

## PSP small-group learning sessions: A resource for practice improvement

In order to practise efficiently and provide the best possible care to patients, physicians need to participate in CME and practice-improvement learning opportunities that are both practical and meaningful to them and their patients. Content must be clinically relevant, effect positive change in how physicians practise, and improve patient health outcomes.

Traditionally doctors have participated in CME that delivers instructional objectives and uses specific learning resources.<sup>1</sup> This teaching style requires learners to participate in formal activities and its effectiveness is measured using set criteria.

In recent years the medical practice landscape has shifted significantly: patients are moving toward taking more responsibility for their own health, and the use of EMRs has become widespread. To accommodate this evolution and influence further positive change, physicians are seeking new CME opportunities that allow them to participate in the learning process by defining and identifying content that is meaningful to their practices.

In response to physicians' requests for innovative learning opportunities, the Practice Support Program (PSP) has introduced a new model of support: small-group learning sessions. This group education model accommodates natural learning styles<sup>1</sup> and focuses on facilitation of learning. Each local division of family practice works with its PSP regional support team coordinator to identify topics that reflect the local quality improvement needs. Physicians are

offered choices about what content is featured, and they are encouraged to identify the information they need based on opportunity, interest, or perceived gaps in care. Depending on the chosen content and facilitation methods, small-group learning sessions have been approved for Mainpro-C accreditation on a basis of one credit per hour.

Evidence shows that interactive sessions, either one-on-one or in a small group, are more likely to result in sustained practice change.<sup>2</sup> Teaching, mentoring, and coaching can be tailored to a small number of learners more easily than to larger groups, and cooperative, problem-based group learning emphasizes effective communication and interactive teamwork. Tailored with this evidence in mind, PSP learning session activities are self-directed and focus on physician-identified practice needs.

Small-group learning sessions provide an opportunity for doctors to discuss issues and innovations and to observe practices and procedures before adopting related changes.<sup>2</sup> While participating in small-group learning sessions physicians can:

- Explore and customize learnings.
- Plan for practice changes based on content.
- Discuss how to embed these changes into their practice workflow and to help enrich provider satisfaction.
- Test group learning content in a practice environment.
- Collect aggregated data and share information through a model of supporting reflective learning to ensure the improvements being implemented are sustainable and shared in supporting the physician's clinic or practice.

After a session doctors can receive

in-office support from a physician, MOA peer mentor, or PSP staff (regional support team coordinator). Regional support teams help guide doctors to use new knowledge and skills in their future activities. With coaching, regional support teams aim to:

- Support physicians in determining ways to embed practice change into clinical workflows.
- Illuminate the value in the active, action-based learning experience.
- Share successes and challenges and transfer knowledge to other physicians as appropriate.

With a goal of supporting sustainable practice changes and improvements, PSP will collect and evaluate aggregated data about the sessions (e.g., themes in topics, learnings, and outcomes) and share successes and experiences.

During July and August, 16 family physicians, 1 nurse, and 16 MOAs participated in four small-group learning sessions across the province, with more sessions planned for the fall. Topics included Med Access upgrade to maternity care, Profile EMR basics, EMR messaging and tasks, entering discrete data into an EMR, and more. The group sessions have been EMR related but small-group learning sessions are not limited to EMRs. It is anticipated that these sessions will evolve to include more emphasis on using the data in the EMR to inform practice improvement in specific clinical care areas.

To support a commitment for change, funding for small group learning sessions is available through regional support teams, and physicians can receive sessional payments for participating in the reflective continuous learning process. For more

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

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information on small-group learning sessions or other PSP services visit [www.pspbc.ca](http://www.pspbc.ca).

—Bruce Hobson, MD  
Practice Support Program

#### References

1. Fox RD, Bennett NL. Learning and change: Implications for continuing medical education. *BMJ* 1998;316:466-468.
2. Kalaian SA, Kasim RM. Synthesizing the effectiveness of small-group learning in STEM classes using multi-level meta-analysis methods. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-Western Educational Research Association, St. Louis, MO, 14 October 2009.

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## TRANSFUSION MEDICINE Online courses to 31 Mar 2016

The benefits and risks of blood transfusion are complex. Are you aware of the physician recommendations on blood transfusion recently released on Choosing Wisely Canada by the Canadian Societies for Transfusion Medicine, Hematology, Internal Medicine, and Palliative Care? Take the online course Transfusion Medicine for Physicians, and be confident you are making the decision to transfuse using the latest evidence-based information. Blood Transfusion—Less Is More is a 1-hour online course made up of six 10-minute modules with the flexibility to complete modules in one or multiple sittings. The course features interactive case studies highlighting important points common in daily clinical decision making, including accompanying references and resources to update and test practice knowledge in transfusion medicine. Target audience: emergency and family physicians, hospitalists, internists, residents, and surgeons. CME credits available. For additional information and online registration visit [www.pbco.ca](http://www.pbco.ca) or contact Sonia Chau at 604 675-3991, [schau@pbco.ca](mailto:schau@pbco.ca).

## CME ON THE RUN Various locations, 6 Nov–6 May (Fri)

CME on the Run sessions are held at the Paetzold Lecture Hall, Vancouver General Hospital, and there are opportunities to participate via videoconference from various hospital sites. Each program runs on Friday afternoons from 1–5 p.m. and includes great speakers and learning materials. Next session: 11 Dec (dermatology and allergy). Topics include new guidelines for introduction of foods, nail disorders—diagnosis and management, red spots—differential diagnosis of rashes; and many more.

Following sessions: 5 Feb (internal medicine); 8 Apr (infectious disease and travel); 6 May (MSK, sports and rheumatology). To register, and for more information, visit [www.ubccpd.ca](http://www.ubccpd.ca), call 604 875-5101, or e-mail [cpd.info@ubc.ca](mailto:cpd.info@ubc.ca).

## ONCOLOGY FOR PRIMARY CARE

### Vancouver, 20–21 Nov (Fri–Sat)

The BC Cancer Agency's Family Practice Oncology Network invites family physicians and primary care professionals to attend its annual Family Practice Oncology CME Day on 21 Nov and the preceding afternoon session, Oncology Imaging for Primary Care, on 20 Nov. Both are accredited by the College of Family Physicians of Canada and the BC Chapter for up to 10 Mainpro-M1 credits. Both sessions will take place at the BC Cancer Agency Research Centre in Vancouver and provide an effective way to learn about new oncology resources and support in BC. The event includes oncology updates on our most requested topics and case-based workshops. Register now at [www.fpon.ca](http://www.fpon.ca). For more information contact Jennifer Wolfe at [jennifer.wolfe@bccancer.bc.ca](mailto:jennifer.wolfe@bccancer.bc.ca) or 604 219-9579.

## LIVE WELL WITH DIABETES Vancouver, 20–22 Nov (Fri–Sun)

The additional half-day added for the 2014 conference was a great success, and we have continued it for this year! This year's agenda includes presentations designed for family physicians, allied health professionals, podiatrists, and other health care professionals who have an interest in recent advances in diabetes. Location: Sheraton Wall Centre. Featured speakers: Drs Dina Panagiotopoulos (type 2 diabetes in children); John Fleetham (sleep apnea and diabetes);