CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Integrated primary care workforce planning in the City of Toronto: Co-development and operationalization of a fit-for-purpose planning toolkit

1st North American Conference on Integrated Care, Toronto, 4 - 7 October 2021

Sarah Simkin[1], Cynthia Damba, Ting Lim, Nathalie Sava, Ivy Lynn Bourgeault, Caroline Chamberland-Rowe

1: Canadian Health Workforce Network, Canada

Introduction

Regional planning capability is increasingly necessary to ensure that the healthcare needs of defined communities can be met. In the City of Toronto, disparities in access to integrated primary care provided the impetus for the development of a comprehensive Primary Care Strategy. The strategy, which was developed with patient and provider input, aimed to improve patient access to care, service integration, and system efficiency. Ontario Health Toronto recognized that achieving this was contingent upon adequately planning for future health workforce needs and that robust, regional-level workforce planning processes that include the developing Ontario Health Teams, would be necessary.

Aims Objectives Theory or Methods

The project goal was to co-develop and operationalize an evidence - informed toolkit for integrated, multi - professional, needs - based primary care workforce planning. Underpinning the approach is a health workforce systems framework that acknowledges the social, political, geographic, economic and technological contexts within which planning is situated. The toolkit includes qualitative tools that were used to conduct extensive consultations with key stakeholders and point-of-care providers to mobilize their substantial knowledge of the local primary care workforce and of community-level population health needs. The toolkit also includes a quantitative workforce planning model, which is being developed and operationalized in partnership with Ontario Health Toronto.

Highlights or Results or Key Findings

Our team adopted a participatory approach to build internal workforce planning capacity within Ontario Health Toronto, enabling the progressive adaptation and refinement of the toolkit through the first cycle of planning. The co-developed toolkit includes fit-for-purpose qualitative, descriptive processes and quantitative planning approaches that support high-quality health workforce planning activities. The iterative and interactive planning approach includes horizon scanning, scenario generation, workforce modeling, and policy analysis. To identify neighbourhoods in need

of additional resources, the quantitative model assesses the alignment of population health needs with workforce service capacity for all 140 neighbourhoods in the city from 2016 to 2026. Interactive dashboards enable local stakeholders to test scenarios relevant to planning in Toronto, including patient mobility, population and provider diversity, and population growth, to understand the impact of changing conditions. A scenario-based allocation step can be added to optimize alignment by shifting service to alternate providers or virtual care.

Conclusions

The co-developed fit-for-purpose approach to integrated primary care workforce planning addresses specific regional and Ontario Health Teams' planning challenges and will provide an essential evidence-base to facilitate equitable distribution of primary care human resources. It will establish open, transparent, ongoing partnerships, building capacity, and enhancing trust and buy-in amongst stakeholders.

Implications for applicability/transferability sustainability and limitations

This toolkit was designed to meet the needs of Ontario Health Toronto and would require adaptation for full transferability to other jurisdictions. The principles and processes are applicable across jurisdictions, but the technical assumptions are context-dependent and would require adjustment for unique stocks, flows, and policy levers within different systems.