



Community Engagement Framework

Healthy People, Healthy Communities

*Approved May 1, 2013
Executive Management Committee*

www.easternhealth.ca



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Introduction

Public involvement in the health and community services sector has increased tremendously over the past few decades.

National, provincial and regional organizations have encouraged citizens to participate in decisions that impact on their health and the determinants of health. More and more, people are becoming advocates for their own health needs and those of their community. And research indicates that greater patient and family involvement in taking responsibility for your health and your health care leads better clinical outcomes.¹

The Board of Trustees of Eastern Health has recognized the importance of community engagement since its inception in 2005. Indeed, as an organization dedicated to *Healthy People, Healthy Communities*, Eastern Health recognizes partnerships are vital for the purpose of service delivery.

In its first years of existence, the Board of Trustees invited stakeholders from across the region to attend public meetings to discuss health care needs and the health of their communities. This evolved into community health needs assessments completed throughout the region, complete with recommendations and implementation follow-up.² As part of the needs assessment process, Community Advisory Committees were established. Focus groups, key informant interviews and surveys were used as ways to get people to participate in the needs assessment process.

As Eastern Health continues to mature, the Board has recognized the importance of community engagement in its strategic plans. The concept of community engagement is also an underlying theme in Accreditation Canada Standards. Throughout Eastern Health, there are many examples of community engagement activities. With the maturation of the organization and the Board, a Community Engagement Framework has been developed. This framework will guide Eastern Health to develop a collaborative partnership approach to achieving its vision of *Healthy People, Healthy Communities*.

Guided by Eastern Health's Foundational Statements

Vision

Eastern Health, through the development of its Strategic Plan, has outlined its vision and values. The vision of *Healthy People, Healthy Communities* is based on the understanding that both the individual and the community have important roles to play in maintaining good health. Healthy communities enhance the health of individuals, and when individuals are healthy, communities are overall healthy. Eastern Health holds a firm belief that communities have the collective wisdom and ability to develop

¹ Various references have been identified, including, H. Hibbard and Jessica Greene. "What the Evidence Shows About Patient Activation: Better Health Outcomes and Care Experiences; Fewer Data on Costs," Maerrie J. Kaas, Suzanne Lee, Carol Peitzman. "Barriers to Collaboration Between Mental Health Professional and Families in the Care of Persons with Serious Mental Illness" and Department of Health et al. "Improving Children and Young People's Health Outcomes: A System Wide Response." See References Cited.

² Needs assessment on the Burin Peninsula, Bell Island, Southern Avalon, Trinity Conception, Northeast Avalon and Discovery Zone are available at www.easternhealth.ca.

programs to promote healthy living and is committed to working with its many partners to achieve the vision of *Healthy People, Healthy Communities*.

Values

Eastern Health's core values were developed through a community engagement process in 2007. They provide meaning and direction to its employees, physicians and volunteers in providing quality program and services. The values of Eastern Health are basic convictions that give meaning and direction to the things that the organization sees as important. In addition to the values and their definition outlined below, key behaviours and outcomes are found in Appendix I.

Respect		Recognizing, celebrating and valuing the uniqueness of each patient/client/resident, employee, discipline, workplace and community that together are Eastern Health.
Integrity		Valuing and facilitating honesty and open communication across employee groups and communities as well as with patients, residents and clients of Eastern Health.
Fairness		Valuing and facilitating equity and justice in the allocation and use of our resources.
Connectedness		Recognizing and celebrating the strength of each part, both within and beyond the structure, that creates the whole of Eastern Health.
Excellence		Committing ourselves to continuous improvement in order to excel

Focus on Values

While all five values prompt community engagement, the values of integrity, connectedness and respect are of particular relevance to community engagement. These values have outcomes of openness and accountability; strength through diversity and wellness.

The key behaviours provide insight into the meaning of each of these values and their applicability to community engagement.

Integrity

Valuing and facilitating honesty and open communication across employee groups and communities as well as with patients, clients, and residents of Eastern Health

- We recognize that the value of integrity requires being open and honest about our understandings, beliefs, and actions
- We believe that accountability for our actions is key to integrity because any action by an individual who is part of the Eastern Health system will affect the rest of the system
- We value and demonstrate honesty in our interactions with patients, clients, residents and employees and in our communications with the general public, political leaders and the media
- We appreciate and promote community engagement, dialogue with stakeholders, and two-way communications as means to enhance transparency and accountability
- We consult with other teams, disciplines, and communities to encourage positive change in planning and policy development
- We listen to others and demonstrate that we have heard by taking action
- We take an approach of collaborative partnership across patient/client/resident groups, employee groups and communities
- We are honest about our strengths and our limitations
- We welcome discussion with the general public through our engagement with our political leaders and the media: we listen, we inform, and we learn through those discussions
- We recognize and celebrate the fact that we are accountable to each other, to those in other employee groups, to our patients, clients, residents, and to our communities

