

Innovative Models Promoting Access-to-Care Transformation Overview

Recent and widespread reforms in community based primary health care (CBPHC) in Western countries focus on health systems in the hope of making them more affordable, inclusive, and fair. However, meaningful gaps in access to CBPHC remain, especially when vulnerabilities exist (e.g., poverty, low literacy levels, language barriers, etc.). These vulnerabilities, or a combination of them, can result in unmet needs for care, delayed or inappropriate treatments, and avoidable emergency department consultations and hospitalizations.

The main goal of the Innovative Models Promoting Access-to-Care Transformation (IMPACT) research initiative is to improve CBPHC by improving access to appropriate care when vulnerabilities exist. To achieve these goals, the IMPACT initiative has four interconnected projects that will take place over five years (2013-2018):

1. Identify vulnerabilities that can increase gaps in access to CBPHC in specific locations.
2. Consider the local context where gaps in access and vulnerabilities exist.
3. Use local knowledge and knowledge gained from research to find potential solution(s) for improving access to CBPHC and then rollout the solution(s) in the locations where gaps in access and vulnerabilities exist.
4. Determine whether the solution(s) actually improve access to CBPHC in the locations where gaps in access and vulnerabilities exist.

These projects are collaborative in nature. As a research team, we will focus on building partnerships between local decision makers, researchers, clinicians, and community members working together to support the improvement of access to CBPHC. These partnerships are called Local Innovation Partnerships (LIPs) and have been established in three Canadian provinces (Québec, Ontario, and Alberta) and three Australian states (New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia).

Each LIP team strives to empower local community members to address gaps in access, particularly where community vulnerabilities exist. We will also focus on building connections and capacity among academics, clinicians, and decision-makers to assess, understand, and address local access issues. The collective work of IMPACT will result in a wealth of information and research that will help identify and clarify important challenges and barriers in accessing CBPHC. This information will help decision makers to identify, understand, and address access issues in other locations. The information and shared learning will also help policy makers create an environment where the continued addressing of access issues can occur.

A long-range goal for the IMPACT projects is that they contribute to lasting change in access to CBPHC in the locations where vulnerabilities are found and addressed.

For more information about IMPACT go to:

<http://www.med.monash.edu.au/sphc/impact/programme-of-work/>