

Healthy Connections 2010



Conference Report

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BACKGROUND

The rise in chronic illness, particularly among older persons, is transforming healthcare landscapes nationally and internationally. These changes present policy-makers, planners, practitioners and front-line workers with the challenge to identify better ways to meet emerging population needs. Evidence of chronic disease prevention and management emphasizes the importance of self-management in achieving improved health outcomes, health system sustainability, and enhanced quality of care for persons living with one or more chronic conditions. However, in spite of considerable support and enthusiasm in principle, there are concerns that if not properly done, such a framework could also lead to a greater burden of care on vulnerable individuals, and their families and caregivers.

Self-management initiatives are well established in jurisdictions across the European Union, the United Kingdom, the United States, and regions in Canada. This rich know-how offers tremendous opportunity to inform the continued evolution of self-management across mainstream healthcare in Ontario. It also raises important questions around policies and best practices to increase self-management support for individuals, families, and healthcare providers and how best to reach and engage persons (and their caregivers) most vulnerable and at-risk of hospitalization and/or admission into long-term care.

In this connection, there is considerable interest in Ontario in evidence which can inform planning, implementation and evaluation of ongoing self-management policy and practice when reaching vulnerable populations across a wide range of care settings.

CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

Held at Ryerson University on February 17, 2010, this one day conference was presented by Solutions: East Toronto Health Collaborative and the Canadian Research Network for Care in the Community in partnership with the Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network (TC LHIN), Ryerson University, the West End Urban Health Alliance (W.E.U.H.A.), the South East Toronto Organization (SETO), and Planning for North East Toronto Seniors' Services (PLANTSS).

The morning session opened with a keynote address from renowned Canadian author, Wayson Choy, followed by featured speaker, Judith Schaefer, from the MacColl Institute for Healthcare Innovation (Seattle, USA) and a dynamic panel of local leaders from across Ontario's care continuum. Panelists shared insights, evidence, and transferable lessons from various vantage points across the health system. They highlighted key challenges and promising solutions to help increase support for self-management at the community, organization, policy and systems-level.

Afternoon sessions shifted from theory to practice with a series of skills-building workshops. These sessions offered conference delegates a rich opportunity to engage in knowledge translation and exchange with other front-line practitioners, health administrators, policy makers, and consumers from across the province.

EVENT STATISTICS

The conference drew a wide audience from across the province. Participants included representatives from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Toronto Public Health, senior officials from Local Health

Integration Networks (LHINs), Community Care Access Centres (CCACs), healthcare consulting firms, executives, middle-management, and front-line staff from healthcare organizations¹ including Toronto-based hospitals, family health teams, community health centres, hospice care, and a diverse group of community agencies, researchers, professional associations², industry, and consumer groups.

The conference registered 309 total delegates with a breakdown of 273 regular (paid) delegates and 23 complimentary registrations (10 volunteers and 13 speakers). The majority of registrants were front-line healthcare providers.

DELEGATE FEEDBACK

The conference received a 38 per cent response rate on its evaluation (feedback) form. Evaluations were distributed to each delegate with their registration package and were collected at the end of the afternoon session by volunteer staff, or placed in a drop-box at the registration table. A copy of the conference feedback form is provided in Appendix A.

Of the 103 responses received, 49 (47.57%) were provided by front-line providers, 19 (18.45%) were provided by senior managers, 11 (10.68%) from individuals in middle-management, 7 (6.8%) from healthcare executives, 6 (5.82%) from researchers, 6 (5.82%) who were self-identified as “Other” (industry, associations), and 5 (4.85%) from members of a consumer group.

Responses included very positive, thoughtful, thorough and constructive feedback on the conference proceedings. This may be indicative of the level of interest and commitment to the Healthy Connections conference series. As this event signified the tenth anniversary Healthy Connections conference, it may be of interest to pursue this area of question in a follow-up survey.

Delegates were asked to rate the event on a scale from “1” to “5” with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest.

	Very Poor	Poor	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Not applicable
Conference venue	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Food & drink service	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Agenda format	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Morning plenary session	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Afternoon workshop sessions	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Overall satisfaction with the conference	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

¹ Organizations represented diverse sectors from community support services, home care agencies, rehabilitation hospitals and programs, supportive housing agencies, senior services organizations, mental health and addictions services, Osteoporosis Canada, the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada, the Alzheimer Society of Ontario.

