

Cultivating a safer landscape for patients



Neil de Haan is coordinator for provincial pharmacy information systems at the BC Cancer Agency and associate lead of CST's Medication Management Team

For five years, Neil de Haan has been preparing for the improvements that the Clinical & Systems Transformation (CST) project will bring about.

Neil was hired by the BC Cancer Agency to oversee the selection, implementation and maintenance of pharmacy computer systems for the regional cancer centres, Provincial Pharmacy and the Systemic Therapy Program.

Ultimately he wanted to cultivate an innovative solution to share patient information more broadly. At long last, the seeds he planted are starting to bear fruit. The CST project will introduce a shared clinical information system and create consistent, leading practices across VCH, PHSA and PHC.

"I've always been interested in computers and their intersection with healthcare, and this project is a huge opportunity to transform care," says Neil, a pharmacist with a degree in computer science. "It's going to keep delivering benefits well into the future as we really make this transformation our own. It's going to be exciting for the rest of my career."

Neil says while the BC Cancer Agency knows what care patients receive at its sites, the organization wouldn't automatically know if a patient was admitted for a broken leg at VGH between chemotherapy cycles. Similarly, VGH wouldn't know what chemotherapy the patient has received. This will become a thing of a past with CST.

"There's a lot of back-and-forth work between these institutions as staff try to maintain a complete picture of the patient. CST will help us to have that seamless record – wherever and whenever that patient presents in the system," he says. "It will improve their safety and care, and allow us to make better decisions."

Neil took a secondment from his job to join the CST project as associate lead with the Medication Management design team. He wanted to help cultivate a safer landscape for patients by developing processes that support the safer administration of medications, which will be achieved through closed loop medication management.

With multiple aging computer systems that don't talk to each other and a need to have improved access to data in BC for research, Neil is excited about using modern technology to its full potential. He adds that having a standardized platform for best practice that's consistent across VCH, PHSA and PHC will raise the level of care for all sites.

"We deliver great care wherever patients go; this will allow us to prove it," he says.

"I've been waiting for five years to see this happen and I think we're prepared, we're ready and we have the right team. I'm just really looking forward to having those first patients come through the doors at the BC Cancer Agency and seeing the difference it will make in their lives."

Background information

The Clinical and Systems Transformation project is a joint initiative of three health organizations: Vancouver Coastal Health, Provincial Health Services Authority and Providence Health Care. The project is designed to transform health care delivery systems and processes to improve the quality and consistency of the patient and caregiver experience. CST will support the health organizations in establishing common clinical and process standards, including work flows, order sets, clinical guidelines integrated plans of care and a common electronic health record. This clinical transformation will be supported by the implementation of a clinical information system that will replace aging existing systems. The project will be implemented in stages across the health organizations.

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