

Clinic Grant Report

December 2022 to March 2023

Overview

During the past two fiscal years, **2021/22 (2022)** and **2022/23 (2023)**, the Vancouver Division of Family Practice offered Vancouver-based primary care clinics small grants to support patient medical home (PMH) related practice improvements and primary care networking. The program uptake has been strong in both years with 106 clinics receiving grants in 2022 and 122 clinics receiving grants in 2023. This represents approximately 50% of Vancouver-based PMH clinics and more than 500 physicians each year.

Evaluation of the program shows the program is highly effective and very well received. Virtually every participating clinic was able to complete their projects fully or partially within the three-month time frame, clinics undertook valuable work, and clinics achieved a variety of Patient-Medical Home relevant outcomes.



547 Physicians and 122 Clinics **(2023)**
 524 Physicians and 106 Clinics **(2022)**
 71% of clinics applied for funding **both years**



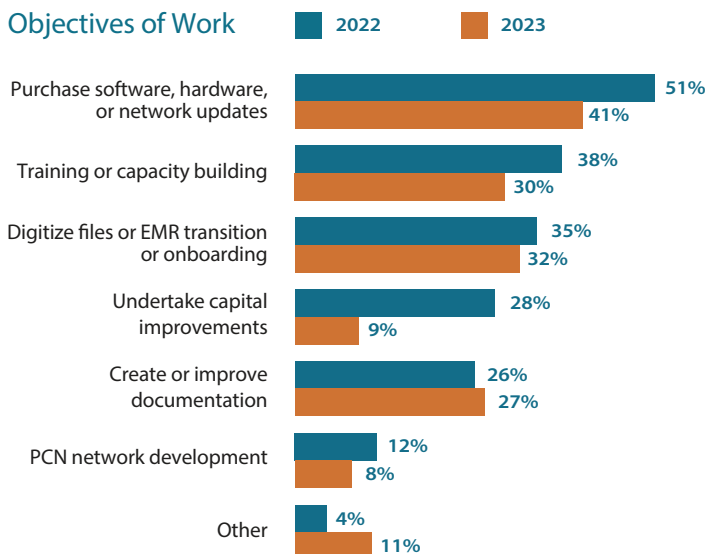
~50% clinic participation per year



Funding
 \$543,300 **(2023)**
 \$530,000 **(2022)**

Focus

Clinics used the grants to achieve a variety of PMH-related improvements and PCN networking outcomes. Across both years, the most common projects involved improvements to IT infrastructure (the purchase of software, hardware or upgrading networks).



"The clinic has always been wanting to improve booking access to reduce the workload of office staff. The funding was the push we needed to make the commitment."

– 2023 Physician Survey

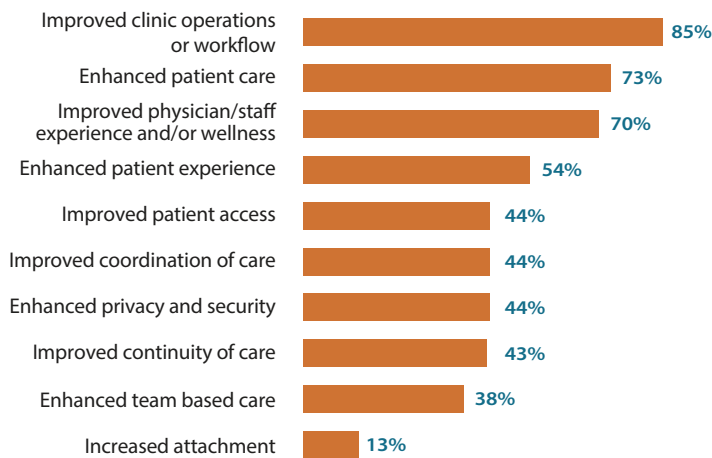
"We were able to upgrade our internal and internet network to increase the bandwidth and speed significantly. This improved the capacity for simultaneous multiple video virtual care visits while running the EMR on 4 machines at the same time, along with the VOIP phone system and streaming waiting room music, all without any lag or dropouts or disconnections. Patient interaction is smoother, and the work experience is reliable for all."

