

## CHARD: Referral resources at your fingertips

**D**uring the General Practice Services Committee's 2005 Professional Quality Improvement Days, the profession identified the need for an up-to-date directory to facilitate patient referrals to both specialists and other community-based services. The idea resonated with Dr David Attwell, a Victoria area family physician and former GPSC co-chair. Dr Attwell was frustrated by the lack of comprehensive and up-to-date information on community referral resources and set out to champion an innovative solution.

The Community Healthcare and Resource Directory (CHARD) began

*This article is the opinion of the GPSC and has not been peer reviewed by the BCMJ Editorial Board.*

as a 3-month pilot on Vancouver Island in 2009 with a focus on mental health and addiction. Physician and medical office assistant users tested an early version of the directory, where it received a very positive response, with users eager to see more resources from across BC. "It's one-stop shopping. All the information is right there. I don't just get a name and then have to find all of the contact information somewhere else," said one user.

Building on the success of the pilot, CHARD was launched province-wide and made available to all physicians in BC in April 2010. It now contains nearly 30 000 referral resources in the areas of cancer, cardiac, mental health and addiction, musculoskeletal, neurodegenerative, pallia-

tive, renal, and respiratory resources, comprising nearly 80% of all referral resources accessed by a family practice. In just 1 year the number of users has grown to over 1000 as physicians and MOAs continue to discover the many benefits of CHARD.

CHARD provides busy practices with a single, comprehensive source of information about referral resources both in their local area as well as across BC. Offered in an easy-to-use and fully searchable web-based format, up-to-date and accurate information is only ever a few clicks away. Patients benefit from receiving appropriate and timely referrals, while improving the providers' experience in delivering care and creating overall benefits to the health system.

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# CHARD

Community Healthcare and Resource Directory

*improving patient referrals*

## Finding referral resources just got easier

CHARD is a secure, web-based directory containing referral information on healthcare practitioners and services in BC

### ▶ Search CHARD to find

- Specialist physicians
- Health authority and other publicly funded programs and services
- Allied health professionals

### ▶ CHARD contains detailed information including

- Contact information including physician-only phone numbers
- Details on referral procedures and forms as well as patient eligibility criteria and instructions
- Practitioners and services accepting new patients

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**1-877-330-7322** or visit  
[www.info.chardbc.ca](http://www.info.chardbc.ca)



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For physicians, using CHARD has proven to be a valuable tool both in discovering local resources they may not have been aware of, as well as finding specialized resources for patients with complex clinical needs where an appropriate referral resource is not immediately known. Designed with physician workflow in mind, CHARD allows a user to specifically search for referral physicians, programs, and services, as well as a number of allied health professionals.

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Detailed information is designed to help users find the most appropriate referral resource. “It is the level of detail in CHARD that makes it so useful,” says Dori Garvin, a Kelowna-area MOA. “Most of the time you can get access to contact information, but you still have to figure out if the specialist will see the patient and how they want to receive the referral.” The detailed listings page in CHARD contains contact information, inclusion and exclusion criteria, a provider’s referral process, and other information needed to ensure a smooth referral process. The directory also provides access to electronic versions of provider referral forms, a feature often used by Ms Garvin: “Having all of the referral forms in one central place

saves a great deal of time. It also solves the problem of trying to make sure I have the most up-to-date form.”

As an additional tool to support GPs, CHARD is pleased to be one of the first directories to include those specialist physicians who have indicated they offer physician-to-physician telephone advice and patient management calls. This will help ensure that patients receive faster access to specialist advice through their GP and are seen by the most appropriate provider.

To ensure that it continues to be an effective and relevant tool for physicians and their delegates, several enhancements are also underway. The first is increasing the overall medical topics and allied health practitioners listed in CHARD. By March 2012, all remaining topic areas and applicable allied health professionals will be listed. Second, further alignment with physician workflow will soon see CHARD integrate with all PITO-approved EMR systems. This will offer both streamlined access to search the directory as well as the ability to retain information about the referral resource for the patient’s chart.

The creation of CHARD, built by physicians for physicians, is a collaborative solution representing GPSC’s commitment to develop and implement programs that increase family physician satisfaction and enhance support for primary care patients. As the medical and technological landscape continues to evolve, CHARD will continue to find new ways to innovate and ensure that physicians and their delegates can efficiently and effectively locate referral resources for their patients.

If you want to learn more about CHARD, including its many features and benefits, or for information about how to access CHARD, go to [www.info.chardbc.ca](http://www.info.chardbc.ca) or call 1 877 330-7322.

—**Brendan Abbott**  
**Manager, Business Solutions**  
**HealthLinkBC**

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competition for Research at Work funding typically closes in January or February, while Innovation at Work competitions typically occur twice a year. All applications are reviewed by scientific peer reviewers, and then by an internal relevance review committee and an external stakeholder advisory committee.

**Programs and partnerships**

WorkSafeBC’s Research Secretariat holds systematic review competitions on an as-needed basis, targeting specific issues of interest to WorkSafeBC. Systematic reviews, completed or in progress, include carpal tunnel/cubital tunnel syndrome in workers, bronchogenic carcinoma in asbestos-exposed workers, low back pain in workers, multiple sclerosis as a compensable consequence, and primary cancer of the skin.

During the past several years, the Research Secretariat has formed partnerships with workers’ compensation organizations in other jurisdictions across Canada to support innovative research that benefits all Canadian workers, and a unique partnership with the Centre for Health Services and Policy Research (CHSPR) at UBC to develop a comprehensive picture of health and wellness trends for BC’s workers.

**More information**

For more information about WorkSafeBC’s Research Secretariat, its programs, or results; or to apply for a grant, please call 604 244-6300, or e-mail [resquery@worksafebc.com](mailto:resquery@worksafebc.com), or visit [WorkSafeBC.com](http://WorkSafeBC.com) and click “Research” in the Quick Links menu.

—**Susan Dixon**  
**Manager, Knowledge Transfer,**  
**WorkSafeBC Research Secretariat**