

Aligning Engagement Goals with Strategies

A list of lessons learned from past encounters engaging primary care physicians (PCPs) to encourage effective engagement practices and to promote strong PCP-LHIN relationships in Toronto.

Goal 1: Getting your PCP's Attention (Pre-engaged)

Call before showing up at a doctor's office. Advise clinic reception you would like to drop in and inquire about any PCP availability to talk about ways you can help with their practice. Visit the office (even if an appointment can't easily be made) as this communicates that the PCP is valued.

Start the first few encounters by listening to PCPs (e.g., their needs and challenges or anything they want to discuss). Don't assume you know the answers. Their advice matters and moves issues forward (recall the LEAP approach).

Visit PCPs armed with a variety of resources (e.g., 1 pagers, info about local events, newsletters, copies of past e-Blasts) to selectively leave those with participants so that they remember you and the conversation.

When communicating with PCPs, don't use LHIN acronyms. Present all information simply and clearly.

Choose messages and messengers wisely. Focus on simply connecting. Introduce yourself to the PCP and get to know one another. Connecting is a big success.

Go armed with responses to those 'tough issues' that pre-engaged PCPs may bring up so that you can respond in a manner that is engaging versus defensive.

Expand your network by attending existing events where local PCPs will be in attendance and take the opportunity to interact and get to know PCPs in your region.

Goal 2: Maintaining your PCP's Attention (Inform, Consult)

As you talk to PCPs in their offices or at meetings or on the phone, allow time for PCPs to have their say and explore their opinions. Don't just launch into your spiel. Use multiple communication channels to allow for broad based feedback.

Have a back pocket sales pitch to offer PCPs (e.g. SCOPE, SPIN). Demonstrate relevance by tailoring information to reflect the value and/or impact added to PCPs and their patients.

Don't begin engaging PCPs about a service being offered if the service is not ready for uptake. Even a 1-month delay is a long time for PCPs and may cause them frustration.

Don't overload PCPs with information (e.g. monthly newsletters, frequent e-Blasts) just to send something to PCPs, especially if it's not relevant to them. Ensure information provided is high quality, consistent, timely, appropriately targeted, clear and easily understood.

Goal 2: Maintaining your PCP's Attention (Inform, Consult)...continued

Make yourself a hub for PCPs to help them stay on top of their practice. E.g. provide relevant articles, skill-building workshops, and educational talks. Share updates (new services, initiatives) from other sub-regions as well if they are relevant for your PCPs. If PCPs have an event coming up, offer to share and promote it to your PCP networks.

Don't try to push PCPs to increase their participation and involvement with the LHIN if they are not interested at the moment. Let it happen organically but maintain open communication.

Ensure and demonstrate that the views of those consulted are taken into account in the outcome. Provide feedback on the actions taken as a result of consultation.

Goal 3: Maintaining Engagement with your PCP (Involve, Collaborate, Empower)

Be mindful of adapting your communication style from sending information to creating opportunities for two-way and multi-directional communication with PCPs.

Leverage existing relationships (e.g. with PCCC) – Identify and engage with physician leaders and early adopters. Use them to network and build relationships with external PCPs.

Use project events to introduce strategy and maintain ongoing relationships. Each priority project has something being given that's useful to offer to PCPs.

Use one-on-one or small-group focused discussions to learn about individual physician perspectives or to bring out specific solutions/ideas. Have specific objectives for the dialogue.

When approaching PCPs in-person, try to set expectations early on by outlining the reason for meeting. Transparency is always appreciated.

Organize workshops, focus groups, project teams with PCP membership to facilitate opportunities for PCPs to provide input that can feed directly into the decision-making process. Be clear about expectations and time commitments.

Don't forget to follow-up in a timely manner to demonstrate accountability. Communicate successes and share results of past primary care initiatives.

If PCPs have provided feedback, consider organizing a steering committee with interested PCPs and invite them to lead discussions on addressing feedback.

Maintain a commitment to enabling active PCP leadership in the process and ensure sufficient resources are allocated to support the PCP. Be ready and willing to share information, power, and resources when appropriate.

Checklist of tasks to consider when planning an event:

Pre-event Tasks (e.g. planning, scheduling)

- Allow at minimum 4 weeks for planning an event and giving notice to participants.
- Check PCP availability beforehand when scheduling potential dates for the event.
 - Avoid planning events during the month of December and recognize vacations in the summer.
- Consult PCPs for input on event content to ensure what you are offering has value to the PCPs.
- Provide advanced notice when sending out event invitations to accommodate physician schedules (e.g. 1+ week for people to respond in case of vacations). Be upfront about the expected time commitment and the objective for meeting.
- Send participants previous minutes, and any pertinent information prior to the event.
- Consider holding events at a neutral location that gets all PCP members away from their own practice to a place that allows opportunities for networking.
- Schedule monthly events at a set day and time and that minimize interruptions to their daily practice.
- Use mild reminders when reaching out to PCPs (avoid frequent, long-winded updates).
- Use PCCC members to aid in PCP engagement and promote the event to their networks.
- Offer Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits when possible.

Event-specific Tasks

- Serve food and refreshments.
- Keep PCPs event agenda's manageable (avoid overloading PCPs with information).
- Allot ample time for PCPs to interact with one another (e.g. breakout sessions).
- Ask PCPs to complete an evaluation at the engagement event (keep it short). Give a compelling story for why completing the survey matters.

Post-event Tasks

- Analyze evaluation data and share results with your team to ensure any lessons learned are carried over.
- Ensure timely follow-up after the event on action items and results – especially when questions or comments requiring a response were asked.
 - Follow up with any specific requests for information/engagement ideally within 2 weeks of the event
- Create a short summary describing the success of the event (e.g. few sentences about content, learnings, levels of attendance, etc.) to include in newsletters or eBlasts to PCPs.