

Edmonton Southside Primary Care Network Fast Facts

Vision statement

To be a nationally recognized leader in the development and delivery of primary care health services.

Mission statement

- To improve the quality of life of our patients and care providers through the innovative, professional and compassionate delivery of health promotion and disease prevention services to our patient population in the primary care setting.

About Edmonton Southside Primary Care Network

- Established in 2005 through a tri-partite agreement by the Alberta Medical Association, Alberta Health and Wellness and Alberta Health Services.
- Is an extension of a family physician's services.
- Provides comprehensive family medicine through multi-disciplinary teams that include physicians, nurses, dietitians, social workers, respiratory therapists and an exercise specialist.
- Easier access to primary care with professional health teams, physicians and patients in clinics and under one roof.
- Focuses on health promotion, disease and injury prevention, and care of patients who are medically complex or who have chronic health conditions.
- Works with 138 family physicians in 30 clinics.
- Is one of 40 primary care networks in Alberta, which are supported by the Primary Care Initiative.
- Offers workshops in mental health, geriatrics, prenatal care, exercise, healthy eating and weight management.

Impact of primary care networks

Our primary care network

- Emergency room visits from seniors have been reduced by five per cent after they receive services from Edmonton Southside PCN.
- Diabetics receiving care within Edmonton Southside PCN have better lab results than the overall Edmonton diabetic population.

Primary care networks province-wide¹

- Greater patient satisfaction with respect to access to family physicians.
- PCN patients visit the ER 11.5 per cent less than non-PCN patients.
- Patients are screened more for health promotion and injury prevention.

¹Source: Primary Care Initiative Evaluation: Summary Report, Final Report, April 29, 2011, R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Edmonton Southside Primary Care Network
#200, 9808 - 42 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T6E 5V5
780.395.2626

www.edmontonsouthsidepcn.ca



Updated October 2011

WHAT EXACTLY IS PCN-DELIVERED CARE?

● A physician's perspective

Dr. Denis Vincent vividly recalls his trepidation in 2005 when he joined the PCN. "I was thinking we would be closely watched from a quality-control perspective, and I afraid we'd all be forced to do the same kind of work and move into a certain style of clinic."

Six years later, those fears have never materialized — and Denis is now so satisfied in a PCN environment that he doubts he will ever return to traditional family practice. The biggest draw? A return to the intimate, whole-community approach to medicine that he used to enjoy during his 10-year stint in rural practice.

"In rural practice I knew all the practitioners in the community, and they all knew my patients," he explains, "but that all disappeared when I moved to Edmonton. I began to feel very isolated from the rest of the system, and it affected patient care."

Denis says joining a PCN has allowed him to recreate the practice qualities he missed — and the impact on patient care is striking. "I can now manage cardiovascular risk and diabetes much better, because our nurses can provide immediate education and ensure patients are closely followed."

The benefits to physicians are also important. "As practitioners, we were able to sit down and decide which services and practice improvements were most important to us. My practice is less stressful now, and I am working more quickly and more efficiently. And yes, that has translated into financial rewards for me as well — I'm not afraid to tell other physicians that."

● A patient's perspective

When asked how the PCN has affected patient care, Dr. Rick Spooner is quick to point out his unique position as the patient of a physician within the Edmonton Southside PCN. "Yes, I actually make appointments to see the nurse at my family physician's clinic," he explains, "and often I can get a same-day appointment with the nurse."

Rick says the nurse follows care protocols to guide her work and communicates regularly with his doctor, who usually pops his head in during the visit just to say hello. "She is an excellent nurse and knows exactly what she is talking about. Not every patient can make that determination, but I can attest to her skill and qualifications."

This style of team-based care is a big change from the days when the work of nurses and other providers was tightly restricted — and it takes a significant shift in expectations to make it work. "The change came about only when we accepted that we could trust registered nurses to make medical judgments on our patients' behalf," explains Rick. "And we couldn't do that until we entrusted the PCN with hiring the right nurses, ensuring they are appropriately trained, and overseeing their work."

Speaking as a physician now, Rick says there is a growing relationship of trust between him and his own PCN nurse. On a daily basis he reviews the records of each patient she sees and the clinical decisions she makes, leaving him considerably more time to look after complex patient visits. "My nurse knows I'm not going to leave her twisting in the wind, and I know she will never go off on her own and imperil a patient," he says. "These are our patients, and we are both responsible for their care."