

Advocating for Continuity

All members of the healthcare team are encouraged to promote and advocate the value of continuity to patients, to colleagues within their clinics, in the community, and within the health system.

Recognize and Understand the Value

- Gain familiarization with benefits, value, recommendations and related evidence.
- Foundational principles:
 - Relational continuity is defined as the ongoing, trusting therapeutic relationship between a patient and a primary care physician and their team, where the patient sees this primary care physician the majority of the time.
 - Continuity has been shown to improve health outcomes, decrease mortality, lead to better quality of care, reduce healthcare costs, increase patient and provider satisfaction, and lead to fewer ER visits and hospital admissions.
 - The longitudinal, trusting relationship between the patient and their primary care physician and team must be central to all coordination and information sharing as care delivery extends across the system.
 - Care delivery processes should allow for the transfer of relevant information between multiple care providers and locations, with good coordination and handoffs of care in a way that is consistent and flexible to meet patient needs, preferences and values.
- Resources
 - TOP Relational Continuity CPG
 - TOP Evidence Summary – Value of Continuity

Opportunities for Advocacy

Local PCN/clinic Level

- Influence the uptake and spread of improving continuity in your practice and/or PCN.
- Engage colleagues and team members in understanding via conversation, sharing information, goal setting and improvement efforts.
- Seek to develop and test innovative ideas for improving continuity together.
- Engage patients in conversations about value of continuity and how they can contribute and be part of advocacy for continuity.

Zonal Level

- Guide changes related to referrals to specialty care and hospital to home transitions that focus on continuity.
- Engage in opportunities to participate in successful system partnerships for effective project planning for service delivery that focuses on continuity.

Provincial Level

- Represent Alberta's landscape by communicating value of continuity and principles across organizational and cultural boundaries.
- Navigate the provincial decision-making process while advocating for continuity.
- Coordinate and work with system partners in the context of the broader health care system to drive partnerships and projects that promote continuity.