

Primary Healthcare Practice Support – Frequently Asked Questions

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1. What is Practice Support?

Practice Support helps primary care providers and teams optimize the way care is delivered, allowing busy teams time to focus on what they do best – deliver care. We have a dynamic team and a wide range of initiatives & resources designed to engage and support individuals, teams, and leaders to improve primary healthcare team member and patient experience, enhance access to care to quality person centered care, and strengthen Nova Scotia’s health homes and health neighborhoods.

Primary healthcare providers and teams may engage with Practice Support in a number of ways, such as:

- Multi-month group learning programs to build knowledge, skill and ability to provide high-quality clinical care
- Self-directed learning modules to increase knowledge on your own time
- Group-based coaching calls to practice new skills with support from experts and peers in a safe virtual environment
- Tailored, in-practice supports focused on making sustainable practice improvements

2. Is Practice Support open to any primary care provider?

Yes. We are here to support any primary healthcare provider and/or team who are supporting Nova Scotians in managing their health and wellness needs. If you need help to navigate the supports that are available to you, visit [PHCQuality.ca](https://www.nova Scotia.ca/PHCQuality) or reach out via email at PHCPracticeSupport@nshealth.ca.

3. Who engages with Practice Support?

Individuals and/or teams are welcome to participate. The way in which you or your team would receive support may depend on your goals, readiness and interest. Some services are aimed to support individuals, while others can engage a team using a tailored approach.

4. Is Practice Support free?

Yes, there is no cost to participate.

5. How are topics of support identified?

Topics can be identified in a wide range of methods: from self-identification of a personal improvement, to team-based discussions/goal setting. Support topics can vary in size and scope as well, from small improvements (the “pebbles in your shoes”) that may only require brief support or larger multi-month quality improvement projects. There is no one size fits all!

If you are not sure if a problem or improvement opportunity you want to explore fits within the scope of practice support, please reach out to the provincial practice support team at PHCPracticeSupport@nshealth.ca. We would love to discuss how we can help!

6. What topic areas are within the scope of Practice Support?

We aim to support projects that are improvement focused and that align to the evidence-based pillars of Health Homes. Topics typically fall into one of the following areas:

- **Help with using your EMR or other digital health platforms** (Ex. Pomelo, Medeo, etc.) more efficiently.
- **Help to build a strong foundation that enables high performing Primary Healthcare teams** (ex. team communication and roles, mission/vision/values, ensure appropriate operational and people processes are in place, etc.)
- **Help with panel identification and clean up** (Ex. support in anticipation of retirement, aligning EMR with payment models, designing care planning, etc.)
- **Improve clinic flow and efficiency** (Ex. identifying bottlenecks in the clinic, optimizing processes, etc.)
- **Enhance access and reducing wait times** (Ex. Looking at your supply/demand for care, utilizing team skillsets to support access goals)
- **Improve team collaboration** and utilization of team skill sets to meet patient needs.

7. What are the benefits of Practice Support?

Benefits include:

- Improved patient and provider experience
- Promoting provider wellness, reducing fatigue, turnover, and burnout
- Opportunities to reduce administrative burden
- A unique and innovative set of practice resources
- Enabling increased access and attachment to primary healthcare

Practice Support prioritizes ease of participation by providing:

- Dedicated one-on-one support from a Practice Facilitator who provides on-site support that meets your practices unique needs and reality
- A quality improvement focus that considers each practice individually
- Practice changes which are decided collaboratively based on interest and readiness, and we will work with you to implement them

8. What is Practice Facilitation?

Practice Facilitation is focused on supporting Primary Healthcare teams both within and external to Nova Scotia Health in their individual practice settings to make and sustain improvements that are relevant and meaningful to the team. Improvement projects can be small or large, and drive toward improving the day to day for providers/teams, improve the quality of care for patients, and support Health Home transformation over the long term.

Want to know more about some evidence behind Practice Facilitation? Click here: [The Case For Practice Facilitation Within Primary Care](#).

9. Who are Practice Facilitators?

Practice Facilitation is now a dedicated focus within Nova Scotia Health Primary Health Care. This discipline exists in many other jurisdictions both nationally and internationally. Nova Scotia Health Primary Health Care Coordinators have been doing many elements of Practice Facilitation for years, and we now have a dedicated training program and resources to support them.

Our Practice Facilitators come from a variety of backgrounds. They enter into the Nova Scotia Health Practice Facilitator training program that builds Practice Facilitator competencies in 6 key domains: leadership, information for action, Health Home elements, quality improvement, facilitation, and Nova Scotia Health Primary Healthcare context.

10. How do Practice Facilitators support primary healthcare teams?

Practice Facilitators work with teams to tackle improvements both big and small by helping with data collection, coaching throughout the process on how to approach change to ensure it is sustained, developing a plan to measure changes for improvement, and coordinate improvement activities. They also hold knowledge of many high impact changes for Health Home maturity that a team may want to consider when looking to tackle improvements, such as access, efficiency, panel, etc.

Practice Facilitators regularly receive coaching support from subject matter experts and are tapped into a provincial support network to enable the sharing of experiences and ideas, and pulling in others for support to meet all the diverse needs of primary healthcare provider and teams.

11. Who can I contact for more information?

For more information about the practice supports available within Primary Health Care, please visit [PHCQuality.ca](https://www.nshealth.ca/PHCQuality) or email PHCPracticeSupport@nshealth.ca.

If you are looking for tailored in-practice support, you can also reach a Practice Facilitator in your Zone at:

- Northern Zone: NZPracticeSupport@nshealth.ca
- Eastern Zone: EZPracticeSupport@nshealth.ca
- Central Zone: CZPracticeSupport@nshealth.ca
- Western Zone: WZPracticeSupport@nshealth.ca

