

Pan-Canadian Network: Health System Response to Climate Change

Terms of Reference

1. Background

- Climate change and the linked planetary health crises of biodiversity depletion and pollution pose growing challenges for health systems. Across Canada, many health organizations are developing institutional and regional strategic responses - to strengthen their adaptive capacities and secure the health co-benefits of reduced resource use, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and pollution.
- A critical gap to fill is knowledge sharing and collaboration on health and climate change. Bringing together leaders from across jurisdictions would build on the work to date of individual health institutions and regional collaborations, and enable broader sharing of existing knowledge and practices, as well as support the development of new ideas and innovations.

2. Purpose

- To convene health delivery organizations and agencies from across Canada to explore and exchange approaches to the health system’s response to climate change across provinces and territories, with a focus on shared learning and implementing collective, evidence-informed actions. The group can also help inform future research in this evolving field.

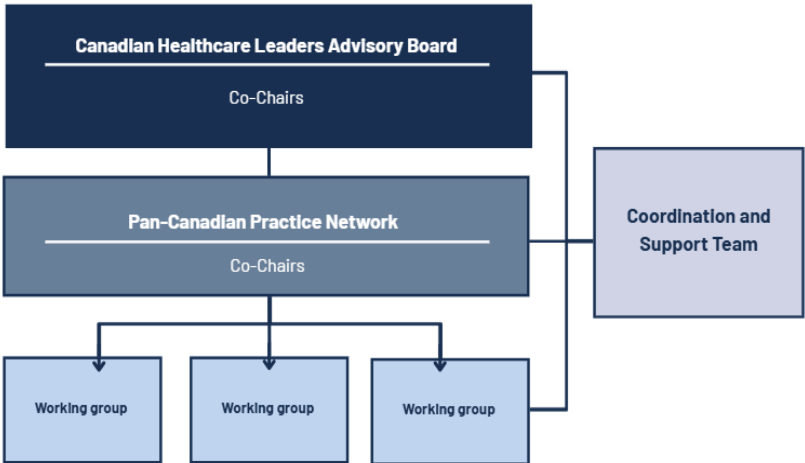
3. Mandate

To advance this purpose, the Network will:

- Create and sustain a mechanism for ongoing knowledge exchange and learning, connecting leaders across the country and enabling the dissemination of leading practices, tools, research, and implementation strategies.
- Identify collective opportunities and support their advancement through targeted small-group collaborations or broader pan-Canadian initiatives, based on scope and alignment.
- Leverage existing infrastructure, expertise, and momentum to enable coordinated action and strengthen capacity across jurisdictions.
- Utilize the strength of collective action to support coordinated implementation and influence policy making through unified, rather than siloed, efforts.

4. Membership and Responsibilities

Figure. 1 Governance structure



4.1. *Advisory Board Members*

- Membership is by invitation or by request from a senior leader within the health organization.
- Membership comprises a representative sample of senior leaders from across Canada who may authorize their organization's participation in the Network.
- Members represent care delivery organizations or pan-Canadian health organizations. In exceptional cases, individuals from other health organizations may be considered if they bring relevant expertise, or essential support, subject to agreement by the Advisory Board.
- Membership will be limited to no more than twelve senior leaders per term, with diverse geographical and sectoral representation.

Responsibilities

- Members must authorize their organization's participation and, if applicable, commit to implementing at least one prioritized initiative within their organization, providing both strategic guidance and operational oversight.
- Members are expected to attend all regular Advisory Board meetings; delegates or substitutes are not permitted.
- Members agree to shared opportunities that align with their organizational priorities.
- Members may, where appropriate, appoint a designated expert to participate in the Practice Network and/or activities of the relevant working group(s) advancing the shared opportunities.
- Advisory Board members will serve an initial two-year term, with the option of renewal.

