

Navigating the CST learning curve

There will be a ‘new normal’ for health care professionals and students across VCH, PHSA and PHC once the Clinical & Systems Transformation (CST) project is rolled out at a site.

Changes to workflows and a powerful new shared clinical information system are just the beginning and mean it’s essential that we have a comprehensive education and clinical support model in place.

Shifting from being largely paper-based to a primarily electronic work environment is a major change, but staff aren’t alone. Education leaders from VCH, PHSA and PHC say there will be a blended learning approach that is tailored to different roles and clinical workflows.

“Having a good learning strategy is critical,” says Barb Lawrie. “Our goal is that go-live is not as chaotic as people may be anticipating. To achieve this, we need a good strategy up front to get our staff comfortable with the tools.”

We are proposing that education includes a combination of self-paced online sessions, classroom courses and simulated patient scenarios. This would involve hands-on practice with the new clinical information system.

Learning sessions will be held before, during and after go-live to help provide clinicians with the knowledge and skills they need to successfully use the new system and understand the clinical workflows.

CST’s Transformational Learning team will work with site leaders to identify areas where staff may require additional education. This is to ensure everyone has the appropriate knowledge and competencies before we switch over.



Barb Lawrie, Executive Director,
Professional Practice and Chief
Clinical Information Officer,
VCH



Dori Van Stolk, former
Director, Learning and
Development, PHSA

We are also proposing to have designated coaches who are well-versed with the system and able to provide at-the-elbow support for staff to support their transition.

Our learning model has been designed for frontline staff by frontline staff, who know what they need to feel comfortable and able to continue doing their best work.

“While we can develop an innovative, effective learning strategy for all three health organizations, it’s also important we localize the plans to meet the needs of the different areas. They know our people the best,” says Dori Van Stolk.

The education leaders understand people are concerned about backfill for education. This is currently being factored into the plan for learning.

For those who are apprehensive about the change, the leaders make it clear they will be supported.

“We have people who need the basics all the way to people who have worked with electronic systems before. We will design an education program that caters to this spectrum,” says Shelley Fraser.

“There’s no judgment. It’s just like if you were using an IV pump for the first time, there’s no expectation that you would be comfortable with it.”

Although change might feel scary, Barb, Dori and Shelley – all members of CST’s Learning Advisory Group – say the benefits of CST outweigh the challenges and it will be worth it.



Shelley Fraser, Director of
Education Strategy for CST and
Clinical Orientation, VCH



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“I’ve been a nurse for over 35 years and I have been dreaming of this day. This will drive quality and safety for clinicians,” says Barb. “Patients won’t need to repeat their information over and over or carry copies of their documents with them, worried that a clinician won’t have the right information. For patients, it’s just amazing.

“The future is incredible.”

Stay tuned for more information about the plan for learning and how to boost your computer skills. In the meantime, free classes are offered by academic institutions like the UBC Learning Exchange or libraries, including the Vancouver Public Library.

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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