

FALL 2016 ISSUE 5

HealthMatters



CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF PCNs



PIONEERING A NEW KIND OF HEALTHCARE
A MEDICAL HOME FOR LIFE
THREE DOCTORS REFLECT ON PCNS

TWO
FOUR
SIX

► Your *Health Matters*

Primary Care Networks (PCNs) were established in the Calgary area about 10 years ago to give people access to various health services, programs and health teams through their family doctors. *Health Matters* is published by the PCNs to give you more information about these services.

Today, PCNs work with teams of other health professionals, as well as offer programs such as Prescription to Get Active and Find-a-Doctor.

Health Matters, Fall 2016 Issue publication team:

Jennifer Allford, Keith Bradford, Terry Bullick,
Bart Goemans, Cori Leyte, Dr. Christine Luelo,
Jacquie Maurice, Amy Sawchenko, Chrissie Worth

Contributors:

Anne Georg, Jacqueline Louie, Jimi Scherer
Photos by: Trudie Lee Photography, Neil Zeller,
ingimage.com

We appreciate your feedback and article suggestions. Contact our editorial team at communications@mypcn.ca.

To find your PCN, visit mypcn.ca

- › Calgary West Central Primary Care Network
- › Calgary Foothills Primary Care Network
- › Highland Primary Care Network
- › Mosaic Primary Care Network
- › Calgary Rural Primary Care Network
- › South Calgary Primary Care Network

Pioneering a new kind of healthcare

Looking back to the beginning

BY ANNE GEORG

Eleven years ago, Marny Conlon arrived in Calgary to start as executive director of the new South Calgary Primary Care Network and headed straight to her office—the Tim Hortons on McKnight Boulevard. The coffee shop was the PCN's office for the next 18 months and where Conlon and her colleagues helped lay the groundwork for a new form of healthcare for Albertans.

Alberta's Primary Care Networks (PCNs) are designed to be patient-centred medical homes, places where family doctors offer patients seamless care integrated with other health services. PCNs base their care on people's needs in their communities and throughout every stage of their lives.

From humble beginnings to proven success

"We had humble beginnings," Conlon says. "The networks began with a federal grant, and

No one—not even the federal government—expected them to be the success they have become



Marny Conlon helped lay the groundwork for a new form of healthcare for Albertans – the Primary Care Network.

no one—not even the federal government—expected them to be the success they have become.”

Conlon says the three most important things to come out of PCNs are: physicians and the healthcare system working together toward a common goal; health professionals seeing a direct link between their contributions and patients’ improved health; and physicians gaining a sense of community through their PCN.

PCNs offer local solutions for the communities they serve. “I’ve always said a favourite hobby in south Calgary is having babies,” says Conlon. “So one of the first things we did was start our maternity care program for the young families in our area.”

Dr. Chris Gorrie helped set up the Calgary West Central PCN. At first, he and a small team met in a colleague’s basement before they moved to a rented room in the Westside Recreational Centre. Gorrie recalls trying to get skeptical doctors to join the primary care model.

“We were like telephone solicitors,” he says. “We had a heck of a time getting people to join us.” But join they did. “From beating bushes in 2006, Calgary West Central PCN now has 450 doctors, 329,000 patients and 130 support staff—all from a handful of doctors eating sandwiches in a colleague’s family room.”

The teams creating the PCNs were adamant on three points: what’s best for the patients would be the motivation behind all decisions; PCNs would address local challenges in their area; and PCNs would be sustainable, starting small and building on that success.

“PCNs are an Alberta solution,” says Dr. June Bergman, one of the people who helped establish PCNs in the Calgary area.

PCNs are an Alberta solution

“Physicians came together to improve conditions so they could better serve their patients,” she says. “I am proud to have been there from the beginning.”

A medical home for life

Three people share their experiences

BY JAQUELINE LOUIE

PHOTOS BY NEIL ZELLER

Primary Care Networks (PCNs) provide people with ongoing, team-based care that's anchored by a family doctor and a medical home, a headquarters for all health concerns, throughout every stage of life. Three patients explain how their PCN has helped improve their health.

Jason Cheever

Jason Cheever lost 60 pounds with guidance and support from the Calgary West Central Primary Care Network.

"It was surprisingly much easier than I thought it would be," says Cheever, 57.

It's good motivation

He lost the weight by following a healthy eating plan. "I never thought about calories. Eating healthier food was enough for me to lose all this weight and exercising decreased my hunger."

It all began in 2012, when Cheever's doctor, Dr. Indu Khosla, diagnosed high blood pressure and arthritis in his knee. She recommended using the PCN to help him eat healthy, be more active and lose weight. At the time he weighed 317 pounds.

