

2023



Navigating to a better future in healthcare



Introduction

Canada's healthcare leaders gathered to talk about the challenges and opportunities before them, expressing the need for transformative change through a series of panel discussions, breakout sessions, and keynote speeches.

In collaboration with CGI, the Public Sector Network (PSN) 2023 Healthcare Roadshow provided the opportunity for healthcare thought leaders in Halifax, Ottawa, Toronto, Edmonton, and Vancouver to gather and consider the possibilities for achieving transformative change and forging a path towards a better future for healthcare in Canada and the role technology should play.

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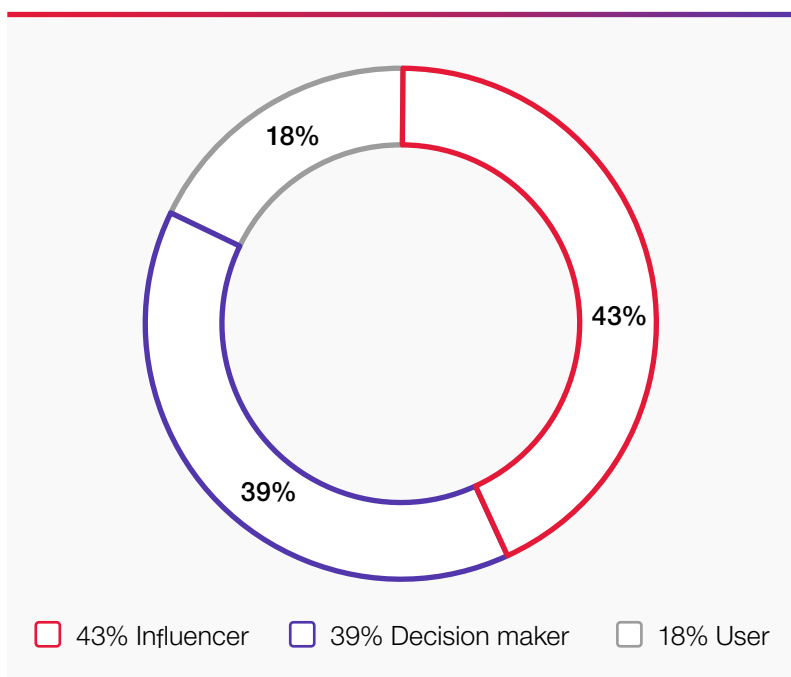
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PSN Healthcare Roadshow – At a glance

Topics of conversation

Date	City	Discussion focus
April 28	Halifax	Health human resources (HHR) and more technology-based solutions.
May 2	Toronto	Business continuity planning and disaster recovery in the hospital sector.
May 3	Ottawa	Resource management and getting the best use of AI.
May 10	Vancouver	Redesigning working processes and leveraging the strategic importance of technology (including AI)
June 19	Edmonton	Emergency room wait times, remote care access and the evolution of privacy and security practices

Attendee role



Event statistics

577
Registrations

81
Speakers

72
Partners

5
Cities

National challenges

The national challenges expressed at the roadshow revealed that despite the collaboration and innovation exercised as part of the COVID response, there has been little change around core service delivery challenges. Patients are struggling for access to timely healthcare services, hospitals are challenged by staff shortages, and governments, both federal and provincial, are dealing with the high costs of service delivery. Across Canada, strategies for recruiting and retaining medical practitioners is a top priority for administrators, as access to primary care, surgery backlogs and clinical service delivery impact patient care across the healthcare network.



Recruitment and retention

Critical staff shortages are prevalent across the country adding massive strain on an already overwhelmed healthcare sector. Existing hiring methods and traditional processes will not be adequate to meet the projected labour challenges across the industry and health leadership is looking for new solutions.

Service delivery

Timely access to healthcare services is crucial to the wellbeing of every Canadian. However, issues around shortages in primary care providers, patient flow and a need for greater care delivery efficiencies in the system were cited by many as being of great concern. Complex, outdated systems, an aging population, and inefficiencies in processes and procedures are putting up major roadblocks to consistent and effective services.

While these are the top common national priorities expressed by participants, there are regional issues overlapping national implications as well.

PSN survey: In all regions, **pressure on resources** was cited as the biggest challenge facing organizations today.

Regional priorities

Building a modern and sustainable healthcare system, while providing access for Canadians to services are foundational components of a healthy network. Participants explored key challenges to identify what role technology should play in addressing local problems.

Halifax

The Halifax event focused on key themes such as health human resources (HHR) and the need for more technology-based solutions, with additional opportunity-based conversations surrounding innovation, artificial intelligence (AI), and cyber security.

Other discussion points included:

- How to introduce innovation and focus more on tangible and tactical technology implementations and less on pilots.
- What role innovation could play in addressing physician shortages.
- How to leverage data for optimal service delivery.
- Information security and privacy, considering recent outages and ransomware attacks.
- Leveraging technology to improve communications with patients.

Toronto

In Toronto, one particularly important topic was the recognition of gaps in business continuity planning and disaster recovery in the hospital sector. In an industry where failures in technology have a direct correlation to the wellbeing of a patient, health organizations need a recovery approach to crisis and IT disaster that is current, tested, and robust.

