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MICHAEL SMITH FOUNDATION  
FOR HEALTH TECHNOLOGIES  
Research Council of Canada

## Raising the bar: A critical time for bold leadership

Leadership in Action: Leadership and Health System Redesign Final Report  
June 2014

National PHSI Team

CHLNI

UNIVERSITÄT WÜRZBURG  
FACHBEREICH MEDIZIN  
LEHRSTUHL FÜR SYSTEMISCHE  
LEBENSWEISUNG UND RESEARCH

## Your Presenters

Research Lead:  
**Graham Dickson** (Royal Roads University)

Decision-maker Lead:  
**Bill Tholl** (Canadian Health Leadership Network)

Building a Bridge Between Research and Leaders

Operational and KT lead:  
**Ron Lindstrom** (Royal Roads University)

## Leadership and Health System Redesign Project

### Background:

- Respond to tightening budgets and... transformation of healthcare in Canada
- Demand for new and modern conceptions of leadership
- Looming leadership “crisis”

## Research questions: What?

- 1) What is the current state of **health leadership capacity** in Canada?
- 2) Where are the **gaps** between current practices and leading practices?
- 3) How can knowledge of effective leadership be **mobilized** by the network to enhance the development of quality health leaders?

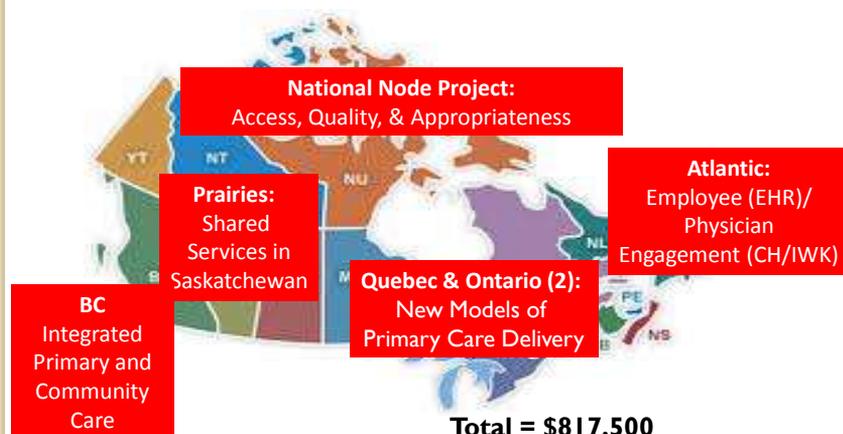
## The PHSI Team

17 *researchers* from  
nine universities

14 *decision makers* from 12  
jurisdictions—policy makers,  
CEOs, mid-level leaders

5 *knowledge mobilizers*  
(university & health  
organizations)

## Participatory Action Research Projects Across Canada



- Total = \$817,500**
- **CIHR Grant (\$350,000),**
  - **MSFHR Grant (\$100,000)**
  - **In-kind contributions**



## Leadership definition

*“Leadership is the ability to influence others to work together to achieve a constructive purpose.”*

*Dickson 2009*

## Findings and Results: Now What?



## Capacity for transformation: Skill Gap

- Need more systems thinking, strategic thinking, visioning, engagement and self-leadership.
- Quality physician leadership—at all levels—is required.
- Too much churn.

*“The strategy that is being employed is insufficient; (change) just moves at a snail’s pace”*

84% of all respondents say there is a small to large “skill gap” in leadership—CHLNet benchmarking project.

*“We have the leadership capacity, but politicization doesn’t allow us to row in the same direction.”*

## Capacity for transformation: Independence & Fragmentation

*“...if we can just park our collective egos and get out of this passive aggressive nature and work as a collaborative we could be stronger.”*



NHS: First Patient Safety Ombudsman.

- Shared leadership; shared vision.
- Challenges conventional notions of autonomy, accountability, and collaboration.

## Capacity for transformation: Change Fatigue

Canada's leaders are having their energy drained and not refreshed—need for succession planning and leadership development.