² Professional associations included the Registered Nurses’ Association of Ontario, the Long-Term Care Association, and the Canadian Mental Health Association.

Each aspect of the conference received a rating of “good” (4) to “excellent” (5). While the **conference venue** was rated “excellent” and the quality of **food and drink** was rated “good”, the majority suggested different lunch arrangements for future events that include seating and more food stations. **Overall satisfaction with the conference** was rated between “good” and “excellent”.

The **agenda format** of plenary and workshop sessions was well received by respondents (“good”). Many commented that the format enhanced their opportunity to network, exchange knowledge, and gain new skills and information from others in the field. Many respondents reflected on the high quality and knowledge of speakers and indicated that they had wished the conference to be more than one-day with greater opportunity to attend all the workshops offered. Significant feedback was received about the particular importance and timeliness of this conference and its particular focus on self-management support for vulnerable populations. There was a common desire among respondents to have this conference repeated and / or targeted to additional audiences (e.g., consumers from culturally diverse groups). One respondent pointed to the need for such a conference to solely address issues of diversity and self-management in culturally diverse groups.

The emphasis on the client perspective was noted in the large majority of delegate feedback. While many felt that the client perspective was *“the most valuable aspect of the day”, “the heart of self-management”* and *“the key to strong client-provider partnerships”*, there was a group of respondents who felt it was *“disruptive”* and the *“least valuable aspect of the day”*.

One senior healthcare manager commented, *“It’s very hard to focus a workshop to both survivors and professionals as the level of experience and knowledge is different and each group is looking for different learning opportunities”*.

Another senior manager felt that *“Communication should be more specific to certain levels: organizations, management, clients”* but noted that the interdisciplinarity of the conference audience was the most valuable aspect of the conference.

MORNING PLENARY SESSION

Each respondent commented on the keynote address by Wayson Choy. Delegates felt Wayson provided *“a wonderful foundation for the day”* and set a *“constructive tone and emotional atmosphere”* for the rest of the conference sessions. However, from the comments received, it appears that Wayson’s keynote became a barometer for other presentation styles. The *“want for more story-telling”, “less reading”* and *“less slides”* was expressed in a small number of evaluations.

Respondents also commented on a lack of time to engage and interact with the feature speakers and panelists. Many expressed the desire for a longer panel session to allow the panelists to engage with one another. Others felt that the feature speaker’s presentation was too long and encroached on the time for audience interaction.

AFTERNOON SESSION

The afternoon workshop series received very positive feedback from delegates overall. While some workshops were rated more successful than others, the afternoon session was rated between “good” and

“excellent”. Many respondents commented that they would have liked to have had more time to attend more than two sessions and suggested either to shorten the length of workshops, or add a second day to the agenda. Other suggestions included adding workshops specifically addressing planning and evaluation of self-management support, and providing a forum for delegates to learn from the experiences of other organizations/programs from across the province.

With respect to individual workshops, the **Health Equity Impact Assessment Tool** received the highest rating (“excellent”) and was often quoted as being the most valuable aspect of the afternoon. Both **Health Coaching for Dementia Care** and **TEACH: Putting Motivational Interviewing into Practice** were rated between “good” and “excellent”. **Self-Management Strategies for Culturally Diverse Populations** was rated “good” with positive feedback about presentation style and helpful content. A few respondents noted the focus on the Chinese population and expressed their interest in learning how these strategies could be applied more broadly to other culturally diverse client groups. While the second of the two-part session (**Self-Management Toolkit, Part II**) was rated “good”, the first workshop (**Self-Management Toolkit, Part I**) encountered a series of challenges, which were reflected in the feedback. The rating of “poor” to “adequate” was attributed to what respondents noted as a “*lack of focus and structure*” with the facilitator engaging in interactive discussion before setting out the objectives for the session. Others felt the speaker’s lack of familiarity with the Canadian healthcare system was a barrier in the transfer of knowledge. Specific examples included the facilitator’s inability to speak to the role of personal support workers (PSWs) in self-managed care.