Connectedness

Recognizing and celebrating the strength of each part, both within and beyond the structure, that creates the whole of Eastern Health

- We respect the broad knowledge and expertise distributed throughout Eastern Health
- We appreciate the contribution of each individual, profession, discipline, team, workplace and community of Eastern Health
- We encourage and facilitate team work and collaboration across employee groups and communities
- We promote a spirit of open communication with the general public through active and positive community engagement as well as through our political leaders and the media
- We work to promote the integration of various parts of our system through communication and collaboration
- We facilitate communication and sharing of information and ideas among our employees, physicians, volunteers, partners, stakeholders, and the community
- We facilitate and promote internal and external communication, consultation and collaboration
- We recognize that the cultural, social, economic and environmental contexts of our various geographical communities affect, and are affected by, the work of Eastern Health, and we act with this in mind
- We recognize that Eastern Health is its patients, clients, residents, employees, work places, and communities, and we are loyal to this whole

Respect

Recognizing, celebrating and valuing the uniqueness of each patient, client, resident, employee, discipline, workplace and community that together are Eastern Health

- We appreciate the dignity of every person and we show it in our attitudes and actions
- We show consideration and appreciation for all people who are part of Eastern Health
- We adhere to rigorous standards of privacy and confidentiality
- We show caring through consideration, compassion, fairness, and good will toward each individual who is part of Eastern Health
- We know that the wellness of patients, clients, residents, employees and communities is dependent on feeling respected and valued, and we act according to that knowledge
- We encourage and facilitate the balance of work and personal life, knowing that respect for self is as important as respect for others
- We recognize that in an integrated and holistic health care system, the individual components (people, disciplines, work places, and communities) are unique and valuable; we do not encourage a one-size fits all approach
- We embrace diversity and inclusion
- We are aware that health and wellness are influenced by the environment, and we take steps to prevent harm to the environment and promote a sustainable natural environment.

These key behaviours shape the organization's work with its public.

Defining Community and Community Engagement

There are many definitions of community and community engagement. The following definitions have been adopted by Eastern Health.

Community

A community is people connected to each other by bonds such as living in the same geographical area, people with some similar characteristics (e.g. age, religion, gender or ethnicity) or people who come together with a common interest, or people who have social and psychological ties with each other and with the place where they live.³

Community Engagement

At Eastern Health, community engagement is the process of working collaboratively and interactively with communities to address issues affecting their well-being. Community engagement enables communities to have a role in planning, decision-making and evaluating health services and policies. Community engagement can result in environmental, behavioural and service changes that will improve the health of the community and its members.⁴

³ This definition comes from Kathleen M. MacQueen, Eleanor McLellan et al. "What is Community? An Evidence-Based Definition for Participatory Public Health," and Evaluation Support Scotland, Effective Interventions Unit, June 2002 . See References Cited.

⁴ This definition comes from Fawcett et al., 1995; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1997. Community Engagement, Vancouver Coastal Health and Tamarack– An Institute for Community Engagement, 2003. See References Cited.

Benefits of Community Engagement

Eastern Health recognizes the importance of community engagement. There are many benefits, including to:

- Develop higher quality services based on community feedback
- Target resources where they are most effective and valued by the community
- Foster self-help and mutual-aid
- Be publicly accountable by sharing information on decision-making
- Hear from vulnerable groups and allowing for consideration of perspectives that would not otherwise be understood.
- Strengthen capacity, in communities and within our organization, to ensure that community members have a role in decision-making
- Create communities that take greater responsibility for what is happening in their area
- Partner with external stakeholder groups
- Strengthen population health approach
- Consult with the public to inform health service planning, policy and operations
- Foster a people-centred culture
- Educate communities on Eastern Health—its role, mandate, challenges, operations
- Create an understanding amongst communities on why certain decisions are made⁵

Guiding Principles

Community engagement at Eastern Health will be guided by the following principles:

- Diversity is key.
Diverse voices bring different opinions and perspectives, leading to better decisions. Eastern Health will make great effort to engage particularly with hard-to-reach clients directly, and when necessary, engage with advocates on their behalf.
- Everyone is a stakeholder.
Health is a universal concern. As current, past and future users of the health and community services sector, all people served in Eastern Health’s geography (regionally and provincially) will have an interest in issues of broad public concern. Eastern Health will be aware of its geography and demography when interacting with the public.
- Engagement is a spectrum.
Eastern Health recognizes that community engagement has many facets. It means informing, consulting, involving, collaborating and empowering. It also requires participation by the public. Engagement may be at various levels, from individuals to interest groups to community leaders.