*“I am not sure I have the energy or stamina or stomach to do it ever again...we get “hammered” by the premier's office, the minister's office, the unions, local newspapers, the people who donate to the hospital, the foundation, the public. Everybody believes that change is for the worst.”*

## KM: Creating a Leadership Culture

*“In England they have started this scheme: the thousand top leaders. They are trying to train the thousand top leaders that are the next generation of leadership for the NHS. Wow.”*

*“Canada has a healthcare succession planning model called ‘I quit!’”*

*“Current leadership culture needs a basic refresh. There is not a great value placed on health management and administration in this country.”*

- Canada is laissez-faire.
- A national convener is missing and is needed.
- It should link to Canada’s reform agenda.

## Support for Standards of Leadership

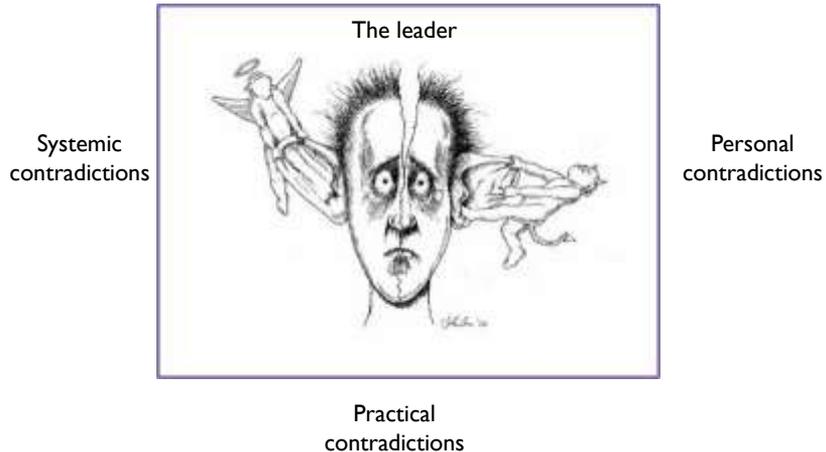
- Other countries have national expectations—UK, Australia.
- Canada needs a national framework—like LEADS.

*“...our research supports a national standard for leadership competencies”*



Otherwise we are playing leadership in Alice’s world...

## Array of contradictions pulling on leaders



## Deliberative Dialogue: So What?

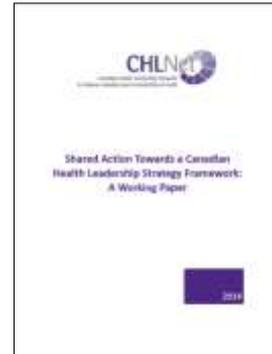
- Bring coherence across the country on leadership call to action; bring Canada back to top
- Conduct dialogue on complexity, systems transformation, and LEADS
- Build networks to identify innovative practices in leadership for health-system transformation.



## Support for Canadian Health Leadership Action Plan

*“(Lets)...reframe the conversation from the negative—’leadership is lacking in health care’—We have to give them a focus; lift them up. Make the endgame clear. Be more positive about the strength of our leadership in the country today”.*

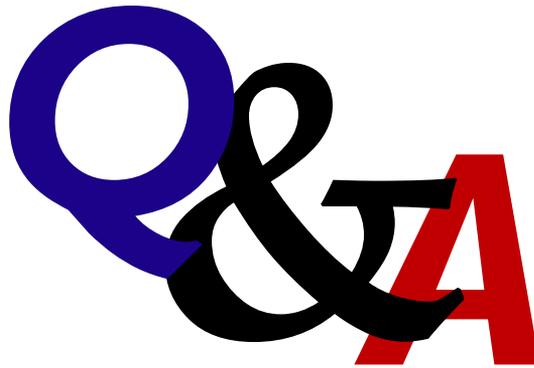
*“The good news is there has been a shift in the system in the last 6-8 months. I think people are beginning to understand that they can’t do it alone.... it is a louder voice now.”*



Canadian Leadership Action Plan

## Why research partnerships are important

- Orients participants to research and practice perspectives
- Encourages participants to appreciate and honour their different worldviews, values, and beliefs
- Enhances participant collaboration and cooperation
- Helps participants to understand and address issues together, including power, to solve real problems
- Enables transformative learning for researchers and practitioners



Thank you from  
the PHSI team.



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