

# What We Heard from YOU

## Patient Voices Network Focus Group Summary

### What Has Happened

Health Quality BC (HQBC) is committed to supporting the Patient Voices Network (PVN) and to continue to connect patient partners with health care partners who are seeking to engage the patient voice in their efforts to improve quality of care. As we make enhancements to these services, we ensure that we are informed by the patient partners active within the Network.

In spring 2025, HQBC hosted a focus group of patient partners to reflect on their experiences and suggest improvements. While recognizing we have made some progress since the previous Pulse Check Survey in December 2023 — such as a more user-friendly website and streamlined onboarding — participants also highlighted ongoing challenges, including misalignment of opportunities with patient partner interests, complex application processes and the need for clearer engagement pathways. The discussion centred around what matters most to patient partners, what they value in their PVN experience and ideas for cost-neutral capacity building. Their input surfaced key themes and suggestions to enhance inclusivity, simplify processes and strengthen community connections.

### What We Heard – PVN Has Value!

Participants expressed strong appreciation for PVN's ability to foster meaningful connections, offer diverse engagement opportunities and provide a platform where they feel heard and valued as equal partners. They highlighted the importance of sharing personal stories, the impact of peer initiatives like randomized coffee trials (RCTs)\* and PVN's unique reach at provincial and national levels.

(PVN) allows the partners to talk with each other directly and gather better information to make informed decisions about working together.

– Survey Respondent

Participants also offered cost-neutral ideas to build capacity — such as peer-led training, ambassador programs and simplified application tools — and welcomed HQBC's commitment to follow up with next steps, reinforcing a shared commitment to co-developing improvements in partnership with the patient partner community.

\*A "randomized coffee trial" (or RCT) is where individuals are randomly matched to meet for coffee and chat. The purpose is to facilitate casual connections, knowledge sharing and relationship-building.

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## Ideas for Improvement

- **Simplify and Improve Accessibility:** Streamline the application and RSVP process with tools like a reusable patient partner profile and clearer, more user-friendly intake forms. Design systems that are inclusive of people with limited technology access, youth, newcomers, non-English speakers and other underrepresented groups.

Making system-level resources and supports available can help build both skills and confidence.

- Survey Respondent

- **Improve Opportunity Alignment, Variety and Sources:** Improve alignment by clarifying role descriptions, expected time commitments, sources of engagements and levels of engagement (e.g., consult vs. collaborate). Expand the variety and inclusivity of opportunities beyond condition-specific roles and address the misalignment between patient partner interests and engagements offered.

- **Strengthen Training and Learning:** Establish a defined onboarding path and provide accessible, updated online learning resources. Support peer-led learning, knowledge sharing and cost-effective capacity building (e.g., champions, skill shares and webinars).
- **Build Community and Reduce Isolation:** Reintroduce well-liked initiatives like RCTs and encourage peer-led groups to help patient partners connect, learn from one another and feel less isolated.
- **Communicate Clearly and Consistently:** Ensure transparent, timely follow-up from HQBC/PVN, especially after partner input, and provide regular updates on engagement outcomes and next steps.

## Next Steps

To align with HQBC's mandate and ensure clear, consistent follow-up, here is a preliminary outline of next steps HQBC will take based on the Pulse Survey, the focus group and our mandate objective to *"Identify and promote local, regional and provincial opportunities for engaging the patient perspective in health care transformation."*

- We are reviewing and enhancing the core processes of how patient engagements are requested, communicated and coordinated. The aim is to create a more accessible experience that supports timely, meaningful participation.
- We are considering learning opportunities designed to enhance the knowledge, confidence and impact of patient partners. These will include webinars and resources on key topics such as effective participation, cultural safety and information on the ever-changing health care landscape.
- We are also scoping out a new program to recognize and support highly engaged patient partners who can help shape the future of patient involvement.