
Projects for potential student collaboration with the Emergency Strategic Clinical Network™ (ESCN):

Project Area/Title: Development and Implementation of Evidence-Based Clinical Pathways for the Care of Patients in the ED Setting.

Description of the Proposed Project: The goal of emergency management is to provide timely, safe, effective and efficient care based on appropriate diagnostic assessment and initiation of appropriate primary and preventive treatment, including transitions of care. Current surveillance and research work has determined that, across Alberta, significant clinical practice variation exists in emergency medicine for a variety of conditions and clinical scenarios (cardiac conditions, renal colic, benign headache, diagnostic test ordering, etc). Standardizing treatment and reducing variation is a priority for the Emergency SCN™. In Alberta's publically funded health care system, it is necessary that this process occurs in a cost-conscious manner thus respecting the responsibility that Alberta Health Services (AHS) has for appropriate public resource stewardship.

The Emergency SCN™ endorses knowledge synthesis projects which propose to systematically review the research literature followed by development and implementation of evidence-based clinical pathways regarding the care of patients presenting to the emergency department setting. The developed clinical pathways should address conditions for which known practice variation exists, or address appropriate transitions of care (e.g. recommendations for follow up testing post ED evaluation). It is strongly encouraged that knowledge synthesis projects of this type endeavour to appreciate the nuances of the local Alberta ED environment in order to develop a flexible, evidence-based and pragmatic clinical pathway that suits the needs of Alberta patients and healthcare providers.

Goals for the Proposed Project: Development and implementation of evidence-based clinical pathways can result in improvements in health care delivery and better health outcomes for Albertans.

Project Area/Title: Innovations in Community Care Following Emergency Department Visits for Chronic Diseases in Elderly Patients.

Description of the Proposed Project: Acute exacerbations of chronic conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and congestive heart failure (CHF) among elderly patients often result in emergency department (ED) visits. In many cases, these ED visits end with admission to hospital, which may be in opposition to patient care directives and potentially lead to complications. Other health care jurisdictions have adopted a "hospital-at-home" model of care for acute exacerbations of specific chronic diseases. These models of care are defined as programs which provide active treatment by medical professionals for the acute exacerbation within the patient's home setting following an ED visit (as opposed to admission to hospital), with duration of care continuing until resolution of the exacerbation is achieved.

A hospital-at-home program, as described above, could be implemented as an admission avoidance intervention following ED visits in Alberta. Appropriate, effective and safe care provided in the community setting following ED visits could serve to reduce health care costs associated with hospital

admissions, provide patient-focussed care that is respectful of care directives, and potentially contribute to solutions for ED overcrowding as barriers to hospital admission is identified as an ED outflow issue that can lead to ED overcrowding.

The Emergency SCN™ endorses evidence-based knowledge synthesis projects or feasibility studies that investigate innovations in appropriate, effective and safe community care addressing admission avoidance following ED visits for chronic diseases in elderly patients. It is strongly encouraged that projects of this type endeavour to appreciate the nuances of the local Alberta ED and community care environment in order to develop flexible, evidence-based and pragmatic programs that suit the needs of Alberta patients and healthcare providers.

Goals for the Proposed Project: Innovations in community care for elderly patients with chronic diseases following ED visits for acute exacerbations may result in improvements in health care delivery and better health outcomes for Albertans.