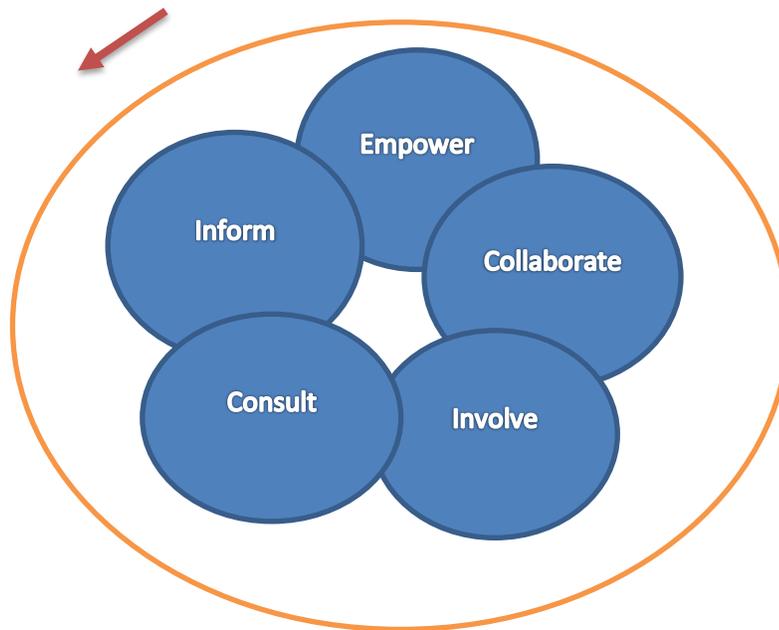
⁵ Benefits outlined from Vancouver Coastal Health’s Community Engagement Framework and [Tamarack - An Institute for Community Engagement](#).

- Engagement is giving and receiving.
In addition to recognizing the spectrum of engagement, Eastern Health recognizes the importance of closing the loop on engagement activities. Eastern Health commits to reporting back to its communities about how their input was used in decision-making.

Community Engagement Framework

Eastern Health uses the International Association of Public Participation's Spectrum of Public Participation.⁶ This Spectrum of Participation ranges from information dissemination to full partnership and the spectrum has five components: inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower.

Eastern Health may engage with community at any one level at a time or two or three levels at different times or at the same time. There is no one starting point.



⁶ (c) 2007 International Association for Public Participation www.iap2.org.

The full model follows:

**International Association of Public Policy Spectrum
of Public Participation**



	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public Participation Goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public
Promise to the public	We will keep you informed	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulation solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
Example techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fact sheets ▪ Web sites ▪ Open houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public comment ▪ Focus groups ▪ Surveys ▪ Public meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workshops ▪ Deliberative polling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Citizen advisory committees ▪ Consensus-building ▪ Participatory decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Citizen juries ▪ Ballots ▪ Delegated decision-making

Informing

Eastern Health puts substantial effort into communicating factual and timely information to the public. Communication strategies are completed for various initiatives across the organization and Eastern Health uses diverse ways to reach the public and other stakeholders. Various mechanisms include: media releases; public events; social media such as Facebook (EasternHealthNL) and Twitter (@EasternHealthNL); the internet (www.easternhealth.ca) and publications such as the Annual Performance Report.

Consulting

There are a number of ways that Eastern Health requests feedback from the public. Needs assessments involve focus groups, key informant interviews and surveys of people living in the areas being assessed. Efforts are also made to engage hard-to-reach groups, including youth and those with disabilities. During the development of the *Statement of Rights and Responsibilities for Clients, Patients and Residents of Eastern Health*, public meetings were held to invite people to have input into the development of this statement.

Involving

In many areas, Eastern Health works directly with the public to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are understood and considered.

One example is the Ethics Advisory Committees. Formed from public expressions of interest, these Ethics Advisory Committees represent the public and provide lay perspectives on ethical issues.

Eastern Health's Chronic Disease Self-Management Workshops are another example of community engagement. Lay leaders are trained to co-facilitate the workshops and then help to deliver them to help people live better with their chronic illness.

Collaborating

Eastern Health collaborates with community stakeholders in many different ways.

The two Wellness Coalitions consist of community groups from geographic areas who come together to share ideas and resources with the aim to improve the health of communities.

For each of Eastern Health's community health needs assessments, Community Advisory Committees, comprised of residents of the area who responded to a public call to participate, provided feedback about the health needs of the community and made recommendations as to how to address concerns.

In the case of new services, Eastern Health often seeks community input into program and policy planning to ensure that it is effectively responding to the needs of the community. For example, the communications plan for the relocation of the new St. John's Long-Term Care facility involves the Family Council of the current facility.

