MSSU PRESENTS

Learning Health Systems in Action

WEBINAR RECAP

Evaluating Patient Navigation in Dementia Care: How Evidence Informed Provincial Scale-Up

Focus: Evaluation

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THE PROBLEM

- About 13,000 New Brunswickers live with dementia, a number projected to double by 2038. They and their care partners face fragmented services, stigma and difficulty accessing care.
- Access to a permanent primary care provider fell from 93% in 2017 to 73% in 2025, further complicating access to care.
- Patient navigation offers an approach to helping people access and coordinate health and social services.

THE LHS APPROACH

- Evidence informed program design: A scoping review, scan of 11 Canadian navigation programs, and needs assessment involving clinicians, decision-makers, people living with dementia and care partners guided development.
- Co-designed a bilingual navigation model piloted at 6 sites; a Patient Advisory Council (PAC) oversaw all stages .
- A provincial knowledge transfer unit consolidated reports and tailored support for each team, with decision-makers engaged throughout.

WHAT CHANGED

- Pilot results were positive - 72% felt their goals were met at discharge. Of survey respondents, 82% were satisfied, 73% said their knowledge of services increased, and 74% said their access improved
- Findings from the pilot contributed to the government committing to roll out dementia navigators across the province.
- Evaluation will continue to track what to maintain, adapt, or change in new contexts as scale-up proceeds.

EVIDENCE IN ACTION

- The most common reason people sought navigation support was to access Department of Social Development programs.
- Surveys and interviews with care partners identified the importance of practical guidance and emotional support, while identifying system barriers such as long wait times and income eligibility cut-offs.
- Implementation interviews with the project team, clinicians, navigators, and members of the PAC found that existing relationships and trained staff helped, while a compressed setup timeline and "navigating to nowhere" got in the way.

KEY LESSONS

1. Build evaluation in from the start and share findings in a timely manner while they can still shape change.
2. Pair program data with surveys and interviews to learn whether a program works and the barriers and enablers to program delivery.
3. Engage decision-makers early and align with existing government mandates and priorities.

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