– 2023 Physician Survey

Impact

Many PMH-related outcomes were achieved across the grants, the most common were: improved clinic operations or workflows, enhanced patient care, improved physician/staff experience or wellness, and enhanced patient experience. These impacts are consistent with what was achieved in 2022.

% of Projects Achieving each PMH-Related Outcome 2023 n=113 Grants



"Major improvement in our office network -network is more secure now that we are on PPN, internet speed much faster and more reliable. We are now able to access Care Connect and Pharmanet, which the doctors are really happy about. Staff very happy about new computers and better functioning of network."

– 2023 Physician Survey

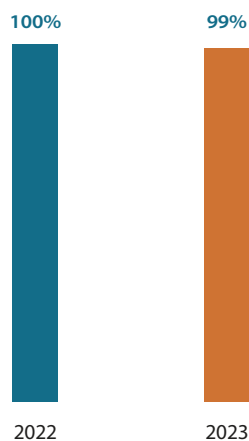
"Our clinic mainly used the funds to create a list of available resources for our clients who are looking for a physician who don't have one, who are looking for resources for a variety of conditions such as depression, anxiety, obesity, need for community resources, etc. Our staff and I itemized these resources available and collated them in a file. We also updated our binder for standards of care and reviewed it. The funding gave us an opportunity and incentive to do this for our clients and the office."

– 2023 Physician Survey

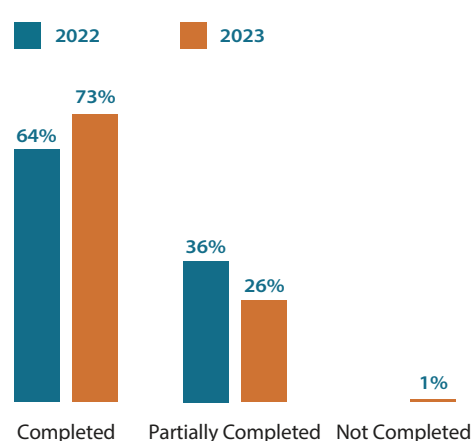
Efficacy of the Program

Although the maximum amount of funding available per clinic decreased in 2023 from \$7,500 (offered in 2022) to \$5,400 (offered in 2023), in both years the majority of grants were sufficient to meet project needs and the majority of projects were completed. Almost all participants reported they would take advantage of the grant program if it were offered again. Seventy-one percent of clinics received grants in both years indicating a recurring need for this program and high satisfaction.

Take Advantage of Program Again



Projects Completion Rates



Many comments were offered on the value of the program and its accessibility.

"Keep it up! Low-barrier, rapid funding for quick projects is a great way to improve care and morale."

– 2023 Physician Survey

"I found it to be very straightforward, easy to respond to the application and great communication if I had any questions."

– 2023 Physician Survey

"This is making a real difference to our lives and injects hope into our ability to create a sustainable future in family medicine."

– 2023 Physician Survey

"I like the way the program allows participants the diversity of choice regarding their clinic's area most in need of improvement. This makes the funding very efficient."

- 2023 Physician Survey

"Overall, the grant funding provided the resources and support we needed to make meaningful improvements to our organization and the services we provide."

– 2023 Physician Survey



Virtually all physicians said they would take advantage of this program again

Suggestions for Improvements

Suggestions were offered for how to improve the program. The most frequent suggestion was to continue to offer the program. Physicians also asked for increasing the length of the time for project completion and increasing the grant amount. Other suggestions included:

- **share learnings across clinics (also mentioned in 2022),**
- **support multi-year projects,**
- **automatically provide funding every year for all clinics, and**
- **allocate funding based on project needs not physician counts.**

The following pages provide examples of the projects undertaken in the main areas of work. It should be noted that most projects achieved multiple outcomes (e.g., upgrading or adopting an EMR improves efficiency; enhances patient experience and care; and enhances provider experience). It should also be noted that ultimately most projects result in improved patient care and improved provider experience. As we saw, these were the most frequently reported outcomes for these PMH projects.

