Cycling through Italy with my wife and friends this May was a truly stunning experience and gave me many hours to reflect. I see similarities between my cycling journey and the journey of the Medicine and Quality portfolio.

In cycling, you rely on the peloton to lead, guide, and keep you safe; much like I rely on my Medicine and Quality team. Together we overcome peaks, valleys, and unexpected terrain, but, at the end of the day, there is a sense of accomplishment and we know our hard work was worth it. I remain humbled and amazed by what my team has achieved over the last year – my first year as VP.

The work on physician engagement, led by Dr. Harsh Hundal and consultant Rose Harrison, is moving full steam ahead. We know that engaged physicians improve quality of care and patient outcomes, while also reducing costs. We are in the process of identifying our top 25 future physician leaders who will help lead the way at their sites and ensure we continue to use a quality lens in all the work that we do.

At the end of May, physician leaders from across IH met in Kelowna for the Physician Administration Co-Leadership Training session. We had the highest attendance ever and the event was hugely successful. The dyad team from Foothills Hospital in Calgary said they were impressed with the talent in the room and encouraged us to continue on the path of administrator-physician leadership.

Other work taking place includes review of our trauma, infectious disease, and quality, risk and accreditation systems to ensure we are meeting the needs of the organization and following current best practices. This is a high-level, system review and not review of employee performance. Part of the quality review will include a restructure of the Health Authority Medical Advisory Committee (HAMAC), the introduction of sub-committees, and how we report to the IH Board of Directors.

Speaking of HAMAC, we had a historic meeting in Williams Lake on June 15, as we bid adieu to Glenn Fedor, who held the position of HAMAC Board Chair for three years. His leadership and dedication to physicians has been thoughtful and exemplary. Thank you, Glenn, for all your contributions.

Quality of care is also reflected in Interior Health’s new key strategy, A Healthier, Safer IH. The new reality is that our workplace has become less safe. We need physician input to help us make the workplace physically safer, but also to promote a good work-life balance. This includes more emphasis on family, personal wellness, and mental health. (cont’d on p. 2)
As we move into the summer, I’ll be focusing on the reviews taking place in the Medicine & Quality portfolio, prioritizing the recommendations, and presenting those to the Senior Executive Team.

After a year in my role as VP, we have solidified the structure of the portfolio and I am happy with our current direction. I believe the success of IH will come from improved physician engagement. We are a high-functioning health authority, but if we embed physician engagement, we could be the best in the country.

It’s time to take a breath, reflect on what you’ve done, and be proud of the important work you do every day. Italy is lovely, but there is no place in the world like beautiful British Columbia. We are truly fortunate to call this home.

Dr. Glenn Fedor started with the Health Authority Medical Advisory Committee (HAMAC) before the iphone was invented and the same year Facebook came out – 2004.

For the past three years, he served as HAMAC chair. At his last meeting on June 15, his colleagues travelled to his home community of Williams Lake to bid him a fond farewell upon his well-deserved retirement from HAMAC.

Prior to taking on the chair duties on May 26, 2015, Glenn held positions as chief of staff and president of medical staff at Cariboo Memorial Hospital; and he was the Thompson Cariboo Shuswap RMAC chair for six years.

But despite those years of service, he’s still game for more. The family physician has always believed in advocating for his profession as well as his patients.

“I’m still working as a family doctor – in the office, teaching residents, supervising international medical graduates in the community, and doing hospital and residential care rounds. I’m not sure what kind of a job Dr. Ertel may offer me in the future, but if I stay on three more years, I get my 40-year IH pin,” he says, with humour but also pride.

“It has been my pleasure to serve as HAMAC Chair these last few years,” says Glenn. “My vision for the future is meaningful engagement that focuses on true collaboration and health and wellness for physicians.

Glenn estimates that he has made at least 80 business trips to Kelowna over the last 14 years. He says since 2000, he’s driven a Dodge Durango, but turns them in every three years so they don’t break down.

“I usually put on 25,000 kilometres a year.”

You also have to have nerves of steel to take on the Cariboo roads in the winter.

“My fondest trip was in December 2013 when I left Williams Lake at 1 p.m. during a wicked snowstorm and arrived safely in Kelowna at 11 p.m.” – a trip that should normally take a little over five hours.

