

Clinic Grants Report

2021/22, 2022/23, and 2023/24

Overview

For the past three years, the Vancouver Division of Family Practice has offered Vancouver-based primary care clinics small grants to support patient medical home (PMH) and primary care network (PCN) related practice improvements. Program uptake has continued to be strong with about 50% of Vancouver-based clinics participating each year. This impacts between 400 and 500 physicians each year.

This granting program is highly effective as virtually every clinic was able to fully or partially complete their projects within the allocated time frame, undertook valuable work, and achieved a variety of PMH and PCN relevant outcomes.

Program at a Glance



~50% of Vancouver clinics participate each year



~ 400* physicians and 106 clinics (2022)
547 physicians and 122 clinics (2023)
430 physicians and 132 clinics (2024)



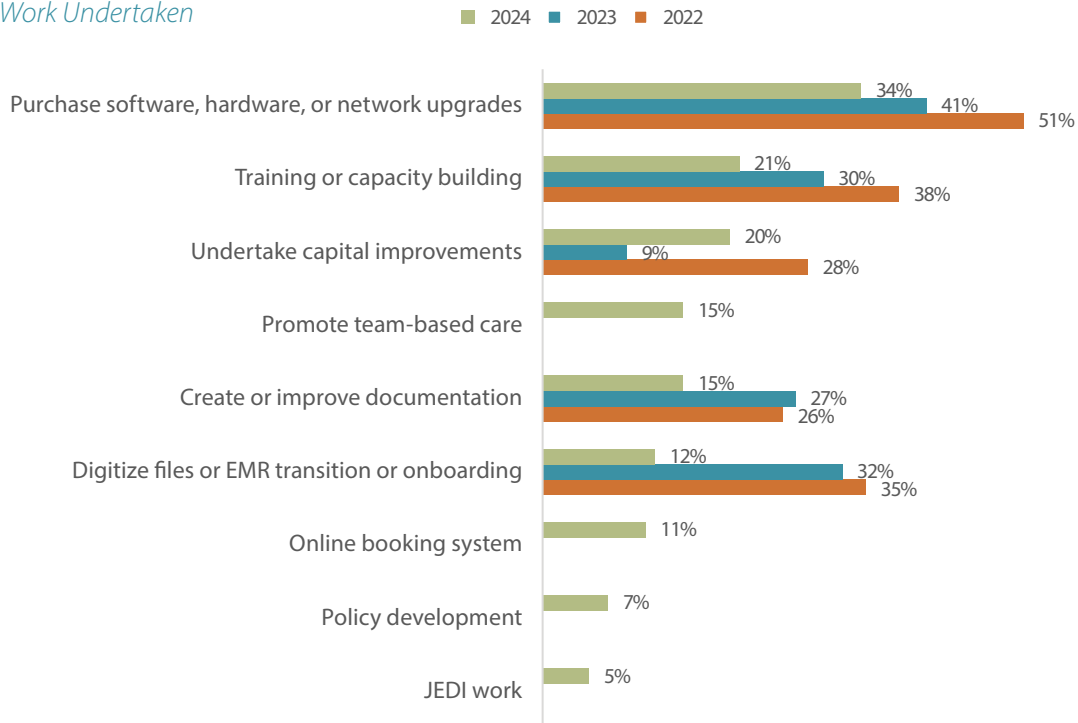
Grant Funding
\$530,000 (2022)
\$543,300 (2023)
\$466,200 (2024)

**400 participating physicians was estimated based on reported FTE due to data capture methodology in 2022.*

Projects Undertaken by Clinics

Clinics used the grants to achieve a variety of PMH/PCN-related activities. Each year IT-related work accounts for about half the grants (purchase software or hardware, implement network upgrades, or implement online booking systems). The major project categories are shown below.

