

Looking Ahead: The Future of Models of Care

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As a collaborative, the Arthritis Alliance of Canada and the Canadian Rheumatology Association are proposing innovations in models of care to respond to historical human health shortages, and to anticipate the next crisis that will impact accessibility to rheumatology care. By 2025, it is estimated that one third of Canadian rheumatologists will retire,¹ coupled with an anticipated growth in patient volume driven by an aging population.² With the knowledge of the impact of early diagnosis and treatment on outcomes in rheumatologic diseases, we must find alternative approaches to patient care.

Team-based models of care are a natural option for a specialty with a long history of collaborating with allied health professionals including physiotherapists, occupational therapists and more recently, nurses. These models increase patient access, improve quality of care, and invigorate the clinic environment. These models take time and energy to develop, highlighting the need for peer-to-peer mentorship, opportunities to share experiences, and new/continued provincial and national support.

As highlighted in this edition of *CRAJ*, a diverse array of models of care has been successfully implemented throughout Canada. There is no “one size fits all” solution, and in the end, the most appropriate model is determined by the rheumatologist’s style of practice, availability of allied health professionals and resources to support the model of care, and ultimately, the needs of the local community. Regardless of which model is utilized, patient and system outcome measures need to be collected, studied and analysed, to verify that patient needs are being met, and that a positive change occurs in our care delivery systems.

The adoption of quality of care measurement and monitoring of adherence to performance measures is in its infancy in rheu-

matology, but the future is bright with a new robust generation of rheumatologists in Canada. The awareness of the need to revolutionize patient care will drive this positive change.

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