



## **Boosting PCN Performance: Understanding and Enhancing Utilization of Nurses in Alberta's Primary Care System**

### **Overview**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to understand nursing roles in Alberta PCNs and stimulate action to enhance the utilization of this health human resource to support family physician work in team-based primary care.

**Research Plan/Methodology:** This study will use a mixed-methods design to understand the current and potential role for nurses in Alberta's primary care system through their employment in PCNs. The goal of health services research (CIHR Pillar III) is to inform improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of health professionals and the health system through change (practice & policy). In addition to the investigative techniques described in Phase 1 of this project to address a health service research topic, Phases 2 and 3 will focus on action-oriented strategies to mobilize the knowledge gained for transformation and impact.

### **Phase 1: Gaining Knowledge about PCN nursing roles in Alberta**

1. Environmental scan of nursing roles in PCNs and identification of performance gaps.
2. Develop and administer a Practice Pattern Survey to nurses employed by Alberta PCNs to determine current tasks, patient populations and opportunities for optimization of their roles.
3. Identify practices (Document analysis) used in Alberta to support the integration/optimization of nursing roles in PCNs.
4. Engage Albertans in discussions (Focus groups) about their understanding and knowledge needs in relation to nursing roles in Alberta PCNs.

### **Phase 2: Stimulating Action to enhance utilization of nurses in PCNs**

1. Lead the development of PCN nursing practice framework in collaboration with key stakeholders, including the development of a set of practice competencies, responsibilities and outcome accountability measurement. This framework could be the topic of future research.
2. Work with the Alberta Medical Association (AMA) Towards Optimizing Practice (TOP) program and PHCIN to leverage their previous works, for example the results of "Scaling Up



Chronic Disease Management in Alberta” as a means of wiring the findings from this project into the PCN evolution process.

### **Phase 3: Measuring Success**

Develop and disseminate easy to use measurement tools for on-going evaluation of PCN nursing roles and their contribution to patient outcomes in all six dimensions of quality defined in the Alberta Quality Matrix for Health.

**For more information contact the CLPNA’s Research department [Ask CLPNA, info@clpna.com](mailto:Ask CLPNA, info@clpna.com) or phone 780-484-8886 or 1-800-661-5877 (toll free in Alberta).**