Projects that Improved PMH Efficiency

Projects that Created Efficiencies	Examples
Development or Revision of Care Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We also updated our binder for standards of care and reviewed it.”
Digitizing Charts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “With this funding, it allowed me to improve my record keeping and transferring of data from old charts to EMR by hiring extra person to complete the task.”
Creation or Revision of Clinic Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We developed an onboarding schedule for our MDs to join the LFP program.” • “It has given allocated time to work on a policy document related to physician emergency medical leave, whereas prior we had no specific process related to this.”
EMR Upgrades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Updated to OSCAR EMR 15, improvement in documentation, fax prescriptions, referral to specialist, allergy documentation, drug interactions and billing.” • “With Ocean eReferrals, we are hoping to improve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ online booking (patients do not need to remember their username and password - it would be accessible via web with personal identifiers) ◦ patient messages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ease of communication - patient reminders - website forms - this is a BIG BONUS - having patients populate forms/templates with their concerns and perhaps answers to specific questions related to their primary concerns (we can create those templates) ◦ Check-in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kiosks - HUGE advantage in freeing up front staff time when it comes to checking in patients.”
Equipment Upgrades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We are able to replace a noisy printer with a new, quiet one. The noise has been affecting patients' care experience and staff/physicians' wellness, as the noise is really loud and unpleasant.” • “Bought new hardware and some hardware products.” • “Able to replace outdated and damaged computers.” • “New printers for some exam rooms and all printers moved to a new network.” • “Better ergonomics in my computer cart and chair.”
Office Upgrades or Renovations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “This grant allowed us to replace and upgrade the office waiting room and exam room furniture to provide improved comfort and aesthetics of our office.” • “Updating and expanding clinic physical capacity crucial to doctors and staff work environments and patient experience.” • “Renovation and redesigning of rooms which makes it adaptable better to what nurse practitioners ask us and also, we are going to have a new doctor joining us and we needed more space.” • “This funding gave us the opportunity to take the initiative to reorganize our office, supply room, and maximize the usage of our clinic space.” • “We were able to invest the time and money to upgrade and add additional lighting throughout the clinic, including the front desk area, waiting room, all the exam rooms, and hallways. “

Panel Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Funded time to develop prevention registries.”
Care Connect and Pharmanet Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The major improvement in our office network -network is more secure now that we are on PPN, internet speed much faster and more reliable. We are now able to access Care Connect and Pharmanet, which the doctors are really happy about. Staff very happy about new computers and better functioning of network.”
Referral Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Our clinic mainly used the funds to create a list of available resources for our clients who are looking for a physician who don’t have one, who are looking for resources for a variety of conditions such as depression, anxiety, obesity, need for community resources, etc. Our staff and I itemized these resources available and collated them in a file.” • “We have updated our pharmacy list and contact information.”
Software Upgrades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “MS office installed on staff computers. • “Our computers were too old and posed a security vulnerability - especially now that we have online booking - so we decided to purchase licenses for Windows 10 and upgrade all 3 of our reception machines. This should provide better protection for confidential patient data.” • “Set up an email communication system for patients to email concerns.” • “Able to create website to provide basic information for patients.”
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We were able to hire an additional MOA for extra hours to organize patients' charts/info.” • “We are able to add a PCN clinical pharmacist to co-locate on site.”
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I used this funding to help enhance the workflow skills of my virtual MOA - we used the funds to really take a deep dive into her pain points and how we could improve the EMR or add on apps to help with workflow. This was paid training and we discussed these issues at relaxing venues where it felt neutral and without the need for her to feel defensive in anyway. This actually strengthened our working relationship and gave her a sense of feeling more valued as part of the team care we provide for our patients. I certainly vouch for clinic improvement ventures tagged in wellness settings. Paid training is very rewarding and only helps your team members to feel more positive and self-directional in their skillset. My patients certainly felt the effects of the fine tuning of the workflow, and they enjoy the autonomy they have over their care at the clinic.” • “The funding allowed us to have enhanced team-based care. In addition, the funding provided staff with time and knowledge for increased patient privacy and security.” • “This funding allowed our staff to gain more knowledge in sterilization and EMR.” • “Time for staff and physicians to work together to upgrade training of staff for more efficient communication/patient care.” • “Had meetings with MOAs to discuss computer and EMR security and patients' information protection.”

