



## Working together

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The Primary Health Care Transition Fund has supported many projects across Canada that have focused on innovative models of primary health care delivery to various populations of patients. Fundamental to these models is a team-based approach that brings together family physicians and other health care professionals. As many of us are experiencing, however, working in teams poses various challenges related to role identification, overlapping scopes of practice, professional regulation, liability, funding and remuneration, the use of information technology, team leadership and management, and the need to evaluate changes in the way we work together.

One of the national Primary Health Care Transition Fund projects has studied these issues as they relate to interdisciplinary practice. The Enhancing Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Primary Health Care initiative brought together 11 organizations to produce a series of reports and tools to better understand the factors associated with team-based primary care. The organizations at the table were the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists, the Canadian Association of Social Workers, the Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists, the Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Nurses Association, the Canadian Psychological Association, the Canadian Pharmacists Association, the Canadian Physiotherapy Association, the Coalition for Enhancing Preventive Practices of Health Professionals, the Dietitians of Canada, and the College of Family Physicians of Canada.

Six principles serve as a foundation for interdisciplinary work:

- patient or client engagement;
- population health approach;
- best possible care and services;
- access;

- trust and respect; and
- effective communication.

The in-depth reports that define the framework for the Enhancing Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Primary Health Care initiative include the following:

- health human resources;
- funding;
- liability;
- regulation;
- information and communications technology;
- management and leadership; and
- planning and evaluation.

On April 25, 2006, the presidents of the 11 associations represented on the steering committee signed the Enhancing Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Primary Health Care declaration as an endorsement of the principles and framework. Afterward, 40 to 50 health professional associations and organizations expressed their support.

The principles reflect the values shared by providers and patients and are critical to establishing collaboration and teamwork to achieve the best health outcomes. The framework builds upon these principles and supplies the structure and process required to support collaborative primary health care.

To ensure that this work is sustained, the steering committee is pursuing other projects (eg, in chronic disease management) that will demonstrate the utility of incorporating and applying the principles and framework to create the conditions necessary to support teams in primary health care.

The College of Family Physicians of Canada congratulates and thanks all members of the steering committee, in particular Dr John Maxted, who played a key role representing family physicians.

Further information can be obtained on the Enhancing Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Primary Health Care website at [www.eicp.ca](http://www.eicp.ca).



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