Margot Bergevin, a PCN nurse, advised him on healthy eating, hydration and active living and discussed his actions and goals with him.

"It's good motivation," Cheever says. He now walks 45 minutes a day, six days a week, outdoors or on a treadmill and is aiming to weigh 215 pounds. "It's a lot easier having somebody helping you."



With help from his PCN, Jason Cheever found losing weight "surprisingly much easier" than he thought it would be.



Deb Jensen of Strathmore says her PCN “helped set me on the right track to better health.”

Deb Jensen

Deb Jensen says taking health classes through the Calgary Rural Primary Care Network in Strathmore was a life changer.

“It really helped in every aspect of my life,” she says.

The more classes I took, the better I felt

Dr. Emile Muller, Jensen’s family doctor, referred her to a PCN program in 2008 after diagnosing her with Type 2 diabetes. In 2014, she was diagnosed with lung cancer.

Jensen, 63, has taken a range of classes through the PCN: a diabetes education program; an exercise class for people with chronic health issues; a walking class; a yoga class; a quit-

smoking class; and a class about food triggers, as well as a chronic disease and chronic pain classes.

“I jumped right in,” Jensen recalls. “The more classes I took, the better I felt.”

With help from registered nurse Dori Lee, Jensen learned to use a pedometer and work with her local pharmacist to keep track of her different medications.

“The Primary Care Network can help with so many areas that doctors might not have time to look at, such as the exercise program and the eating properly program,” Jensen says. “My PCN has been a lifesaver for me. It’s helped set me on the right track to better health.”

Britt Fowler

Three years ago, when Britt Fowler was pregnant for the first time, she turned to the South Calgary Primary Care Network for answers. Fowler’s family physician, Dr. Nasim Karim, referred her to the PCN’s Maternity Care program.

“When you’re pregnant you always have concerns,” says Fowler, 28, who also went to the clinic for her second pregnancy. “The staff were great. They’re friendly, and they’re very accommodating.”

Fowler appreciated the clinic’s organization. “Everything is on file, so every time you go in for an appointment, staff have the whole history of your pregnancy,” she explains. “You have so many questions and they take the time to answer every question.”



When she was pregnant, Britt Fowler found answers to all her questions at her PCN.

2006 2016

▶ Three family doctors reflect on PCNs

Dr. Jessica Orr
Calgary Foothills PCN

"(Going from) doctors managing patients to clinical pharmacists and clinical nurses partnering with patients to manage their chronic illness together has been a huge shift. There is a definite sense of patients taking charge of their illnesses under this guidance. Doctors are still aware and involved in patients' care, but team members have much more time to work with patients, help them learn about their hypertension, diabetes or cholesterol and help manage their illnesses and follow up on their progress."

Dr. Phillip van der Merwe
Calgary West Central PCN

"Alberta is a leader in primary health care reform in this country. We have a ways to go, but we are doing something pretty fantastic here. Team-based care gives the patient the ability to access the right person for the right problem at pretty much the right time. I don't always have the expertise or time to counsel somebody about their condition. If it's a mental health issue, then it's better to have a psychologist do that. When we're in a team practice, we can surround our patients with the appropriate care. It's quite a phenomenal improvement."

Dr. John Coppola
Calgary West Central PCN

"Over my 30-plus-year career, I've seen medical charts go from being on recipe cards and paper and, in the past 10 to 15 years, to electronic medical records. These records and the provincial electronic record, Alberta Netcare, have transformed the collection, use and sharing of clinical information to improve care across the continuum. The next step is to use this rich source of data for proactive management of patients, healthcare service delivery planning, research, quality improvement and the professional development of healthcare providers."

'06

'16

Mosaic PCN

62 physicians
+ 68,750 patients
2008 (first year)



297 physicians
+ 303,809 patients

South Calgary PCN

49 physicians,
12 clinics
+ 91,152 patients



224 physicians,
49 clinics
+ 207,743 patients

Calgary West Central PCN

83 physicians
+ 69,000 patients



460 physicians
+ 329,000 patients

Calgary Foothills PCN

96 physicians
+ 107,204 patients



452 physicians
+ 370,000 patients

Highland PCN

23 physicians
+ 30,487 patients
2007 (first year)



58 physicians
+ 63,580 patients

Calgary Rural PCN

17 physicians
+ 68,769 patients



135 physicians
+ 108,383 patients



Thank you
Calgary and
area for
10
great years!

 

PrimaryCare
Networks
CALGARY AND AREA

