

# Strategy, policy and benefits evaluation

Helping healthcare decision-makers plot an effective path to better quality care and improved patient outcomes



Whether in the U.S., U.K. or Canada, health industry visionaries, policy-makers and executives are, for the most part, quickly becoming aware of how critical it is that we transform our health system in response to rising costs, shrinking budgets, an aging population and the continued shortage of health human resources. There is a general feeling that as a society, we have not been getting full value for our healthcare expenditures. It is therefore imperative that the industry looks for opportunities that improve patient care and health outcomes, while addressing the need to avoid unnecessary costs.

To this end, changes are already occurring in many areas and on many fronts, including federal, provincial and territorial health ministries, regional health authorities, multi-location health networks, multi-facility healthcare campuses and individual health provider institutions such as hospitals, clinics and group health centres.

However, with many possible transformation options open to them, perhaps more than ever before, decision-makers must do everything possible to ensure the priorities they choose, the directions they follow, the policies they make, the programs they undertake, the technologies they adopt and the resources they deploy all deliver maximum benefits. This is a difficult task for busy healthcare management already stretched thin by excessive workload and struggling to cope with seemingly endless day-to-day operational issues.

## Helping healthcare management make the right choices

TELUS Health Transformational Services includes a group of knowledgeable and experienced consultants who specialize in strategy, policy and benefits evaluation engagements addressing today's most troublesome health domains – ones for which transformational change is clearly required in order to meet rapidly changing patient needs and achieve sustainability within the health system overall. These include areas such as:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Prevention &amp; management of chronic disease</li><li>■ Reduction of errors and cost in medication management</li><li>■ Timely access to quality care</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Relieving the stress on acute care by empowering patients through home- and community-care initiatives</li><li>■ Advancement of a fully integrated EHR</li><li>■ Improvement of clinical decision-support tools</li></ul> |
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We help healthcare management make and implement the right choices regarding improvement initiatives in these areas and ensure that results align with transformation agendas being developed at all levels. Our engagements address:

**Strategy** : helping clients profile the current environment, set practical, achievable goals and develop, test and implement new, more effective models of healthcare delivery. This often includes recommending new and better use of Information Management tools and Information Technology (IM/IT), which remain underutilized despite evidence that increased adoption improves coordination of care, enhances patient safety, improves health outcomes and reduces overall system costs;

**Policy** : helping clients pave the way for sustainable transformation with policies that support change and reward operational improvements, intelligent risk-taking, innovation and technology adoption. While many see technology as the 'silver bullet' solution to improving healthcare, for example, poor adoption will likely be the result of undertaking a technology initiative within the context of a broken policy framework. With the right policies and business models in place, however, technology, as well as processes and even people, will all snap into alignment.

**Benefits Evaluation :** helping clients create and execute an effective benefits evaluation framework, especially identifying practical/measureable indicators to express project benefits. The entire lifecycle of a project should be guided by 'benefits' – from using planned benefits up front to inform investment priorities and shape a project business case; to ongoing monitoring throughout to guide project work to ensure planned benefits are actually achieved; and finally to post-implementation benefits evaluation to articulate ROI or to focus problem analysis and remediation efforts.

## Strategy, policy and benefits evaluation engagement snapshots

Perhaps the best way to describe the strategy, policy and benefits evaluation work that TELUS Health Transformational Services can deliver is through the following examples of typical engagements that involved our multidisciplinary team of experienced consultants that is unique because of its strong clinical leadership:

### Chronic Disease Prevention and Management (CDPM)

In response to the rapid increase in the incidence of chronic disease, we helped the Ontario Government develop a prevention and management strategy as the basis for a series of initiatives that we then helped the Province undertake to better understand and attack the problem, such as establishing a chronic disease registry. We brought considerable CDPM experience to this engagement, including similar work with other major Canadian and U.S. jurisdictions, such as establishing a CD Registry for New York City.

### Patient access to quality care

We helped the Ontario Government develop and implement a strategy to address long wait times for critical surgical and diagnostic procedures. Our strategy, which spawned numerous clinical process improvement initiatives across the province, also included a recommended IM/IT component – the Wait Times Information System, which collects actual wait time information for all regions of the province – for which we provided system procurement and implementation support. Because we have clinicians on staff, we were able to bring deep clinical understanding to this engagement, resulting in an actionable strategy that resonated well with clinicians province-wide.

### Benefits evaluation framework

We developed and implemented a benefits framework to help a western Canadian province evaluate the effectiveness of activities along the province's cardiac care pathway, such as ambulance services, acute care and cardiac rehab. This included implementing a data collection system, benchmarking current care levels against best practices of other Canadian and international jurisdictions, identifying gaps and recommending initiatives to close the gaps. We brought clinical expertise to the engagement – one of our clinician staff members led the engagement – as well as deep understanding of this province's health system as a result of previous engagements.

### Organizational strategy

To help them chart their future direction, Mississauga's Credit Valley Hospital engaged our consultants to help their management, physicians and Board examine the implications associated with, and then develop responses to, numerous challenges (e.g. large financial deficit, constrained budget, aging population, increased incidence of chronic disease) and opportunities (e.g. merging with another large, area hospital) they faced. We did this within the context of the hospital's resource constraints and were able to bring deep understanding of what was going on at the provincial level as a result of the knowledge we had gained from numerous engagements with the Province.

### IM/IT strategy

Our consultants were engaged by the University Health Network to help them revamp their IM/IT strategy in response to rapid advancements in technology and changing clinical practices. We also looked at how UHN could better integrate and link care with other organizations and how to collect information on groups of patients so that UHN researchers can analyze trends and make treatment recommendations. We not only provided 'as needed' strategy consultants, saving UHN from having to hire these skills full time, but also brought considerable depth of experience from doing this regularly with multiple organizations in numerous jurisdictions.

For more information on how TELUS Health Transformation Services can help address your strategic, policy and benefits evaluation challenges, contact John Ronson at [john.ronson@telus.com](mailto:john.ronson@telus.com) or by calling 416-726-8762.