Dr. Mike Ertel thanks Glenn for the “tremendous leadership” he has shown while serving as HAMAC chair.

“Glenn has made significant contributions around quality at HAMAC – we will miss the great enthusiasm Glenn has always displayed at the meetings.”

Dr. Harsh Hundal will take on the role of HAMAC chair as of July 1.
Many health-care organizations are challenged with physician engagement. In last year’s Doctors of BC Health Authority Engagement Survey, Interior Health scored the lowest in B.C.

“When we look at the literature about what drives engagement, it is authentic leadership supporting a sense of community, efficacy, and joy in work. People are supported in being innovative in a psychologically safe environment,” says Dr. Harsh Hundal, Executive Medical Director for Physician Engagement & Resource Planning.

“In health care, we have an aging patient population with increased service needs, combined with shrinking resources, placing more burdens of care on our clinicians – they are feeling marginalized, isolated, and distressed.

“We can’t fix what we do not acknowledge, so if we accept that this is an issue, for not just our physicians, but also our administrators and staff, we begin to see that we are not alone. It becomes imperative to build community and co-create a more empowered culture, one relationship at a time.”

Harsh and consultant Rose Harrison, Harrison Inc. are using physician engagement models from world-leading health systems to help both physician and administrative leaders at Interior Health shift from complacency thinking, “we are not as bad as...,” to innovative thinking, “we are as great as...”

To help drive this change, physician leaders have been invited to be a part of IH’s administrative structure in dyad pairings, making them equal partners in decision-making processes.

“If we empower clinicians and administrators to drive innovation with the front-line staff, include patient and Aboriginal voices, and incorporate their leadership and decision making into the structure and in the processes, then our people will be engaged and we will improve the quality of our care,” explains Harsh.

In the end, the focus is not the score on the Doctors of BC Health Authority Engagement Survey – it is to change our culture through open dialogue, supportive systems, and a model of leadership to nurture and build capacity.

“There is a will to tackle the problems together, and it is a necessity for physicians to lead the charge. We need to really focus beyond ourselves to the people we serve: our patients, families, and communities.”

If you are interested in learning more, email engage@interiorheath.ca.
Collaborative Learning & Success at PACT

The two-day Physician Administrator Co-leadership Training (PACT) session took place in May and saw more than 100 participants. PACT provides training for medical and administrative leadership, as well as an opportunity to discuss issues relevant to the medical leadership role.

“This was the largest PACT turnout ever,” says Dr. Mike Ertel, VP Medicine & Quality. “It really shows everyone’s support and investment in physician leaders and how it can support the organization going forward. We are on the right path.”

The first day focused on Aboriginal health and wellness and included presentations and panel discussions from Interior Health, First Nations Health Authority, Métis Nation BC, First Nations Health Council, Provincial Health Service Authority, and First Nations community members.

“The presentations were profound and the speakers engaged the hearts of those attending,” says Dr. Sue MacDonald, Executive Medical Director for Aboriginal Health & Wellness.

“For me, it was helpful to understand that many individuals were not aware of the racism and discrimination against the Aboriginal population.”

Sue says this was particularly highlighted in the presentation by Dr. Shannon McDonald, Acting Chief Medical Officer at the FNHA.

“Dr. McDonald spoke both about her role at FNHA, but also shared her own experiences as an Aboriginal physician woman. Her personal experience with racism and discrimination really opened our eyes.”

Brad Anderson, Corporate Director of Aboriginal Health, presented the strategic direction of Aboriginal Health at IH and what we can do to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal people.

“It is important to familiarize physician and administrative leadership with the work of our team,” says Brad. “Our patient navigators, cultural safety educators, and practice leads, alongside the First Nations Health Council representatives and community members all play a crucial role nurturing the relationship and trust between Aboriginal people and Interior Health.”

Sue says the success of the day was due largely in part to the safe learning and sharing environment that was created.

“The personal experiences shared were directly from the heart, which helped IH staff and external partners and stakeholders from the community bring important information to those in the room.”

The second day focused on physician engagement and dyad working relationships.

Dr. Harsh Hundal, Executive Medical Director, Physician Engagement & Resource Planning, and Rose Harrison, Medical Affairs Consultant, provided an overview of the work underway to enhance physician engagement and incorporate more physician-administrator dyads.

