Connect Care Oversight

Why do we need a Connect Care Oversight Strategy?

The Alberta Health Services (AHS) Connect Care initiative seeks to improve health outcomes through adoption of a continuum-of-care, cross-generation, cross-geography clinical information system (CIS). For this to succeed, health care providers and support staff must integrate informational supports into their workflows in a meaningful way. This happens best when CIS users have a meaningful input into CIS decisions and priorities. A Connect Care oversight strategy ensures a well-run initiative, guided by purpose and tempered by pragmatism.

What does Connect Care Oversight encompass?

Connect Care oversight balances the needs of project governance, clinical advocacy and community agency.

Governance: Connect Care governance is expressed through standing committees that address key areas of risk and accountability. Committees decide about matters of policy, design and standards. They have broad impact, setting guard-rails within which advocacy and community oversights work.

Advocacy: Advocacy is about understanding how professional, operational and practice issues affect CIS design, adoption, deployment, use and optimization. Advocacy is sensitive to how business and clinical practice operates, what can work, and how to effect change from within.

Community: Sustaining success requires nimble ways to tap into what is happening on the front lines, while monitoring for unanticipated problems. Community-aware calibration can happen through purposeful consultation with advisory and user groups, tapping into street-smarts of CIS users.

How is Governance conducted?

Connect Care governance is accountable to an overarching Connect Care Executive Committee (CCEC), in turn accountable to AHS and Alberta Health leadership. Five high-level committees report to the CCEC: Program & Design, Content & Standards, Engagement & Adoption, Portals, and Communications. The Content & Standards Committee, for example, decides about core clinical system design applicable to all clinical and operational areas.

Each high-level committee is also the point of escalation for one or more accountable committees or workgroups.

How is Advocacy promoted?

A multidisciplinary Connect Care Council (CCC) attends to the intersect between technology, workflow and practice. It considers solutions, provides recommendations and gives direction about the effects and acceptability of decision, documentation and improvement supports. Provincial in scope, its membership includes Connect Care Area Council (CCAC) co-chairs spanning all disciplines, specialties, supports, sections and programs.

CCACs report to the CCC which reports to the CCEC. CCACs deliberate and guide professional and practice issues specific to major clinical programs, such as surgery, medicine, child health, women's

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health, mental health, emergency and cancer care. Area councils liaise closely with provincial guidance, policy and quality-improvement groups. The majority of specialty clinical system design decisions, for example, are made by area councils.

How is Community Agency enabled?

AHS has well-developed supports for User Groups, which will enable Connect Care users with shared interests and needs to organize and work together. The Connect Care program, working with AHS zone operational and clinical entities, helps User Groups articulate their needs, take responsibility and collectively find ways to improve healthcare quality. User Group supports help with meeting management, information sharing, communication forums and links to Advocacy and Governance structures.

In addition, three initiative-wide advisory groups act as resources to both governance committees and advocacy councils. A Patient & Family Advisory Group facilitates consultations about a wide range of design, implementation and support challenges. A Stakeholder Advisory Group assures input from organizations that affect and are affected by Connect Care, including professional associations, regulatory agencies, research consortia, quality councils and health education institutions. Finally, a Security, Privacy & Access Advisory Group considers alignment of Connect Care developments with privacy legislation, policy and practice.

How do Connect Care governance, advocacy and agency relate?
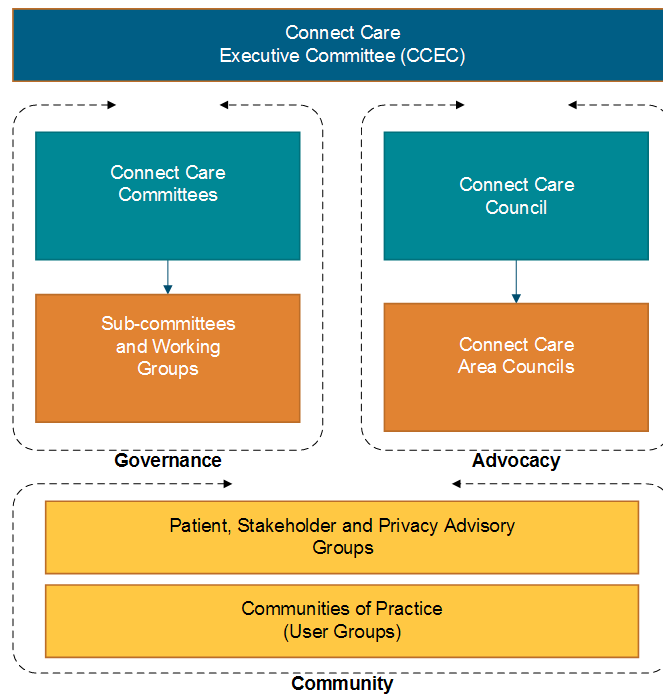
Advocacy and Community oversights work in parallel with and as a resource to Governance structures. All are coordinated through the Connect Care Executive Committee and the Connect Care Program Office.

By positioning the Connect Care Council at the same level as governance committees, the Connect Care initiative balances clinical, operational and technology considerations. It also recognizes that community and culture are as impactful as matters of technology design and deployment, and that meaningful community supports are essential to emergence of organized, empowered and accountable CIS users.