ENHANCING INTERPROFESSIONAL EDUCATION (IPE) IN PRE- AND POST- LICENSURE
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR (NL)

NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Memorial University is a leader in creating, delivering, and evaluating effective Interprofessional Education (IPE) throughout the health/social care profession continuum. Memorial’s Centre for Collaborative Health Professional Education (CCHPE) is leading this project in conjunction with academic, government, Regional Health Authority (RHA), and community partners with the ultimate goal of improving safe, patient-centred care through enhanced IPE across the learning continuum: from undergraduate health and social care learners through continuing education for professionals in practice. Overall, the goal of this project is to create a province-wide, pre- to post-licensure IPE curriculum blueprint and evaluation framework.

The objectives of this project are to:

1. Develop partnerships and conduct IPE needs/capacity assessments with educational institutions, Regional Health Authorities, and community agencies
2. Develop pre- and post-licensure IPE curriculum and evaluation plans that meet the needs and utilize the identified capacity of partners

The content of the needs assessment report reflects an extensive stakeholder consultation process that began in May 2016 with initial meetings and discussions that continued throughout the fall of 2016 and winter of 2017 with the data collection process, and concluded in summer 2017 with the writing of this report. Input from the IPE Stakeholder Advisory Committee (IPESAC) at its June 2017 meeting is guiding the creation of the curriculum blueprint and evaluation framework.

The data collection process included semi-structured interviews and online and telephone surveys with a number of stakeholders representing provincial government, postsecondary institutions, Regional Health Authority, Community Agency, Professional Association and Licensing Body, and NL English School District cohorts. In addition, we included a respondent validation process (Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting) to ensure we had accurately identified the main themes for each stakeholder group.

A coding process elicited the following thematic categories from our stakeholders: opportunities for IPE/IPC, benefits of IPE/IPC, IPE/IPC challenges, evaluation and assessment of IPE/IPC, current IPE/IPC structures, provincial IPE funding and function, core IPE roles, collaboration of teams in practice, and community agency specific themes. These thematic categories are further explicated in the results section. These themes were validated at the Stakeholder Advisory Council Meeting with some additions and refinements. Results indicate that there is general consensus across cohorts that IPE is necessary for health and social care professions, and that moving forward with expanding the province’s IPE offerings is necessary and beneficial at this juncture, despite the challenges that may exist.
As per the needs assessment findings and subsequent conversations with the Interprofessional Education Stakeholder Advisory Committee and Community Agency Steering Committee, a number of recommendations regarding the creation of the curriculum blueprint and evaluation framework are suggested as follows (in no particular order):

- Community Agencies should continue to be engaged as potential experiential learning sites for health and social care professional students;
- When necessary, technology should be used to make interprofessional education activities accessible across the province in various sectors;
- The resulting curriculum should be flexible so that it can be applied to various settings across the province and be adapted according to the specific needs/constraints of those settings;
- The curriculum should consider learners as being on a spectrum of learning rather than separating them into pre- post-licensure categories;
- The creation of an interprofessional experiential learning preparedness course needs to be explored further;
- The curriculum should include a wider breadth of health and social care professional programs, or be adaptable to the later inclusion of health and social care professional training programs not yet included in the IPE delivered at Memorial University;
- The members of IPESAC should continue to provide support and be involved in this project to ensure momentum for a provincial IPE curriculum and evaluation framework implementation and adherence across sectors;
- The evaluation framework should include measurable variables of team functioning in order to create evidence for IPE/IPC benefits, which is currently missing from the literature;
- Those involved with the creation of this provincial interprofessional education curriculum blueprint and evaluation framework should connect with other entities across the province who are working on projects with similar goals to avoid duplication of efforts and keep costs low (for example: the provincial government primary health care renewal and Memorial University's Semester in Dialogue program); and
- It is of utmost importance to include patients/clients/families/communities in the creation of the provincial IPE curriculum blueprint and evaluation framework, as necessary members of interprofessional health and social care teams, and as tools for the evaluation of team functioning and provincial IPE success.

Our results point to a clear need for a more comprehensive IPE plan that meets the diverse yet complementary needs of our stakeholder groups. The application of these results to the IPE curriculum blueprint and evaluation framework as they are developed will undoubtedly move to produce learners and professionals in practice that are collaboration ready, critical for improving patient-centred care in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.