Projects That Improved Patient Experience

- Online booking.
- Free Wi-Fi in the waiting room.
- Changed waiting room and exam room chairs so that they accommodate bariatric patients and patients of elevated BMI.
- Reconfigured the waiting room for better patient flow.
- Exam room lighting improvement to enhance physical examination accuracy and patient comfort, create a more professional and comfortable environment for patients and staff, and improve visibility and safety for patients navigating the hallways.
- A text-message based digital waiting system, in order to decrease waiting room congestion and the risks of cross infection.
- Secure patient messaging integrated into EMR OSCAR along with consolidation of our online booking and video telehealth platform through Cortico.
- Purchasing patient support supplies e.g., stress balls, juice boxes (especially for those who feel unwell during blood draws or paps/IUDs), pads, baby wipes for wiping after procedures, hot water bottles for cramps post IUD insertion.

Projects That Improved Privacy & Security

- Installed McAfee antivirus total protection software into all computer terminals in the office for better security protection.
- Meetings with MOAs to discuss computer and EMR security and patients' information protection.
- The WiFi security was also improved, which provides peace of mind and reassurance.
- SR FAX enhanced privacy and security.
- I used the funding for training new MOAs as well enhancing EMR + privacy safety electronic medical records + Patient communication.
- Major improvement in our office network - the network is more secure now that we are on PPN, internet speed much faster and more reliable.
- The funding provided staff with time and knowledge for increased patient privacy and security.
- We upgraded our Google Workspace for Business plan to allow more storage, which is what we use for our business email and Google Drive. This allows all team members to use Google Drive directly, instead of having to email something from their work email to another separate Google account for storage if the main Business Google Drive is full. We now have 8TB (8000GB) of storage for our Business Google Drive and enough for everything. This creates better confidentiality for the patient and prevents unnecessary exposure of sensitive patient data.
- Our computers were too old and posed a security vulnerability - especially now that we have online booking - so we decided to purchase licenses for Windows 10 and upgrade all 3 of our reception machines. This should provide better protection for confidential patient data.
- This funding has provided us with an upgrade to our computer software which allows us to stay current with security and access to online platforms.
- This has led to understanding about the limitations of email and the importance of security. This funding has so far led to our IT specialist helping us out with possible options and also with physicians limiting what patients should be emailing us.
- We have been able to enhance network security, preventing unauthorized access to organizational assets and patient sensitive information. We have been able to make email communication safe to help improve security and ensure patient sensitive data is secure. We have also been able to streamline our staff's IT experience and improve efficiency along with safety.

Projects That Increased Access

- Online booking.
- Renovation of the office to an exam room will allow us to see more patients.
- Adding a panel of patients with mental health and ADHD to my new practice.
- Setting up a call group for our patients to have access to one of our physicians, after hours, in case of urgent issues.
- Met and discussed how to enhance provider and patient experience, improve access, and create an internal after hours call stipend. We will use the grant to support weekly clinic meetings with doctors and MOAs, and kick start the afterhours call system.
- Repaired our automatic door for mobility challenged patients.
- Implemented online booking for our patients as some patients have trouble booking through only the phone. Online booking will give them better access to their physician.
- Optimized the online booking system to ensure appointments are readily available.

Projects that Enhanced Patient Care

- Developed a screening registry and recall.
- Trained our staff in sterilizing techniques as per the BC of Doctors Guidelines.
- Improved/created documents listing what to do and what resources are available for a client that needed help to stabilize their medical conditions i.e., acutely depressed patient. List of resources that could be contacted.
- Developed a gender care pathway and pathways for transitioning young people to adult services.
- Training MOAs to download educational materials for patients regarding preventative health on variety of health issues.