“This was a different day and it too was extremely well received,” says Sue. “We learned from a physician-administrator dyad at Foothills Hospital in Alberta that a partnership of shared work does not mean you are always doing the same thing. Each person brings strengths and opportunities to step forward in their roles.”

The day also highlighted three Interior Health dyad partnerships that evolved on their own: residential, perioperative and rural, and facilities.

Discussions throughout the session were visually captured by a graphic recorder, which will be used to help guide vision and work moving forward.

The next PACT session will take place this fall.
Improvements in IH Technology

Faster Access to Patient Imaging Records

Diagnostic Imaging Repository (DI-r) is now live across Interior Health. DI-r triggers an automatic upload of a patient’s prior medical imaging and reports from other health authorities into the IH digital imaging system.

“It saves us so much time and allows us to have previous imaging immediately available for comparison to the current study,” says Dr. Brenda Farnquist, radiologist and education director for Medical Imaging at Kelowna General Hospital.

Having these records automatically in the IH system creates a more complete patient imaging record, gives radiologists additional information to report on a patient’s current imaging, and reduces the time for new reports to be completed because past images no longer have to be requested and sent manually.

“The option to view exams with attached reports performed in other health authorities allows for improved diagnostic assessment. It’s helpful to be able to see from previous exams if something has been there before or if something is new – really, you’re looking to see if something has changed,” says Dr. Vipal Vedd, chief radiologist at Royal Inland Hospital in Kamloops.

“This is a huge tool. It’s easier for us to create an accurate and improved report, and to reflect that back to the physician, so he or she has more confidence in what we’re saying.” Read the full story online.

Electronic Charting Launched at Penticton Regional Hospital

Penticton Regional Hospital (PRH) is the latest Interior Health site to launch a new Electronic Medical Record (EMR) in its Emergency Department (ED).

“Health professionals, and ultimately patients, will benefit from having accurate, current information that is easily shared with all authorized members of the care team, and which follows the patient into the community after they leave the hospital,” says IH Board Chair Doug Cochrane.

The new EMR system allows ED physicians and nurses to electronically document all aspects of the care they provide to patients including nurse assessments, vital signs, medication administered, and emergency physician reports.

“I am excited to be a part of this landmark change,” says Dr. Stephan Samoyloff, Department Head of PRH ED. “The electronic record will vastly improve our ability to communicate our care plans.”

Read the full story online.
MyHealthPortal

Content Expanding to Include Clinical Reports

MyHealthPortal is expanding this summer to include additional clinical reports. The expansion will be implemented in three phases:

- Vernon Jubilee Hospital & Pleasant Valley Health Centre – June 18
- IH East hospitals and health centres – Aug. 22
- Remaining IH hospitals and health centres – Sept. 12

While most clinical reports will be included, MyHealthPortal will not include: emergency department notes; progress notes; psychiatry / MHSU notes; scans of hand-written notes; Profile or MedAccess EMR notes; nursing or allied health documentation. Child or sexual abuse cases are also not included.

Report authors are responsible for the accuracy, totality, and appropriateness of what is dictated. Avoid using jargon and do not include references to third parties as these cannot be redacted in MyHealthPortal.

In the event of errors, patients are advised to contact the MyHealthPortal support team, who will pass their query along to Health Information Management for correction or clinical review. In some cases, follow up with the report author may be required.

The planning and implementation of this expansion has been done under the guidance of the MyHealthPortal Clinical Advisory Group, and has included consultation and input from IH’s Executive Medical Group and the Health Authority Medical Advisory Committee (HAMAC). Seven town halls were held in April to inform practitioners, gather their input, and address any concerns brought forward.

The MyHealthPortal team will continue to work under this clinical guidance during the phased implementation period and welcomes your feedback.

The implementation and expansion of MyHealthPortal is an example of IH’s commitment to building on technology to enhance patient care. It is a burgeoning area: artificial intelligence, wearables, prescribed apps, and the open notes movement are just a few examples of changes in health care that are developing quickly.

For general information, visit www.interiorhealth.ca > AboutUs > Physicians > MyHealthPortal or contact MyHealthPortal@interiorhealth.ca.

For information regarding dictation and reports, contact DocumentationSupport@interiorhealth.ca, or visit MyHealthPortal web page on the IH InsideNet (IH network access required).