Other topics included:

- **Formal and Informal collaboration** to achieve common goals and develop support models in IT and cybersecurity.
- **Health human resources** and addressing the burnout and fatigue felt across the industry.
- **Virtual care** and how to make better use of available resources and maximize the workforce.

Ottawa

The Ottawa event had two major themes: resource management and getting the best use of AI. Both stem from the same circumstances - the immense backlog of medical procedures that started accumulating during COVID compounded by the alarming number of current vacancies throughout the healthcare sector.

Discussions centered around:

- Continuing to **work collaboratively**, even without the impetus of COVID.
- **Process redesign** that, combined with **workforce management**, could help create a more efficient and effective healthcare system.
- **Data democratization** where data can flow freely from the hands of a few experts to the patient care teams, and the patients themselves.



Vancouver

In Vancouver, there was widespread recognition of the problems in the current healthcare environment, but there was also optimism and commitment by governments and partners to find innovative solutions. From redesigning working processes to leveraging the strategic importance of technology (including AI) the topics discussed included:

- How to **attract and retain talent** in the face of a high-level of vacant healthcare positions (more than 150,000 vacancies are projected). The focus of this discussion was on redesigning work for the healthcare industry to support retention and recruitment, as well as to better manage workflows.
- **Virtual care** - with health authority representatives and others talking about transitioning from our COVID-driven, fully virtual care models to more balanced use of virtual care.
- **Data reporting** was a major topic with a presentation of the Health System Performance Dashboard (initially built by CGI), which reports on cross sector performance.
- **AI and Generative AI** were discussed in depth with a live demo and presentation from Nuance on the use of AI to take voice to text to automate a patient chart from the unstructured discussion as a solution to address challenges in care provider workload.

Edmonton

With a wide representation of organizations spanning Alberta's health ecosystem, there were good discussions and agreements on some of the priority challenges facing the sector. These are long emergency wait times including EMS services, ensuring proper and timely access to primary care, especially in the rural communities, and the need to keep evolving privacy and security practices to meet changing needs. Mental health was acknowledged as a top priority for the province, as addition and mental health challenges are seen as being on the rise.

Other discussions centered around:

- The need for equity in healthcare through health diversity and equity innovation.
- The importance of delivering personalized patient experiences to meet the evolving demands from savvy citizens.
- How to mitigate against the risk of **talent** shortages and staff burnout.

Insights

From all the events came insightful ideas and potential solutions to the challenges facing our healthcare sector today. Here are some key points:



Leveraging artificial intelligence

A big shift from last year's PSN Roadshow was the attitude towards artificial intelligence, with participants showing widespread interest in harnessing the potential of AI and shifting away from the unease and reluctance of last year's attendees. With this optimism, there were still noted concerns regarding the challenges of introducing AI in a risk averse industry such as healthcare, and the ethical guardrails necessary for the use of Generative AI technologies such as ChatGPT.

The idea that **intelligent automation** and other technology-driven solutions could solve several resourcing, accuracy, and efficiency issues was discussed and widely supported. Unfortunately, the question for many remained... where to start? The healthcare industry is heavily regulated, with unique challenges due to constraints and limitations around personal health information and clinical decision making. While participants agreed that organizations will be challenged to determine how best to leverage these technologies, there was a near unanimous consensus that AI will be part of future healthcare delivery.

Navigating privacy and security

Across all jurisdictions, there was significant interest and dialogue surrounding privacy and security with discussion around common experiences such as data leakage and system outages caused by cyber and ransomware attacks.

Recognizing that the lack of investment in legacy platforms and modern cybersecurity practices is a major concern, opportunities were discussed to achieve economies of scale by leveraging regional solutions across multiple entities. Concepts such as regional security operations centres (RSOC) have already been introduced in Ontario with smaller institutions benefiting from larger hospitals' more mature and robust dedicated IT services rather than struggling with their own budgetary constraints and technology limitations.



Unlocking the full potential of data

With healthcare organizations generating massive amounts of data, it's important to recognize that this data can be analyzed to glean insights and improve the quality of patient care. Making the best use of this information through **data analytics** is an exciting area of exploration, with a myriad of benefits to the healthcare sector, including:

- Detailed and more comprehensive electronic health records for a better patient profile.
- A greater opportunity of improving health for people population health.
- Support for clinical decision making.
- In-depth insight into a patient's health and treatment.
- Improved efficiencies in healthcare.

Heather Richards, executive director with BC's Ministry of Health, explained how data analytics is benefiting the medical industry through dashboards (initially built by CGI) that report on cross agency and health authority healthcare system performance. These dashboards are being leveraged by the ministry and health authorities to identify patient care gaps, match demand to available resources quickly and effectively, and outline trends.

Targeting virtual care

After an initial push to leverage virtual care platforms and functionality during COVID, some governments are pulling back on its utilization and coverage. The question for health organizations becomes how to target that technology to the patients who need it most. Virtual care has been proven as an extremely effective model, and one that could address staffing issues as well.

