

# The role of physician engagement and practice facilitation specialists in building highly effective interprofessional primary care teams

Dr. Sundeep Banwatt (Clinical Director), Andrew Bilton (Executive Director), Sathuja Sivalogarajah (Manager, Engagement & QI), & Kritika Kuttiyappan (Engagement Specialist)  
CarePoint Health – Engagement Team

Background	Strategies	Feedback
<p>CarePoint Health (CPH) has affiliated with 80+ family physicians in Mississauga who operate under various payment enrollment models (PEM), including, FFS, FHG, and FHO, through an affiliation agreement. This connects them and their patients to a coordinated, comprehensive team of IHPs, who act as an extension of the family physician, that collaboratively delivers holistic care by addressing patients' physical health, mental health, and social determinants of health.</p> <p>The model of care CPH offers focuses on achieving the Quintuple Aim (patient experience, population health, reducing costs to healthcare system, well-being of care team, and health equity). Practice facilitation fosters team collaboration and ensures the physician is actively involved in the approach.</p> <p>To establish a highly functioning primary care team, changes in practice are a necessity and is crucial to establishing team cohesion that incorporates physicians through dedicated resources for physician change management, practice facilitation, and engagement.</p>	<p>The consistent touchpoints throughout the year ensure physicians feel well-supported from the point of affiliation and onwards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>1:1 engagement offering change management and technical support</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ 146 visits with physicians in 2022-2023 FY</li></ul></li><li>▪ <b>Organizing and offering subsidized CME events</b></li><li>▪ <b>Open house to connect physicians to CPH team members</b></li><li>▪ <b>Hosting virtual Bi-Monthly Town Hall</b></li><li>▪ <b>Sharing regional supports available and supporting with onboarding</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Including: OceanMD, HRM, SCOPE, &amp; OneLink resources</li></ul></li><li>▪ <b>Coordinate a Physician Advisory Council</b> comprised of family physicians affiliated with CPH across various PEM and regions within Mississauga</li><li>▪ <b>Leveraging digital communications to share program and service updates</b></li></ul>	<p>Having the engagement team, including CPH's Clinical Director, easily accessible to the physicians allows for questions or concerns to be addressed in a timely manner. Physicians have expressed their gratitude for being able to touch base with an engagement team member for timely support as needed.</p> <p>According to a survey conducted among affiliated physicians,</p> <div style="background-color: #6aa84f; color: white; padding: 10px; border-radius: 10px; text-align: center;"><b>91%</b> reported that their patients' needs were met.</div> <div style="background-color: #3498db; color: white; padding: 10px; border-radius: 10px; text-align: center;"><b>91%</b> stated that their affiliation with CPH has improved their work.</div>
<p><b>Aims &amp; Objective</b></p> <p>Practice facilitation to increase physician engagement is necessary to foster a sense of collaboration between providers. By nurturing this engagement, healthcare organizations, such as CPH, not only optimize their operational efficiencies but also cultivate a culture of excellence that positively impacts patient care. Additionally, focused practice facilitation and engagement are proven to be successful in promoting a learning-focused culture, improving the work environment, and enhancing teamwork.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>CPH has integrated physician engagement and facilitation as an essential role within the team.</p> <p><b>Responsibilities:</b></p> 	<p><b>Key Drivers of Success</b></p> <p><b>Working with Time Constraints</b></p> <p>The team has limited time to interact with physicians to offer practice facilitation to its fullest extent. Priorities are determined ahead of time to ensure that the little time that is available is being used to support and share appropriately.</p> <p><b>Overcoming Information Overload</b></p> <p>To ensure that physicians are not inundated with an excess of information from CPH, it is crucial that we are mindful with our communication efforts – particularly, our electronic communications. There is a need to maintain an effective and focused approach when determining information worth sharing.</p> <p><b>Prioritizing a Tailored Approach</b></p> <p>The needs of physicians vary due to different PEM, the neighbourhood they are in, and the patients they support. While physicians understand that working with our team can improve efficiencies within their practice, it is common for barriers to be present that limit the degree of involvement Ye et al.. However, understanding the unique challenges that affiliated physicians face through relationship building, allows for the team to find creative solutions to best support them.</p>	<div style="background-color: #f0e68c; color: black; padding: 10px; border-radius: 10px; text-align: center;"><b>97%</b> reported that CPH communicates about patients in a timely manner.</div> <div style="background-color: #3498db; color: white; padding: 10px; border-radius: 10px; text-align: center;"><b>93%</b> have access to HRM to receive information from CPH.</div> <div style="background-color: #6aa84f; color: white; padding: 10px; border-radius: 10px; text-align: center;"><b>77%</b> found in-person meetings with the engagement team valuable in helping understand programs &amp; services.</div> <div style="background-color: #3498db; color: white; padding: 10px; border-radius: 10px; text-align: center;"><b>76%</b> agreed the engagement team provided the necessary supports to implement digital tools.</div> <div style="background-color: #6aa84f; color: white; padding: 10px; border-radius: 10px; text-align: center;"><b>93%</b> agreed that the engagement team addressed questions and concerns in a timely manner.</div> <div style="background-color: #f0e68c; color: black; padding: 10px; border-radius: 10px; text-align: center;"><b>87%</b> felt supported and heard during interactions with the engagement team.</div>
		<p><b>Monitoring &amp; Evaluation</b></p> <p>There is a need for continued focus on physician engagement and practice facilitation and how this role can advance the broader primary care transformation work required within OHTs, including supporting the development of Primary Care Networks. CPH will continue to collect feedback from its affiliated physicians on the impacts of practice facilitation and evaluate uptake of key priorities.</p>

"As a Fee For Service Family Physician it has been a great experience to be connected with the team at CPH. Engagement staff are knowledgeable, responsive, and readily available to update on new services and facilitate communication".

Dr. Susan Reece  
Affiliated with CPH since 2019

## References

1. Ye J, Woods D, Bannon J, Bilaver L, Kricke G, McHugh M, Kho A, Walunas T. Identifying Contextual Factors and Strategies for Practice Facilitation in Primary Care Quality Improvement Using an Informatics-Driven Model: Framework Development and Mixed Methods Case Study. JMIR Hum Factors. 2022;9(2):e32174. doi: 10.2196/32174