Listen to the recent interview with surgeon and author Dr. Atul Gawande for his thoughts on the great potential digitalization holds for health care.
Physician Recognition

Silver Medal of Service Award goes to RIH Physiatrist

Dr. Jill Calder, Royal Inland Hospital Physiatrist, has been recognized for her outstanding contributions to medicine and improving the welfare of British Columbians with the Doctors of BC Silver Medal of Service Award.

Congratulations, Dr. Calder, on this accomplishment and sincere thanks for your commitment and dedication to excellence in health care!

“Doctors Making a Difference” features IH ER physician

The latest “Doctors Making a Difference” feature from Doctors of BC profiles Dr. Jeff Peimer, a Williams Lake Emergency Department doctor who played a leadership role in the development of a new ER protocol as part of the Child and Youth Mental Health Substance Use Collaborative.

He is passionate about emergency medicine and children, and has combined those passions to make a real difference for youth in B.C., starting in the Interior. Read the full article from Doctors of BC.

Dr. Harries Recognized During BC Family Doctor Day

Dr. Leona Harries from Penticton has received a BC College of Family Physicians My Family Doctor Awards from the BC College of Family Physicians. As one nomination stated:

“Dr. Leona Harries is the most caring, giving human being and doctor I have ever had the privilege to know. She took on both my parents as they were dying, mom from cancer, dad from pulmonary fibrosis. There are no words to express what she did for my mom and dad and us as a family throughout the most horrific two years plus of our lives. Dr. Harries is the embodiment of what it means to be a physician.”

Congratulations to Dr. Harries and all the other winners! Read the BC Family Doctor Day media release to learn more.

Dr. Du Preez Honoured

The BC College of Family Physicians has awarded College Coin awards to Dr. Anneline Du Preez, emergency room physician in Cranbrook. Dr. Du Preez epitomizes the rural family doctor, practising true cradle-to-grave medicine and care to a growing roster of complex-care and frail elderly patients. While serving as a full-time family physician in Kimberley, she is also an emergency room physician at the busy East Kootenay Regional Hospital in Cranbrook and the chief physician at a long-term care facility. Read the full story online.
Teaching Awards

SMP Class of 2018 Co-honour Drs. Gorman, McCauley

The Southern Medical Program (SMP) Class of 2018 recognized Dr. Sean Gorman as co-recipient of the 2018 SMP Graduating Class Award. Selected by the graduating class, the annual award acknowledges a SMP faculty member for excellence in clinical teaching. Dr. Gorman is acknowledged as an outstanding teacher by SMP students training at Royal Inland Hospital. Dr. Graeme McCauley, Clinical Assistant Professor with the UBC Department of Medicine, Division of Respiratory Medicine at Kelowna General Hospital, is the other co-recipient. The SMP graduated 35 new doctors this spring in their largest graduating class.

RIH General Surgery Recognized

Dr. Anise Barton accepted the Resident Appreciation Award on behalf of RIH General Surgery faculty for their outstanding contribution to resident education. The award was presented on May 17 in Vancouver by the UBC Faculty of Medicine Division of General Surgery.

Physician Health Program

Asking for Help is a Sign of Strength

The physician health program provide confidential help, referrals and counselling for physical and mental health issues, plus a wide range of other concerns, including: relationship challenges, substance use, career transitions, and financial issues, colleagues at risk, burnout, and occupational health questions.

Access confidential support – anytime you need it. Call our 24-hour helpline for private, discreet assistance with issues that you and your family may be facing.

1-800-663-6729
www.physicianhealth.com

IH Executive Medical Leadership

Dr. Mike Ertel, Vice President, Medicine and Quality
Dr. Zoe Aying, Credentialing & Privileging
Dr. Nick Balfour, IH Central
Dr. Curtis Bell, Primary & Community Care
Dr. Andy Hamilton, Surgical Services
Dr. Devin Harris, Quality & Patient Safety
Dr. Nancy Humber, IH West Rural
Dr. Harsh Hundal, Physician Engagement & Resource Planning
Dr. Lawrence Jewett, East Kootenay
Dr. Norm Kienitz, IH West Tertiary, IH Trauma & IH Transportation
Dr. Douglas Kingsford, Chief Medical Information Officer
Dr. Sue MacDonald, Aboriginal Health & Wellness and Kootenay Boundary
Dr. Doug Smith, Residential Care, Palliative Care, & MAiD

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