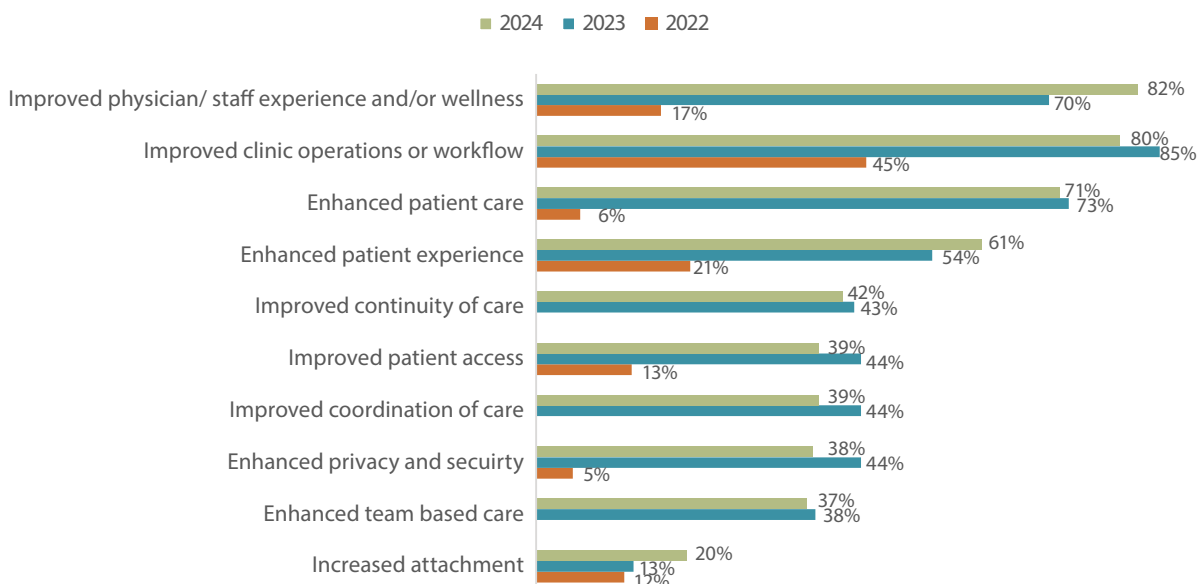
Figure 1: Type of Work Undertaken



Impact of the Grants

Clinics report that many PMH/PCN related outcomes were achieved. As shown in Figure 2, the most common outcomes were: improved physician/staff experience or wellness, improved clinic operation or workflows, and enhanced patient care.

Figure 2: Percent of Clinics Reporting each PMH/PCN Outcome



Many comments were offered on the value of the program, its accessibility, and simplicity:



- *This is a very flexible program that works well and is not burdensome administratively.*
- *Good initiative with lots of flexibility.*
- *The program could not be simpler or made easier. Thank you.*
- *It's great, appreciate the simple reporting and application process.*
- *I think that this program offers real support that allows us to improve the office routine, workflow and modernize and improve patients' care.*
- *The program gives great flexibility for the clinic to work on relevant and practical projects with direct benefits to all parties.*
- *Keep this program going! It's a wonderful resource!*
- *These grants are critical, at a time when running a primary care office is becoming increasingly financially difficult, organizationally challenging, and professionally demanding.*
- *It is a great source of support that is well utilized by the clinic and appreciated by the clinical team.*

Suggestions for Improvements

The most frequent suggestions for improving the program were to increase the amount of the grants and increase available time for project completion. Other suggestions included:



- Provide a consultant or service provider list
- Expand eligible projects (include nursing projects, help clinics with transcription and AI powered tools)
- Engage PSP to continue to support QI for the projects
- Provide information on other available community grants to support project work
- Run the program in April (to be able to take advantage of summer students)
- Adapt funding allocations (base it on regular staffing in clinic)
- Run program more often, more than once a year
- Share other clinic projects and project learnings
- Provide a single payment rather than two payments (currently 80% of funding is provided upon project initiation and 20% upon project completion), and
- Use text messaging to send reminders about the program.

The following pages provide examples of clinic projects that achieved PMH outcomes (e.g. improve patient experience, team-based care). While the example projects are presented in one outcome area, most projects achieve multiple outcomes (e.g., upgrading or adopting an EMR improves efficiency; enhances patient experience and care; and enhances provider experience). Ultimately most projects resulted in improved patient care and improved provider experience (refer to Figure 2 above).

