

## Integrating systems for CST success



Dr. Eric Grafstein is CST  
Chief Medical  
Information Officer,  
VCH/PHC and the  
Regional Emergency  
Department Head for  
VCH and PHC

Dr. Eric Grafstein says data drives everything he does in health care.

“We need the information at our fingertips,” he says. “We have a tremendous reliance on information from both inpatient units and the community in order to know what’s going on with the patient.”

Dr. Grafstein is also the physician lead for the Clinical & Systems Transformation (CST) project’s Emergency Team. He got involved because he is passionate about improving access to data and the CST project will help accomplish this.

CST will integrate more than 300 different systems currently in use across VCH, PHSA and PHC, ensuring important data is readily available to our staff. Because not one system is used for everything, multiple standalone systems need to be integrated. The data will be synthesized in the new clinical information system. This will be completed before each site goes live.

It’s about bringing everything together in a single repository, says Dr. Grafstein. So, even if data remains in a different system, it won’t look like it.

“Integration of multiple systems reduces duplicate data entry,” says Serge Music, CST Technical Transformation Project Manager. “It potentially introduces errors if users have to enter patients’ identifiers into systems that aren’t talking to each other.”

Without integration, important information – such as allergy interactions, what drugs have been dispensed and what labs have been done – wouldn’t be shared between systems.

“It’s really critical for our clinicians to have this in order to do their work properly,” says Serge. He adds interfaces are being designed as connection points between an existing

system and the new clinical information system. They bridge the gap between two systems that weren't designed to work together.

Dr. Grafstein says it will make things a lot easier. The new system will allow him to instantly bring up patient information – like electrocardiogram (ECG) or blood count results – instead of asking someone to look it up for him in various systems like Muse, PathNet or Excelleris.

He adds these benefits are major steps on the road to transforming our health care system to be smarter.

“This project will improve patient care, the efficiency of care and patient safety – and it's rare to have the opportunity to do all three.”

## Background information

The Clinical & 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 safety, quality and consistency of the patient and caregiver experience. CST will support the health organizations in establishing common clinical and process standards, including workflows, 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.

**Website:**  
CSTproject.ca

**Email:**  
[info@CSTproject.ca](mailto:info@CSTproject.ca)

**CST Executive Directors & Transformation Leads:** **Chief Medical Information Officers:**

**VCH:** Elizabeth Stanger, [Elizabeth.Stanger@vch.ca](mailto:Elizabeth.Stanger@vch.ca)  
**PHSA:** Vicky Crompton, [Vcrompton@phsa.ca](mailto:Vcrompton@phsa.ca)  
**PHC:** Grant McCullough,  
[GMcCullough@providencehealth.bc.ca](mailto:GMcCullough@providencehealth.bc.ca)

**VCH/PHC:** Eric Grafstein,  
[Eric.Grafstein@vch.ca](mailto:Eric.Grafstein@vch.ca)  
**PHSA:** Alain Gagnon,  
[Alain.Gagnon@phsa.ca](mailto:Alain.Gagnon@phsa.ca)