

# Strategic Health Networks in Newfoundland and Labrador

## Practice Points

1. Since the release of Health Accord NL, Newfoundland and Labrador's health system has been in a significant transformation phase. This includes a shift towards a proposed Learning Health and Social System (LHSS). A LHSS is supportive of a person-centered focus, shifts to preventative and outcomes-based models of care, embraces digital and technology enablers, advances innovative approaches that drive improvements in quality of care and access to services, and supports the achievement of outcomes of the Quintuple Aim for Health Care Improvement.
2. One of the proposed integration and transformation mechanisms to building a LHSS are Strategic Health Networks (SHNs). SHNs are interprofessional groups with a provincial scope and mandate to help drive the achievement of targeted, measurable, and sustainable clinical and operational improvements in health outcomes and service delivery. They are built around clinical, social, or operational areas that may span the continuum of care or multiple service areas.
3. A SHN is led by a Medical Lead and Program Director. Each SHN will have a VP of Transformation (Health Systems or Well-being) executive sponsor who will ensure that activities of the network are aligned with the transformation priorities identified within Health Accord NL and the strategic priorities of NL Health Services.

## Results



Figure 1. Mandate of a Strategic Health Network

Table 1. Mandate of a Strategic Health Network

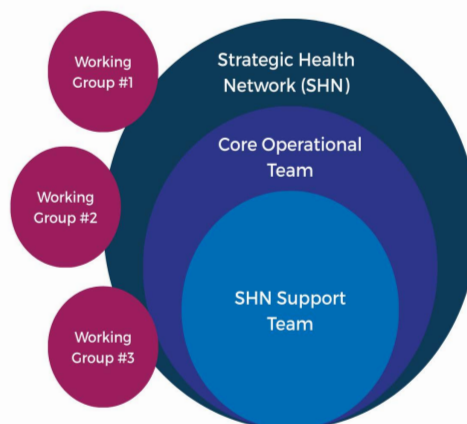
<b>Prioritizing Evidence-Based Initiatives</b>
Identify and prioritize initiatives using evidence and diverse perspectives to drive sustainable clinical and operational advancements while ensuring care delivery and outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently.
<b>Driving Sustainable Improvements</b>
Implement targeted, measurable, and sustainable improvements in health outcomes and service delivery by aligning with provincial policies, standards, and improvement strategies, contribute perspective and insights, and support organizational alignment. Data is used to support the identification of evidence-based solutions to achieve network goals and address identified challenges, with a strong connection to quality and digital health.
<b>Measuring Monitoring and Evaluation</b>
Priorities, goals, and indicators are systematically measured, monitored, and evaluated to ensure objectives are met.
<b>Contributing to a Learning Health and Social System</b>
Innovation is fostered, cultivated, scaled and spread. Knowledge and learning are translated and dispersed through the activities of the network thereby fostering a culture of continuous quality improvement.
<b>Promoting Health Equity</b>
Reduce unwarranted variability in service delivery while promoting equity in access and outcomes, and while maintaining regional autonomy.
<b>Supporting Change Management</b>
A wide range of internal and external stakeholders are engaged to champion change.



**Figure 2. Functions of a Strategic Health Network**

**Functions of a SHN include:**

- Provincial oversight and capacity building to identify areas that would benefit from provincial policies, standards, and improvement initiatives.
- Engagement and collaboration with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders that will champion change, contribute perspective and insights, and support organizational alignment.
- Strategic and operational planning to set meaningful, targeted, and measurable priorities, goals, and objectives for the networks and support implementation planning.
- Data analytics drives evidence-based solutions to achieve network goals and address identified challenges, with a strong connection to digital technology and decision support.
- Implementation and change management (at the health zone level) to ensure consistency, coordination, quality, efficiency, and system sustainability when implementing solutions brought forward by the network.
- Evaluation and quality improvement to provide ongoing evaluation support to the activities of the network, thereby fostering a culture of continuous quality improvement.



**Figure 3. Structure of a Strategic Health Network**

- SHNs are structured with layers and groups to drive transformation.
- The Core Operational Team includes directors and health zone representation that identify network priorities and support implementation of proposed solutions.
- The SHN Support Team are NL Health Services' resources dedicated to the work of the network. This includes data analytics, evaluation, planning, research and innovation, change management and other quality improvement initiatives.
- The Working Groups are formed to support specific network priorities where additional time outside of the regular network meetings may be required to achieve goals of the network.

**Conclusions**

1. SHNs have been established in the areas of Surgery, Health of Older Adults, Emergency Department, and Primary Health Care.
2. Working groups have been established to support the priorities of the networks. For example, in Surgery, a working group for central intake for ophthalmology and orthopedics exists, as well as one looking at the supply chain. In Health of Older Adults, an advanced care of the elderly (ACE) working group has been established.
3. Mechanisms are in place, such as analytic support and the creation of Evidence 2 Practice teams, to support learning cycles.