Projects that Improve PMH Efficiency

Projects	Example
Develop or Revise Care Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update cancer screening documentation. Implement a mental health screening tool. Create a resource document to help connect patients with recovery and counselling resources. Host educational session for the MOA team to review the resource document and discuss its implementation in clinic. Implement Elderly Fragility Assessment & Fall Prevention Protocol.
Create or Revise Clinic Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update employment contracts for employees and associate agreements for clinic associates. Develop clinic onboarding processes. Redevelop the email response process and restructure e-communication documents. Develop standard operating procedures and manuals for employees re: roles/duties, clinic policies, technical standards (e.g, software use manuals). Create templates and referrals forms in the EMR.
Panel Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional staff support to communicate with patients to identify patients to remove from panel.
Technology Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition data storage from a local server to a cloud-based server (including UBC input on privacy impacts and Purchase add-ons to EMR (Intrahealth) that includes email, eFax and SMS direct in EMR function. Improve online booking through Ocean so patients do not need to remember their username and password and make accessible via web with personal identifiers. Upgrade to Cortico plug-in version to better support online booking and EMR usage across five different clinics (currently being used at just one of the clinics). Upgrade staff training in using online booking, email reminders, and patient communication. Update and harmonize clinic website to better present booking options for patients - reducing time spent on booking patients and allowing for a better and more efficient experience for patients booking online. Update digital board in the office to provide information and announcements regarding policies, screening etc. Replace aging Wi-Fi access point and add additional access points to improve coverage. Hire an independent IT consultant to help clinic diagnose aging IT infrastructure and come up with recommendations to address this. Change landline phones to VOIP system with multiple seats; custom support for setup (from TELUS) and training for MOAs. Implement automated fax AI inbox triaging. Implement an AI-powered automation platform (Phelix Fax AI) to address the administrative burden associated with handling incoming faxes, EMR messages, referrals, emails, records, reports, and other relevant documents. Create web forms for patients to relay their concerns and provide answers to specific questions related to their primary concerns. Implement an AI-powered transcription system. Implement AI technology to help with fax labeling and patient file filtering, patient notifications, etc.

Training

- Implement a check-in kiosk
- EMR training for doctors and staff.
- Staff training in provincial portal and e-form for COVID Moderna Vaccine.
- Design streamlined process for documentation and e-form registration and review of vaccination history for clinic MOAs.
- Train staff and physicians in advanced document processing integrated in the EMR and email service.
- Find more efficient ways to process documents to reduce workload for all clinic members especially the physicians (conduct review of managing document confidentiality, using Adobe Acrobat Professional features more fully; use mass email send outs and templates.)
- Customer service training for MOAs.
- MOA training for clinic privacy and security requirements following physician sign up to Care Connect.

Projects That Improve Patient Experience

Example

- Upgrade website to add features like ChatBot to give preset answers to various patient queries reducing incoming phone calls.
- Create an online form submission platform for patients, reducing paper use and clerical errors made by staff during scanning and uploading to patient charts.
- Improve website material, translate from English to Chinese, include additional webpages on skin care and laser treatment.
- Replace a pocket door in one office for more private conversations during telehealth.
- Build a wider door for one exam room (36") to better accommodate wheelchairs.
- Update website to encourage patients to book online and reduce clinic phone call volume.
- Create a database of information of chronic diseases in Chinese language, such as asthma, COPD, coronary heart disease, osteoporosis etc. to provide patients upon their diagnosis.

Projects That Improve Privacy & Security

Example

- Use the Ocean E-Form system to streamline and digitize the patient consent capture process; creating electronic forms that patients can complete and sign digitally at the self-check in Kiosk, replacing traditional paper-based consent forms.
- Update clinic privacy and security policies.

Projects That Increase Access to Care

Example

- Fund an answering service and coordinate physician scheduling with other Indigenous primary care clinics in the area.

Projects that Enhance Patient Care

Example

- Host sessions on dermoscopy skills in family practice, and diagnosis and management of common skin conditions.
- Provide cervical screening (PAP) tests for unattached patients within New Cervix Self-Screening HPV Test lead by VDFP.
- Create a website with online booking educational materials and Q&A/blog.

Projects that Support Team-Based Care

Example

- In-person participation in full day workshop offered by UBC CPD: "Communication Course for Healthcare Professionals: Navigating Challenging Conversations Across the System."
- Provide training and education on team-based care.

Projects that Improve Provider Experience

Example

- Online mental wellness training for physicians and clinic staff.
- Host workshop on stress management in clinical settings.
- Implement an online shift scheduling system to help locum doctors select and book shifts based on their availability.

JEDI-Related Projects

Example

- Complete a review and enhancement of HR policies and procedures aimed at re-balancing staff wellness and sustainability from the impacts of the pandemic, the opioid crisis, and the ongoing consequences of colonization.
- Conduct a legal review of expanded and revised manual to ensure compliance with all legal and regulatory standards and obligations.
- Staff training courses on Gender Affirming Care aimed at ensuring clinic patients feel safe and welcome.
- Install a check-in system that accommodates blind and deaf patients.