
CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Partnering with health, social and community service organizations to build and implement a population health needs framework

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Introduction

In recent years, healthcare service planners and decisions makers in Alberta have received directives to utilize a population health approach when planning health services; however, a common understanding and a consistent approach to address population health needs did not exist. Healthcare service planning has traditionally been based on utilization of health services rather than looking broadly at the health needs of Albertans and their communities. This approach resulted in a narrow focus when planning: medical needs are prioritized at the expense of other health needs. This approach also led to challenges in working with other service organizations.

Aims Objectives Theory or Methods

To address these gaps, it was important to consider perspectives across health, social and community service organizations. A convergent mixed methods approach was used to co-develop an acceptable definition of population health needs and appropriate framework components to support service planning. A broad range of stakeholders were engaged through the following activities: an informal scoping review of grey and peer reviewed literature, key informant interviews across the continuum of healthcare and social service organizations, priority setting through Delphi techniques, and two online stakeholder engagement sessions with broad representation from across healthcare, academia, and community.

Highlights or Results or Key Findings

This multidisciplinary stakeholder engagement resulted in a common definition of population health needs, a Population Health Needs Framework for service planning and a User's Guide. The Framework and User's Guide are comprised of actionable strategies healthcare organizations can apply when planning in collaboration with community partners to better meet the needs of the populations they serve. The Framework is currently being implemented in several primary healthcare settings. One Primary Care Network is using the Framework in conjunction with community data and provider experiences to better understand the health needs of the Edmonton North community and ensure they are providing appropriate health services to the people who live there. Similarly, Alberta's northern communities have been utilizing the population health approach to bring together partners for service planning within 'health neighborhoods'. This work has

highlighted how taking a population health approach has become acceptable in the context of healthcare.

Conclusions

Collaborating across health and community sectors during service planning is not easy. The strategies and considerations provided in the Population Health Needs Framework guides joint service planning across the continuum of care, while shifting away from a medical focus towards wellness, to improve population health outcomes and support health equity.

Implications for applicability/transferability sustainability and limitations

There has been much interest across sectors and the organization of Alberta Health Services to apply this new Framework during service planning. Applicable across jurisdictions and scales of planning, this Framework presents the opportunity to address population health needs and improve the human health experience in a sustainable way.