MSSU PRESENTS

Learning Health Systems in Action

WEBINAR RECAP

Learning Loops: Policy-driven evidence and evidence-driven policy

Focus: Policy to Practice

Speakers: Dr. Andrea Bishop — Director of Research and Engagement, Nova Scotia Pharmacy Regulator (NSPR)

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THE PROBLEM

- Growing reports of pharmacist workload and burnout raised concerns about impacts on patient safety and quality of care.
- While the Nova Scotia Pharmacy Regulator had a staffing requirement for pharmacies for many years, it lacked an evidence-based mechanism to monitor or enforce it.

THE LHS APPROACH

- Embedded research through an in-house researcher and partnerships with external experts and researchers.
- Used an iterative cycle of research, priority-setting, policy development, implementation and evaluation.
- Created a regulatory sandbox to test practice changes and generate real-world evidence.

WHAT CHANGED

- Implemented a new staffing policy using pharmacy-specific staffing scorecards.
- Adopted a collaborative, risk-based process for lower-scoring pharmacies to improve their staffing levels.
- Established annual data collection and evaluation to refine the model and inform future decisions.

EVIDENCE IN ACTION

- Conducted a literature review, practitioner/interest-holder interviews and validation surveys as foundational research.
- Collected over one million data points from provincial administrative databases, pharmacy staffing records, practitioner surveys, patient-reported experience measures (PREMs) and workload measures.
- Combined data into a validated staffing score for each community pharmacy in Nova Scotia, as well as establishing links between staffing levels, practitioner well-being, and quality of care.

KEY LESSONS

1. Embed research expertise within policy organizations to strengthen evidence-informed decision-making.
2. Use multiple data sources and interest-holder partnerships to build credibility and actionable evidence.
3. Design policy as a continuous learning process, with ongoing measurement and evaluation.

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