Meanwhile, in many isolated communities in Canada, it is often indigenous and older patients who have trouble accessing adequate medical services. But innovative technology can allow primary care to be brought to even these remote areas, reducing substantial healthcare gaps.



Business continuity planning

With the ongoing threat of cyberattacks and the increasing use of technology in all aspects of healthcare, the need for business continuity planning is crucial. Outages and downtime create the need to revert to paper based records, massively impacting operations in the hospital, and having a direct correlation to the patient health and wellbeing.

Conducting a business impact assessments and risk analyses are important first steps in ensuring a model is in place for continuity of service in the event of a crisis. So too are understanding business workflows and detailing technology/infrastructure dependencies.

Provinces must invest in disaster recovery models that document the steps and mitigation efforts necessary to respond to all types of crises. They must also ensure staff are made aware of their responsibilities during all response and recovery stages.

The urgency for change

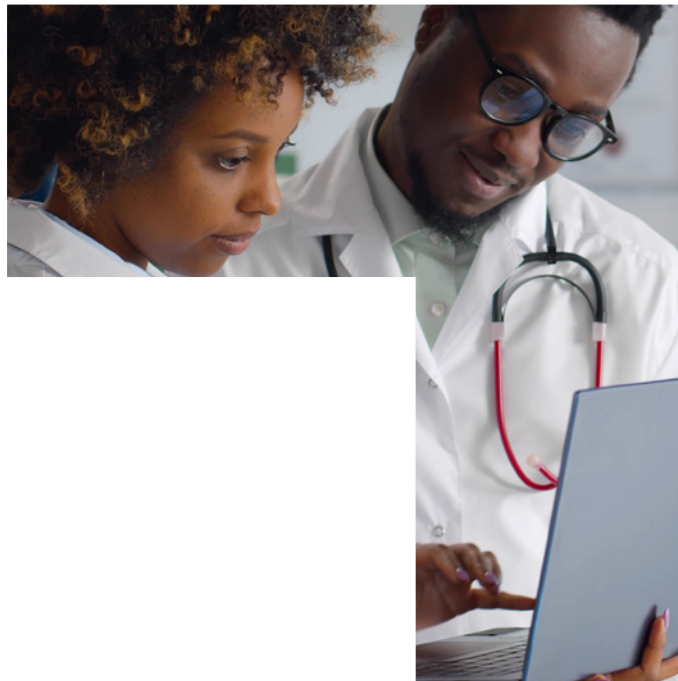
There is a consensus among healthcare practitioners and administrators that there is a state of urgency and a deep desire for transformative change to Canada's healthcare system to address fundamental issues of access to timely care, the soaring costs of service delivery, and recruiting and retaining more medical professionals.

Many participants at the roadshow expressed a strong push for integrating more emerging technologies into the healthcare field as a path towards transformative change, notably artificial intelligence. With this desire came the recognition that a better understanding of how to leverage AI effectively and ethically is a "crucial next step."

Better overall health outcomes and an improved patient journey were also among the top goals identified among healthcare practitioners. This included the recognition of AI as a platform to establish a path forward in developing tooling to reduce costs and improve equitable access to healthcare.

Accelerating digital transformation

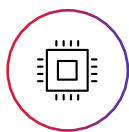
The 2023 Public Sector Network Healthcare Roadshow hosted invigorating discussions around both challenges and solutions in healthcare across the country. An overall sense of optimism was felt around the opportunities for reimagining healthcare delivery by examining the role technology is playing and will continue to play in the sector. The sentiment on which many participants agreed, was the need to capitalize on lessons learned from the pandemic.



Other key takeaways noted by participants included:



Collaboration, whether across jurisdictions, industries, or public-private partnerships, is essential to innovation.



Modernizing infrastructure.



Optimizing the use of virtual care.

CGI believes that digital integration is essential to improving healthcare, reliable service delivery, and creating a better workplace for healthcare providers; technology is a bridge between today's challenges and tomorrow's solutions.

CGI is a leader in working with provincial health organizations, health regions, and hospitals to harness the power of technology to improve the quality of care, while at the same time managing costs and enhancing productivity. With more than 5,000 health IT professionals globally, and 500 nationally, we are recognized as one of the largest consulting, systems integration, and managed services firms in the Canadian healthcare sector.

Our vision is to foster ways to provide human-centric services that will drive healthcare transformation in Canada.



About Public Sector Network (PSN)

Public Sector Network connects government organizations across the globe.

Our mission is to give public sector professionals a single place to come together, share ideas, and get free, unlimited access to the latest information about critical topics that are transforming the government landscape.

Our government-only network helps members find relevant international content and case studies that are critical to your work and can help you save time, and money. For those who are looking to network at a deeper level, we hold insightful online and in-person events, ranging from conferences and exhibitions, to intimate training courses and forums across major cities around the world.

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About CGI

Insights you can act on

Founded in 1976, CGI is among the largest IT and business consulting services firms in the world.

We are insights-driven and outcomes-based to help accelerate returns on your investments. Across hundreds of locations worldwide, we provide comprehensive, scalable and sustainable IT and business consulting services that are informed globally and delivered locally.

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