

MINUTES

BC SUPPORT Unit Advisory Council

February 1, 2022

Attendees:	Lynn Stevenson (chair), Krista Allan, Ellen Chesney, Gregory Haljan, Alison Hoens, Stephanie Irlbacher-Fox, Martha MacLeod, Anni Rychtera, Anne-Marie Visockas
Ex-officio:	Stirling Bryan, Michelle Duffy, Terri Fleming, Danielle Lavallee, Victoria Schuckel, Waqar Mughal
Regrets:	Alison Mclean, Megan O'Reilly, Bernie Pauly, Swapnil Shah, Amanda Ward, Martin Wright
Tentative:	
Guests:	
Secretariat:	Sara Lima Branco

1. Call the Meeting to Order

L. Stevenson welcomed all members to this meeting of the BC SUPPORT Unit Advisory Council and brought the meeting to order at 12:33pm.

2. Territorial Acknowledgement

L. Stevenson acknowledged that this meeting is being hosted from within the ancestral, traditional, and unceded territory of the Lək'wəŋən (Lekwungen) speaking peoples of the Esquimalt and Songhees. Meeting attendees were welcomed to share their respective territory in the chat or during discussions.

L. Stevenson led the group in recognition and reflection on the discovery of a potential burial site at a residential school in Williams Lake last week.

3. Action items from last meeting.

There was one action item from the previous meeting:

- a. The Advisory Council will work on a structured response to D. Lavallee's request for feedback and recommendations for sustainability and/or the sustainability workgroup.
 - i. **UPDATE:** Sustainability will be discussed during today's meeting. **This item is closed.**

4. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the October 6th meeting were presented to the group approved.

5. Approval of Agenda

Today's agenda was approved by the group.

6. Summative Evaluation

In December, a slide deck summarizing the summative evaluation was shared with this group. In advance of this meeting, the executive summary was shared. The final version of the summative

evaluation will be circulated once it's complete. It is anticipated that the evaluation will continue to serve as a document to support ongoing planning efforts in Phase II as well as work by the sustainability workgroup.

D. Lavallee welcomed feedback from the group on the executive summary and next steps. D. Lavallee also reviewed the slide deck pertaining to the summative evaluation that was circulated in December.

Topics of discussion/overall impressions of the summative evaluation:

- a. The executive summary's high-level nature presents challenges – the final report will be more detailed, though.
- b. Phase II is underway; were there recommendations in the summative evaluation that have been embedded in Phase II approaches, or need to be?
 - i. There have been successes in the data domain. Building on the work done in recent years will continue to be a focus.
 - ii. Constructive feedback was provided on the challenges the Unit faced in Phase I.
- c. What, if any, surprises did Unit staff identify?
- d. The executive summary was thorough and nuanced, however there were some areas where the complexity of the work, relationships and environments wasn't sufficiently taken into consideration (i.e., timelines). It recognized our complex governance and the diversity in the province.
- e. In addition, some data areas (some examples include publications and funding areas) had updates in the period between the executive summary and the completion of the full summative evaluation.
- f. One area of improvement and advancement that was identified and discussed among the Advisory Council members is clinical trials, and how clinical trials and research supports can assist healthcare delivery is of collective interest.
- g. General feedback from the Advisory Council members was that, based on the executive summary, no surprises or concerns were raised.

7. Sustainability Work Plan

In advance of this meeting, the sustainability work plan section of the CIHR implementation plan was circulated.

A discussion took place, where the following questions were posed to the group: (1) what perspectives should we start with as we start the conversation around sustainability? (2) what should we prioritize? This will help to frame a more concrete understanding as we move forward.

The Advisory Council members reflected on clarifying what is being sustained (e.g., programs, staff, etc.) in the future. Discussion about how BC SUPPORT Unit fits into the whole of Health Research BC is important for leadership to consider. Integrated strategic planning is critical for long term success. Partnership will be an important part of ongoing work.

Clarity on what the vision and strategy are will be crucial. The vision should be patient-oriented research being naturally embedded within health research and health care in BC; widely accepted as the standard and highly utilized. What are the actions and steps that need to be taken, so that the progress that has been made is sustained, but also grows?

Key questions:

- a. What are the principles and underlying elements we want to sustain going forward?
- b. What partnerships are needed? What supports are needed (processes, criteria, documentation, services, etc.)?
- c. What resources will be available to provide support long term?
- d. What strategies are needed? How can we integrate in a meaningful way with the plans being made for Health Research BC? How can we support culture change?
- e. Could a next step be a conscious transition from our mandate to support POR to how POR can be embedded in existing systems and foster a LHS approach?
- f. Can we look to other organizations as they transitioned for guidance (i.e., Centres of Excellence)?

Key take aways:

- a. Integrated strategic planning is important for Health Research BC to support culture change and leverage strengths across the organization.
- b. A list (though not final) of specific areas that should be sustained (1) the education and training provided by the BC SUPPORT Unit (2) projects like the Health Data Platform (in partnership with government) (3) support for ethics and clinical trials (4) meaningful engagement and compensation, and removing roadblocks for patients and those with lived experience so POR becomes the norm (5) implementation of findings from research
- c. Engagement and partnerships with academic institutions will be important for ongoing work.
- d. There are consultants that specialize in helping large academic research projects successfully transition to next steps when their project ends (what comes next? how do we offboard or change? how do we built on what's been created, with no future funding?). Looking to other organizations who have navigated similar changes (such as the Networks Centres of Excellence) and how they did it may be of value as the BC SUPPORT Unit navigates this work moving forward.

D. Lavallee and S. Bryan thanked the assembled group for all the feedback provided. All this feedback will be shared with the sustainability working group.

D. Lavallee reminded everyone that recommendations on individuals that should be part of these discussions are welcomed and appreciated.

8. Updates

a. Integration:

The voices of those with lived experience, as well as robust partnerships, are crucial. The emphasis now is on improvement – how can improvements that are partnership based and include the voice of lived experience be implemented?

Existing strategic plans (one for Michael Smith Foundation for Research and the BC SUPPORT Unit) will provide a framework for long term strategic plans for the consolidated organization.

b. Staffing:

- i. C. McGavin's retirement has been announced and posting for her position will begin this week. C. McGavin was one of the Unit's first hires, and her contributions to the formative work of the Unit have been significant.

- ii. Unit Director interviews continue.
 - iii. A posting for the SPOR Funded Entity will be published soon.
 - iv. In the coming weeks, a posting for a communications lead will also be published.
- c. Putting Patients First:
 - i. Thanks to M. MacLeod, A. Rychtera, and A. Visockas for their engagement in the conference planning group.
 - ii. D. Lavalée provided an update on the status and content of the program.

9. Summary and next steps

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 9, from 8:00am – 9:30am for the supplemental meeting, for conference platform review and discussion.

D. Lavalée acknowledged the exceptional leadership of L. Stevenson in her role as chair of the Advisory Council and thanked her for her many contributions.

10. Group adjourned at 1:57 pm