4.2 *Practice Network Members*

- Membership is composed of designated experts with responsibilities related to sustainable care, planetary health, or associated areas, who review and consider shared opportunities. Members must possess the expertise to identify actionable sustainability initiatives within their organizations and contribute to the working group's outputs.
- Members must represent either a care delivery organization or a pan-Canadian health organization that has representation on the Advisory Board, or has provided a written letter of support from their executive leadership authorizing their participation.

Responsibilities

- Members are expected to attend all regular Practice Network meetings; where appropriate, delegates or substitutes with equivalent knowledge and expertise are permitted.
- Members must actively contribute to the strategic implementation of prioritized initiatives as well as to knowledge sharing and dissemination efforts.
- Members may, where appropriate, appoint a designated expert to participate in the activities of the relevant working groups advancing the shared opportunities.
- Members support the development of an annual report for knowledge dissemination and to share key insights and measured indicators with the Advisory Board.

4.3 *Co-Chairs*

- The Advisory Board and Practice Network are led by co-chairs, involving two senior leaders from different provinces and/or territories, to ensure cross-jurisdictional representation and shared leadership.
- Co-Chairs are nominated by members and appointed by consensus. In the absence of consensus, a voting process will determine the appointment.

Responsibilities

- Provide overall leadership and serve as official representatives of the Network.
- Facilitate meetings, enabling productive dialogue and alignment across jurisdictions.
- Collaborate with the Coordination and Support Team to develop agendas that support effective planning and decision-making.
- Oversee the management of potential conflict and confluence of interest among members to ensure transparency and maintain integrity.
- Co-Chairs will serve an initial one-year term, with the option of renewal.

4.4 Working Groups

- Working groups function as the operational arm of the Practice Network, advancing specific shared opportunities through coordinated action.
- Advisory Board and Practice Network members may nominate an individual from within their organization with relevant knowledge and expertise to participate in one or more working groups.
- Working groups may also serve as convening bodies for workshops to test the viability of collaborative action before formalizing into sustained initiatives.

Responsibilities

- Members are expected to participate in regular meetings and contribute relevant knowledge, expertise, and resources to advance the shared opportunity.
- Members are expected to regularly report progress, challenges, and key insights back to the Practice Network.

4.5 Coordination and Support Team

- Coordination and Support Team support is provided by CASCADES, which convened this initiative and will continue to support its coordination through March 2027, with the potential for extension.

Responsibilities

- Provide project management and coordination to support the effective operation of the Advisory Board, Practice Network and the working groups.
- Collaborate with members to develop and disseminate an annual report.
- Collaborate with members to explore and pursue additional funding opportunities.

5 Membership Selection Process

- Membership at all levels of engagement begins with a nomination or expression of interest submitted to the Coordination and Support Team.
- Eligibility is confirmed by the Coordination and Support Team.
- Members formally agree to Terms of Reference on behalf of their organization.

6 Decision-Making

- Decisions will be made by consensus whenever possible. If a different approach is required, the Co-Chairs will work with members to determine an appropriate decision-making process.

7 Meetings

- The Advisory Board will meet approximately 2 to 4 times yearly.
- The Practice Network will meet approximately 4 to 6 times yearly.
- The working group(s) will meet as needed, based on the pace and scope of work.
- Meeting agendas will be developed by the Co-Chairs in collaboration with the Coordination and Support Team.
- Minutes will be recorded and distributed by the Coordination and Support Team.

8 Deliverables and Timelines

- The Network, in collaboration with the working groups, will produce a data-driven annual report highlighting progress on selected collective opportunities to demonstrate impact.
- To ensure learnings extend beyond the immediate community, reports will be shared through various networks to achieve pan-Canadian reach, including with care delivery organizations and pan-Canadian health bodies not represented on the Network.

9 Adoption and Amendment

- Members must formally agree to the Terms of Reference on behalf of their organization to participate in the Network.
- These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually. Amendments may be made with approval from the Co-Chairs in consultation with the Coordination and Support Team.