthcare. We hope it inspires more care initiatives throughout Canada and across the globe. We also hope innovations such as these three innovative health systems help further engage healthcare teams to mobilize laboratory insights for measurably better health care.

To learn more about other sites who have achieved recognition with the UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence Award Program or to learn more details about the award program itself, visit www.univantshce.com. Let's continue to make Canada a top country in healthcare excellence.