

Provincial Hospitalist Strategy I: Hospitalist Definition, Scope of Practice, and FTE Definition

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Background:

In the face of the rapid expansion of existing hospitalist programs and requests to fund multiple new hospitalist programs, Alberta Health has requested that Alberta Health Services develop a Provincial Hospitalist Strategy. Specifically, the Strategy will consist of three parts: definition of a Hospitalist, quantification of the current FTE utilization by hospitalists at 17 target facilities, and a 3-year growth projection for each facility. The current work will propose definitions for a Hospitalist, Hospitalist Scope of Practice and Full Time Equivalent (FTE).

Methods:

To determine a Hospitalist definition a wide consultation was undertaken, including the Alberta College of Physicians and Surgeons, Alberta Health Services, Canadian Society of Hospital Medicine, and a review of the literature. To determine the Hospitalist Scope of Practice, the top 9 CMGs were determined from a large urban hospitalist program. The FTE definition utilized in the Calgary Zone Hospitalist program was identified.

Results:

A Hospitalist definition is proposed: A Hospitalist is a generalist physician who provides medical care as the most responsible physician to a group of facility-based patients. This physician will be responsible for the development, implementation, monitoring and communication of a care plan which would include the coordination of specialist and allied health consultations. The scope of practice of a hospitalist is defined in terms of the top 9 CMGs: COPD, CHF, UTI, Pneumonia, Dementia, Enteritis, Disorder of Pancreas, Organic Mental Disorder and Withdrawal. FTE is defined as: 4579 episodes of scheduled patient care per year, or 1928 hours of clinical service.

Conclusions:

The development of a Provincial Hospitalist Strategy requires the definition of a common terminology and frame of reference. This is presented with respect to defining Hospitalist, Hospitalist Scope of Practice and FTE.