

Health Sciences North 2019 Annual General Meeting

Report from the Co-Chair,
CEO Patient and Family Advisory Council
Jessica Grenier



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Horizon Santé-Nord

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Health Sciences North has a strong history of partnering with patients and families to improve health care quality.

As a committed organization, this priority continues to progress and change.

In the summer months of 2018, HSN reached out to patient and family advisors to hear their feedback on improvements that could be made to the program.

Increasing partnership opportunities, communication and visibility were identified as areas of primary concern.

Improving partnership opportunities began in September, with the CEO Patient and Family Advisory Council seeing renewal of the majority of its members.

New CEO PFAC members (Madeleine Sauve, Bradley Rietze, Leslie Steel, Lauri Petz, Debbie Rainville, Donna Humbert and Betty Lauzon) in partnership with senior leaders, were consulted and involved in developing the organization's Quality Improvement Plan, the 2019-2024 HSN/HSNRI Strategic Plan, Patient Experience Reports, readiness for the accreditation process, as well as other policies throughout the organization.

The Health Sciences North Research Institute (HSNRI) continued to partner with us to help understand the patient experience and ensure the patient voice is being heard in the development and delivery of services.

In November, participants from a variety of clinical trials were invited to a focus group designed to review their experiences as participants in research.

The findings helped to determine where strengths and weaknesses existed in the patient experience and identified areas of opportunity for improvement specifically related to communication and education.

In February, HSN and HSNRI launched its 2019-2024 Strategic Plan.

Julie-Anne Bergeron, a member of the Patient and Family Advisory Council, did an outstanding job, serving as one of the masters of ceremonies for the event.

Patient and Family Advisors were heavily involved in the planning process, with members serving on the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, as well as during the consultation and validation phases, allowing them the opportunity to offer their thoughts on what the future of health care should look like in Northeastern Ontario.

Personally, being a member of the HSN Strategic Planning Steering Committee was very rewarding.

I attended a brainstorming session, the Speaker Series talks and attended two internal focus groups.

Throughout the entire process, HSN gave patient and family advisors the opportunity to provide valuable feedback and participate in key areas of development, ensuring patient care remains a top priority for the organization.

I appreciate having the opportunity to be involved and feel the Strategic Plan will move us towards even higher standards of patient care.

In May, Lianne Dupras took part in Cancer Care Ontario's (CCO) Spring Planning Day in Toronto.

This is an annual event where Clinical Council Members, Clinical Leads, Quality Leads, Senior Leadership and Patient and Family Advisors gather to discuss and brainstorm around areas in the health care system that have been identified as needing improvement.

This year's priority areas for presentation and discussion included: clinician wellness and burnout, healthy foods in hospitals, and First Nation, Inuit, Metis and Urban Indigenous Cancer Strategy Plan Development and Regional Engagement.

Lianne was grateful for having had the opportunity to participate, knowing that her recommendations would help plan future work for Cancer Centers in Ontario.

The partnership opportunities mentioned above are only a few examples of the important work that patient and family advisors have been involved in.

Patient advisors were also involved in high level operations of the organization.

They served on hiring committees for two Senior Vice-Presidents, the Chief Nursing Executive, the VP Academic and Research Impact and the Associate VP of Clinical Services to name a few.

Having their voice on these interview panels helped ensure that the candidates' vision aligns with HSN's key goal to be patient and family-focused.

Patient and family advisors have also been actively involved in continuing to advance the work of safety and quality initiatives across the organization.

For example, we have seen increases in Medication Reconciliation on admission, which is a priority at HSN.

The coming together of Physicians, Pharmacists, Nurses, Clinical and Administrative Leaders along with Cathy DiPietro and Jane Keown, some of our dedicated Patient and Family Advisors, has supported this improvement work.

Communication and visibility of the Patient and Family Advisors was also enhanced as we worked collaboratively with staff to include the patient and family voice when delivering Patient and Family-Centered Care content to new staff members at General Orientation Sessions.

New staff members had the opportunity to hear what was important to patients and their families when receiving care at HSN through the eyes of patient advisor Charles Ketter.

The impact to new staff was powerful and was recommended for future sessions.

Patient Advisors were also actively involved in helping to facilitate “Living Healthy” community workshops – Chronic Pain Self-Management, Powerful Tools for Caregivers, and Cancer – Thriving and Surviving.

This past year, we strengthened the voice of patients and their families at HSN through the continued practice of patient storytelling.

We have focused on creating more “live storytelling moments” at the Quality Committee of the Board and at public events and educational offerings.

Patients and families who have shared their stories have indicated that this opportunity is rewarding as they are sharing stories to inspire change and it’s what motivates them to continue to partner with HSN.

The Program has made some great strides this year. HSN recognizes that there is still work to be done.

Patient and family advisors want to know more about one another, what projects they are working on, how their voice has made an impact on patient care, and what can they do differently to help improve partnerships throughout the organization.

In closing, I would like to dedicate this year to a former member of the PFA program who has passed on.

Sandy (Rufus) MacDonald was an active member of the program since September 2012.

His involvement included membership on the CEO Patient and Family Advisory Council, improvement work related to finding financial efficiencies within our operations, as well as the patient relations process and patient reported outcomes.

He also brought the patient perspective to interview panels, focus groups and program councils.

The following quote from Sandy MacDonald clearly explains the true meaning of a patient advisor:

I became a Patient Advisor, because my spouse and daughter, who are both healthcare workers, thought it would be a positive experience. In the role, I can utilize my past care experience, as well as incorporate development skills with respect to the ongoing evolution of HSN. I experienced excellent support when my wife was passing away from cancer a number of years ago, and when I went through my own cancer journey.

It is humbling and deeply satisfying to know that your actions can have a profound, positive impact on even just a small part of the world. It is an experience that will challenge and change your own values and lifestyle.

On behalf of all of my fellow Patient and Family Advisors, thank you all.