

What is the Kidney Health Strategic Clinical Network (SCN)?

The Kidney Health SCN is a collaborative team of physicians, front-line health care workers, researchers, administrators, patients and others committed to improving and informing the care of patients with kidney disease.

Why was the Kidney Health SCN created?

The Kidney Health SCN was created to improve care and outcomes of patients with kidney disease. Networks are effective mechanisms to ensure collaboration and joint decision making, and are a proven model for uptake of best practices to reduce variation and improve quality of care.

Who's involved?

The Kidney Health SCN is comprised of passionate and knowledgeable people from across Alberta who will find new and innovative ways of delivering care to provide better quality, better outcomes and better value for every Albertan. Involvement in the SCN can take several forms, such as a core committee member, working group member, advisor, champion, research partner or consultant/reviewer. The Kidney Health SCN core committee consists of physicians, front-line health care workers, researchers, administrators, patients and others who are setting the strategic priorities for the SCN.

What work is under way?

The Kidney Health SCN officially launched in January 2016. Work has been underway over the past 18 months in anticipation of this launch. The following projects have been initiated to date:

- **Increasing the appropriate use of home dialysis**
Home-based therapies (peritoneal and home hemodialysis) offer improved clinical outcomes at a similar or lower cost compared with in-center hemodialysis, but are under-utilized in Alberta. Increasing the appropriate use of home-based therapies is a priority for the provincial kidney care programs.
- **Increasing the use of living donor kidney transplant**
For people who are candidates, kidney transplantation improves quality of life compared with dialysis. There is a variable use of kidney transplantation across Alberta, and the waiting list for this optimal therapy is too long.
- **Chronic kidney disease (CKD) pathway**
The CKD Clinical Pathway is a resource for primary care providers to aid in the diagnosis, medical management, and referral of adults with CKD. It was developed by the Interdisciplinary Chronic Disease Collaboration in collaboration with other key stakeholders. Link to pathway: <http://www.ckdpathway.ca/>
- **Conservative kidney management**
The Kidney Health SCN has been awarded PRIHS II funding to develop, pilot, and evaluate a Provincial Conservative Kidney Management Clinical Pathway over the next three years for patients unlikely to benefit from dialysis and who choose to not start dialysis.
- **Optimizing the timing of dialysis initiation**
Twenty-three percent of Albertans followed by a nephrologist started dialysis earlier than recommended by recent Canadian guidelines. This project incorporates these guidelines into infographics and animated whiteboards to educate patients and providers.
- **Improving management of pediatric nephrotic syndrome**
Health care providers will develop a standardized clinical pathway to improve how patients with pediatric nephrotic syndrome are managed across Alberta, promoting uptake of evidence into practice.
- **Creating a web-based referral and decision support system**
Conducted in collaboration with AHS Path to Care, we will develop a web-based referral and decision support system to optimize management of rural patients with kidney disease.