LESSONS LEARNED

The success of the Healthy Connections 2010 Conference is reflected not only in the ratings received but in the repeated comments provided by respondents regarding the importance of the topic, the quality of the speakers, and the desire to have the conference repeated and expanded to a two-day event. However, the feedback also pointed to opportunities for improvement. Based on these comments, five key areas of opportunity and continued improvement are outlined below:

- 1) **Have large sessions moderated to provide additional support to the lead facilitator.** Although volunteers had been stationed in each workshop to provide additional support to the facilitators (e.g., note-taking), having a formal moderator to assist in large sessions might have helped structure the discussion and ensure that questions remained concise and relevant to the topic at hand. A moderator may also have helped clarify questions, nuances, and / or related terminology for out-of-province speakers.
- 2) **Allow more discussion time for delegates to interact and engage with invited speakers.** The topic of self-management is relatively new to mainstream healthcare in Ontario, particularly in reference to chronic disease prevention and management among vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations. Given the diverse backgrounds, professions and areas of expertise present on stage and in the audience, more time for plenary discussion may have provided an added benefit for knowledge transfer and exchange.
- 3) **Include an introductory presentation in the morning plenary session** to ‘set the stage’ and lay the foundation for the conference. Such a presentation would introduce the key issues and reinforce the rationale for the sessions and perspectives presented. Although the feature speaker

had been invited to provide such a presentation, the slide deck was provided at the last minute and did not allow time for revisions / additions. During the post-conference feedback session with the Conference Steering Committee, members felt that such a task might have been better suited to someone from within the Ontario healthcare environment as they would have been more attuned with the local context and could have provided the necessary background while making explicit the linkages between the invited speakers and the conference sessions.

- 4) **Ensure meal services are equipped for large delegations** and provide space to sit and network during extended breaks, such as the lunch period.
- 5) **Offer a platform for delegates to exchange information about their own programs and services.** Poster exhibitions, conference 'market-places', and (sponsored) tables/booths offer wonderful opportunity for organizations to showcase their expertise and program experiences while engaging and learning from others. Given the interest expressed to learn from others in Ontario, this might present an excellent opportunity to promote informal networking and knowledge sharing within and across sectors.

CONFERENCE COMMUNICATIONS

The conference received good media coverage at all stages of the conference preparation. Early communications focused on raising awareness among targeted audiences about the conference and sought to draw conference registrations. Media relations on the day of the event sought to raise awareness about the issues of self-management support for vulnerable populations among the broader public. Wayson Choy delivered an interview on the CBC radio show, Metro Morning, and interviews with Wayson Choy, Susan Himel, and Judith Schaefer were featured in a follow-up story by Anne Marie Tobin of the Canadian Press in the Toronto Star (March 2, 2010). The article was also featured in the Winnipeg Free Press and on the Healthzone website. The article is accessible at the following links:

<http://www.healthzone.ca/health/newsfeatures/article/773504--goal-is-to-help-patients-manage-their-own-care>; <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/life/health/self-managed-care-support-training-needed-for-patients-with-chronic-conditions-85865212.html>.

Other conference communications included press releases to local community newspapers, and wide circulation of e-materials on listservs, websites, and e-bulletins, including:

- Longwoods e-letter listserv – an e-publication that is circulated on a weekly basis with an audience of over 10, 000 opt-in readers
- Longwoods conference webpage and rotating e-banner advertisement on the website of Longwoods Publishing
- Ontario Public Health e-bulletin (OPHeBulletin) – an e-publication that is circulated to public health workers across the province on a weekly basis
- Central listserv for LHIN staff
- Central listservs for Community Care Access Centres
- Health Equity Council listserv
- Listserv of the Canadian Network for Care in the Community (CRNCC)
- The Solutions network

- Ryerson Nursing listserv
- The Ontario Community Support Association listserv

OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALTHY CONNECTIONS EVENTS

Opportunities for future Healthy Connection events include seeking accreditation for continuing medical education (CME) credits through the College of Family Physicians of Canada. This opportunity was investigated for the 2010 Conference but the application process is lengthy and did not fit the 2010 conference timelines.

Posting conference materials through the Canadian College of Health Service Executives (CCHSE) was also investigated and may provide opportunity in future events. The CCHSE was very interested in supporting the 2010 conference but fees are substantial and they do not provide pro bono conference support.