Empowering

One of Eastern Health's strategic priorities is Population Health. The organization recognizes the importance of encouraging community action to achieve its vision of *Healthy People, Healthy Communities*. Through its Community Development Fund, Eastern Health provides funding to community groups for work that will impact on the health of the community.

Conclusion

Eastern Health recognizes the importance of community engagement. A strong commitment to community engagement will enable the organization to work towards its vision of *Healthy People, Healthy Communities*.

Appendix I: Eastern Health Values

Value	Key Behaviours
<p>I. RESPECT</p> <p>Definition: Recognizing, celebrating and valuing the uniqueness of each patient, client, resident, employee, discipline, workplace and community that together are Eastern Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We appreciate the dignity of every person and we show it in our attitudes and actions • We show consideration and appreciation for all people who are part of Eastern Health • We adhere to rigorous standards of privacy and confidentiality • We show caring through consideration, compassion, fairness, and good will toward each individual who is part of Eastern Health • We know that the wellness of patients, clients, residents, employees and communities is dependent on feeling respected and valued, and we act according to that knowledge • We encourage and facilitate the balance of work and personal life, knowing that respect for self is as important as respect for others • We recognize that in an integrated and holistic health care system, the individual components (people, disciplines, work places, and communities) are unique and valuable; we do not encourage a one-size fits all approach • We embrace diversity and inclusion • We are aware that health and wellness are influenced by the environment, and we take steps to prevent harm to the environment and promote a sustainable natural environment.
<p>II. INTEGRITY</p> <p>Definition: Valuing and facilitating honesty and open communication across employee groups and communities as well as with patients, clients, and residents of Eastern Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We recognize that the value of integrity requires being open and honest about our understandings, beliefs, and actions • We believe that accountability for our actions is key to integrity because any action by an individual who is part of the Eastern Health system will affect the rest of the system • We value and demonstrate honesty in our interactions with patients, clients, residents and employees and in our communications with the general public, political leaders and the media • We appreciate and promote community engagement, dialogue with stakeholders, and two-way communications as means to enhance transparency and accountability • We consult with other teams, disciplines, and communities to encourage positive change in planning and policy

Value	Key Behaviours
	<p>development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We listen to others and demonstrate that we have heard by taking action • We take an approach of collaborative partnership across patient/client/resident groups, employee groups and communities • We are honest about our strengths and our limitations • We welcome discussion with the general public through our engagement with our political leaders and the media: we listen, we inform, and we learn through those discussions • We recognize and celebrate the fact that we are accountable to each other, to those in other employee groups, to our patients, clients, residents, and to our communities
<p>III. FAIRNESS</p> <p>Definition: Valuing and facilitating equity and justice in the allocation and use of our resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are responsible in our management of our resources • We value and facilitate the just allocation of resources across patient, client, resident groups, employee groups, and communities • We encourage best practices for using our resources to do jobs and deliver services • We act with the interests of future generations in mind • We balance sustainability and innovation • We believe individuals and communities are empowered to articulate their own best interest • We are fair to each other
<p>IV. CONNECTEDNESS</p> <p>Definition: Recognizing and celebrating the strength of each part, both within and beyond the structure, that creates the whole of Eastern Health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We respect the broad knowledge and expertise distributed throughout Eastern Health • We appreciate the contribution of each individual, profession, discipline, team, workplace and community of Eastern Health • We encourage and facilitate team work and collaboration across employee groups and communities • We promote a spirit of open communication with the general public through active and positive community engagement as well as through our political leaders and the media • We work to promote the integration of various parts of our

Value	Key Behaviours
	<p>system through communication and collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We facilitate communication and sharing of information and ideas among our employees, physicians, volunteers, partners, stakeholders, and the community • We facilitate and promote internal and external communication, consultation and collaboration • We recognize that the cultural, social, economic and environmental contexts of our various geographical communities affect, and are affected by, the work of Eastern Health, and we act with this in mind • We recognize that Eastern Health is its patients, clients, residents, employees, work places, and communities, and we are loyal to this whole
<p>V. EXCELLENCE</p> <p>Definition: Committing ourselves to continuous improvement in order to excel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We value compassion and respect as essential to quality care and services • We encourage and facilitate the ongoing professional and personal development of each individual who is part of Eastern Health • We provide opportunities to students and facilitate continuing professional development across employee groups and communities • We promote and support innovation • Our growth is collaborative in intent: We continually expand our knowledge by learning from different perspectives across patient, client, resident groups, disciplines, and communities • We recognize that employee competency is essential to excellence in performance and client satisfaction • We promote a culture of safety • We encourage capacity building within our communities to facilitate health and wellness • We provide feedback to each other in order to refine best practices in health care • We recognize that our goal is optimal wellness for patients, clients, residents, employees and communities and we act according to that goal • We promote and support changes and initiatives to achieve our Vision: <i>Healthy People, Healthy Communities</i>

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