

Physician engagement in our health facilities

We hear the term “engagement” a lot these days, especially when it comes to our health care system. And there is good reason for that. We know from research (and from our own experiences) that we are in the best position to make a positive, meaningful difference for our patients when we all work together and are truly engaged—with each other, with our patients, with health authorities and government, and with our allied health professionals.

Doctors of BC has a history of engagement and collaboration that has seen success with the Divisions of Family Practice and a number of other committees. Now we are moving forward on an exciting, first-of-its-kind initiative that supports physicians working in health authority facilities.

Included in the 2014 Physician Master Agreement, this facility-based physician initiative offers us a unique opportunity to engage with health authorities, enhance the quality of service to our patients, and improve the work environment for physicians. Funding is being provided to incorporated medical staff associations (MSAs) to support physicians in identifying issues and priorities, speaking to their health authority, and hiring staff to support these activities. Similarly, health authorities will be able to seek opinions and advice from the MSA. Our goal is to support and improve the relationship with health authority leadership that allows early and meaningful input into issues that impact patients and doctors. This way we will see our facilities-based doctors gain a meaningful voice to improve patient care and their professional working environment.

We know this is not going to happen overnight. We have a big journey ahead of us. But I am pleased to report

that two pilot sites, Lions Gate Hospital in North Vancouver and University Hospital of Northern BC in Prince George, have been officially incorporated. Another 10 sites are in various stages of development.

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As the facilities engagement oversight group, the Specialist Services Committee has hired staff to support the continued rollout of this initiative. With an executive lead at the helm, teams are being assembled to work closely with each other, local physicians, and health authority leadership to ensure the success of every MSA. And we are hearing about interest

from many other sites around the province, with momentum growing every week.

I commend government and our health authorities for being willing to take on this journey with us. It is very encouraging that each health authority CEO has signed a memorandum of understanding to support this move toward greater engagement and collaboration with doctors. The goal is to have hired all support team staff and completed the incorporation process for dozens of MSAs by this time next year, as well as be meaningfully engaged in conversations with health authorities and be evaluating our progress.

We know that as this initiative grows and spreads throughout facilities in BC, engagement will vary from site to site and will be defined at a local level. Doctors on the front lines of health care see firsthand the problems and possible solutions and are in a great position to provide value and innovative ideas that can help shape our health care system to benefit our patients, our profession, and the health care system as a whole.

—Charles Webb, MBCChB
Doctors of BC President



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