Healthy Connections 2010 Conference



February 17, 2010 • Ryerson University, Toronto, Ontario

FIVE-MINUTE FEEDBACK

Thank you for taking the time to provide us with your feedback about your experience at this year's Healthy Connections Conference. **This questionnaire is completely anonymous and will take approximately 5 minutes to complete.** Your feedback is very important to us. It will help us to improve the design, organization and delivery of our future conference events.

We kindly ask that you complete the form **before leaving the conference today**. Please drop-off your completed evaluations at the registration table or you can leave them with our team of volunteers at the end of the workshop sessions. Thank you again for your support of the Healthy Connections 2010 Conference. See you next year!

Please check the one of the following options:

I participated in today's conference as a:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Front-line healthcare provider | <input type="checkbox"/> Member of a consumer group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior manager | <input type="checkbox"/> Researcher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare executive | <input type="checkbox"/> Student |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Policy maker | <input type="checkbox"/> Member of the media |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

What sessions did you attend?: *(Please check the appropriate box(es))*

- Morning Plenary
 Networking Lunch
 Afternoon Workshops

Please rate today's event on a scale from "1" to "5", where 1 is "very poor", 2 is "poor", 3 is "adequate", 4 is "good" and 5 is "excellent": *Circle the number that indicates your rating for each item.*

	Very Poor	Poor	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Not applicable
Conference venue	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Food & drink service	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Agenda format	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Morning plenary session	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Afternoon workshop sessions	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Overall satisfaction with the conference	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

AFTERNOON SESSION – 1:00PM TO 2:30PM

I attended: *(Please check the appropriate box)*

- Self Management Toolkit (I)
- Health Coaching for Dementia Care
- Health Equity Impact Assessment
- TEACH
- Culturally Diverse Populations

Please rate the workshop sessions on a scale from “1” to “5”, where 1 is “very poor”, 2 is “poor”, 3 is “adequate”, 4 is “good” and 5 is “excellent”: *Circle the response that indicates your rating for each item.*

	Very Poor	Poor	Adequate	Good	Excellent
General format of the workshop	1	2	3	4	5
Facilitation	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of information	1	2	3	4	5
Relevance to my daily work	1	2	3	4	5

AFTERNOON SESSION – 3:00PM TO 4:30PM

I attended: *(Please check the appropriate box)*

- Self Management Toolkit (II)
- Health Coaching for Dementia Care
- Health Equity Impact Assessment
- TEACH
- Culturally Diverse Populations

Please rate the workshop sessions on a scale from “1” to “5”, where 1 is “very poor”, 2 is “poor”, 3 is “adequate”, 4 is “good” and 5 is “excellent”: *Circle the response that indicates your rating for each item.*

	Very Poor	Poor	Adequate	Good	Excellent
General format of the workshop	1	2	3	4	5
Facilitation	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of information	1	2	3	4	5
Relevance to my daily work	1	2	3	4	5

PLEASE USE POINT FORM WHEN RESPONDING TO THE QUESTIONS BELOW:

What was the most valuable aspect of the Healthy Connections 2010 conference?

What was least valuable?

How can we improve (e.g., duration of conference/workshop)?

**APPENDIX B:
EVENT STATISTICS FOR AFTERNOON WORKSHOP SERIES**

Session Options	Total Sold	Capacity	Space Remaining
AFTERNOON SESSION I			
Workshop: Health Coaching for Dementia Care: Making Sense of Self-Management Strategies	34	55	21
Workshop: TEACH: Putting Motivational Interviewing Skills into Practice	31	55	24
Workshop: Self-Managing Care for Culturally Diverse Populations	39	55	16
Workshop: The Health Equity Impact Assessment Tool	42	50	8
Workshop: The Self-Management Toolkit Part I: Implementing SMS through Interdisciplinary Care	122	130	8
AFTERNOON SESSION II			
Workshop: Self-Managing Care for Culturally Diverse Populations	54	55	1
Workshop: The Health Equity Impact Assessment Tool	49	50	1
Workshop: The Self-Management Toolkit Part II: Collaborating with Patients for Everyone's Health	93	130	37
Workshop: Health Coaching for Dementia Care: Making Sense of Self-Management Strategies	32	55	23
Workshop: TEACH: Putting Motivational Interviewing Skills into Practice	34	55	21