

Health Sciences North 2023 Annual Meeting

Report from the Chair,
Patient and Family Advisory Council

Lauri Petz



Health Sciences North
Horizon Santé-Nord

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It's my pleasure to present to you the advancements that the Patient and Family Advisory program has made over the past year and to highlight HSN and the HSN Research Institute in their continued commitment to partnering with patients and families to integrate their voice and perspective into how they deliver care and services.

HSN believes that having patients as part of their team will lead to better health outcomes, and greater patient and family satisfaction.

I became involved with the Patient and Family Advisory program nine years ago after my diagnosis and treatment for cancer at the then Northeast Cancer Centre. I was cared for with compassion and skill. However, through my journey, I felt that the patient voice needed to be heard to change the process of navigating a somewhat intimidating system where communication was at times assumed. I saw a poster promoting the program and I made the call to hopefully assist others like myself to have an easier time in navigating their care journey. At that time, I was so impressed that HSN actually wanted to hear from patients. Over the years, I have appreciated the voice I have had at all of the different areas in which I have been involved. I have been at tables with frontline staff, doctors, nurses, managers, directors and senior leadership, at both the local and provincial level.

There is one theme that runs through all of the work that I've been privileged to be involved in: caring and compassion to make a positive difference for patients at all levels. This has not been easy in this changing world coming out of COVID. Everyone I have met through numerous Microsoft Teams meetings shows resilience, tenacity and optimism to continue moving forward. The constant juggling that happens within HSN's walls to find space where there isn't any, update a computer system that sorely needs it and provide care to patients who have ever changing needs is admirable. As Patient and Family Advisors, I like to think that we make this easier by providing advice and suggestions.

In my experience as a Patient and Family Advisor at both the regional and provincial level, the patient experience has not been as embedded in daily operations the way that HSN has made it. The organization should be commended for taking a leading role in making the voice of the patient a priority.

HSN knows that when it comes to people-centered care, one size does not fit all. Patient and Family Advisors provide a voice that represents all patients and families of patients who receive care at HSN. Our perspectives help HSN to reflect on what is important to patients and our partnership helps to create a better healthcare system. Although HSN's approach and methods of engagement continue to evolve, embedding people-centred care within all levels of the organization continues to be a focus.

The 2019-2024 Strategic Plan was developed in consultation with patients and families. I would like to highlight a few examples of how HSN and HSNRI have partnered with patients and families for each of the five key goals over the past year.

In alignment with our key goal to be **Patient and Family Focused**, HSN continues to partner with Patient and Family Advisors as the organization navigates through the accreditation process to ensure that standards are integrated into every day practice. Patient and Family Advisors continue to act as members of patient safety committees such as the Falls Prevention Strategy Committee, where their voice has played an integral role in co-designing services, policies, work standards, educational materials and have helped to inform improvement initiatives.

The Patient Relations team at HSN deepens the level of patient engagement by referring potential patient and family partners to our Patient and Family Advisory Program and working with patients and families to share their stories in-person or in writing with members of the Quality Committee of the Board.

In alignment with our key goal to be **Digitally Enabled**, the Shirley and Jim Fielding Northeast Cancer Centre partnered with members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and Patient and Family Advisors in their ongoing efforts to enhance equity and inclusiveness in cancer screening. Patient and Family Advisor involvement continues as the team works to develop an animated video series aimed at providing education for the screening of Trans People in the Ontario Breast Screening Program.

The Indigenous Health Team at HSN is leading work to identify and address priority health concerns and health equity gaps for Indigenous patients and their families as we make progress with our key goal of being **Socially Accountable**. HSN partnered with patients, families and Patient and Family Advisors to implement Indigenous self-identification at the point of registration. HSN also sought expressions of interest from across the Northeast region, including Patient and Family Advisors, to become a member of an Indigenous Health Advisory Council to help guide program and service delivery for Indigenous Peoples at HSN.

In alignment with our key goal to **Support and Develop Our People**, the Workplace Violence Prevention Committee continues to benefit from the active participation of Patient and Family Advisors. Their feedback contributed to designing a new Patient Violence Risk Assessment process that allows for the ongoing evaluation of a patient's level of risk of violence throughout their hospital stay. In December, training and communication materials developed in partnership with Patient and Family Advisors were made available to managers, medical staff and employees, promoting the new process to enhance staff and patient safety.

In alignment with our key goal to strengthen our **Academic and Research Impact**, HSN and HSNRI continue to be active participants in the Canadian Remote Access Framework for Clinical Trials project. This is a new model for doing research that is designed to bring clinical trials to remote and rural patients. This project is a collaboration between HSN, HSNRI, the Timmins and District Hospital, the Sault Area

Hospital, Roche Canada, the Canadian Cancer Clinical Trials Network and other external partners. It involves “Proof of Concept” testing to apply this model to a drug trial. The Patient and Family Advisor attached to this work has been instrumental in bringing a patient and family perspective to monthly steering committee meetings at our centre and through participation with other Advisors across Canada in sharing experiences and expertise to help bring research to remote patients. Although the proof-of-concept phase of this project wrapped up in March 2023, HSN and HSNRI have plans to apply this model to other research studies with the invaluable support from patient and family advisors.

As my first year concludes as the Chair of the Patient and Family Advisory Council, I want to express my sincere thanks and gratitude for the opportunity to work with this council and the staff and leaders at HSN. We all work and volunteer from the perspective of our lived experience. It has been an honour to chair a council that brings diverse voices and commitment to assist HSN in its quest to continue to put the patient at the centre of everything it does. It has also been an honour to meet and participate in meetings with hardworking, dedicated staff and leaders who only want to do what is best for patients. On behalf of the Patient and Family Advisors, we would like to thank Dominic Giroux in particular for his ongoing support of always ensuring that the patient voice is constantly heard and we wish him all the best in his new role in Ottawa.

Let me conclude by also acknowledging the members of the Patient and Family Advisory Council who served with me this past year:

Andrea Fortin – 2022-2023- Vice Chair
Carla Bossart-Pletzart
Monica Dorion
Lianne Dupras
Darlyn Hansen
Ann Matte
Rylee Restoule
Julie Sabourin
Hom Shrestha
Courtney Skuro

There are many challenges ahead as we emerge from the pandemic. With sound leadership and a priority put on the patient voice, HSN is well positioned to meet those challenges. Our collective focus and passion on quality care for our patients and families continues to be our driving force as we work together with HSN staff and leadership well into the future.

Thank you.