



Engagement is a Leading Practice in Health Workforce Planning

Sarah Simkin, Henrietta Akuamoah-Boateng, Cynthia Damba, Shelly-Ann Hall, Joy Ikeh, Renata Khalikova, Zeenat Ladak, Ivy Bourgeault

CAHSPR

May 14, 2024



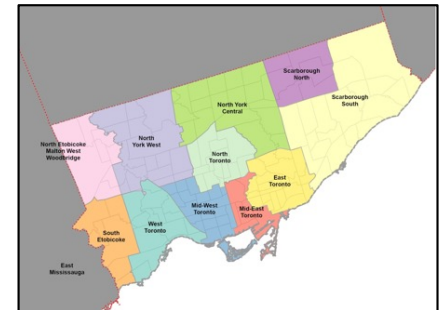
Planning is urgently needed to respond to health system challenges

- Health workforce planning supports proactive workforce decision-making and helps to ensure that the health workforce aligns with the needs of the population
- Planning is a social, political and technical exercise
- Engagement with partners is considered a leading practice in planning
- Generally, capacity for planning is limited, especially at the local level, and embedding engagement into planning processes can be challenging

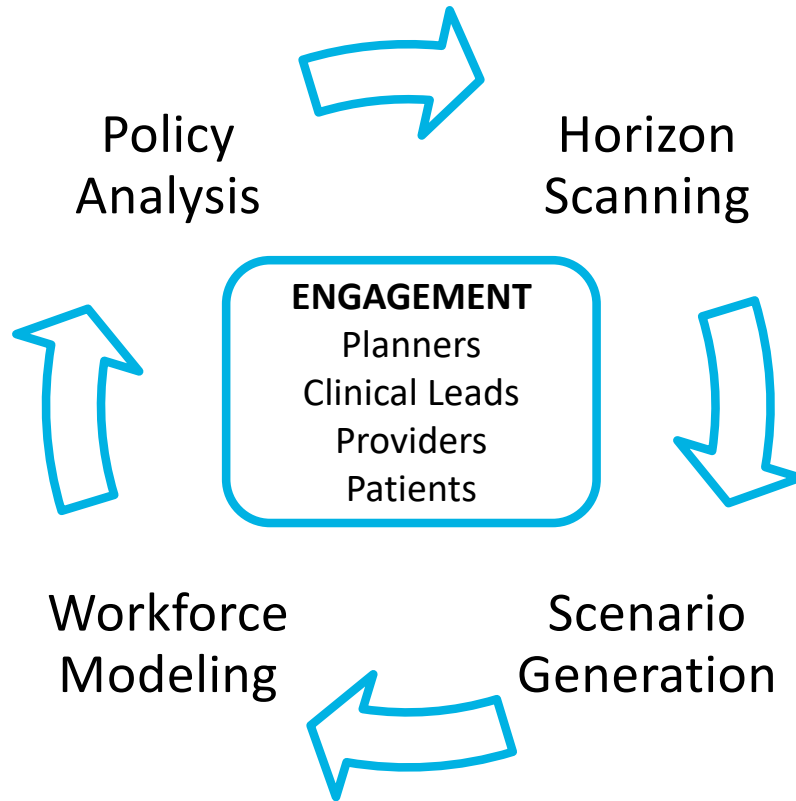
Study Goal: To systematically explore the considerations and processes involved in integrating partner engagement into workforce planning at the local level

Primary Care Workforce Planning in Toronto

- In 2017, Ontario Health Toronto recognized that primary care workforce planning would be necessary to inform **equitable distribution of primary care workforce resources**
- Since then, a rapidly changing primary care landscape, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has accelerated the need for support to facilitate **evidence-based decision-making** and proactively **anticipate and mitigate** health workforce challenges
- A comprehensive planning approach has been developed and deployed in three successive phases
- In this phase of planning, Ontario Health Toronto prioritized **building capacity for planning** through **engagement** with local Ontario Health Teams (OHTs)
- Planning allows OHTs to identify and address local issues proactively and to develop, implement, and evaluate fit-for-purpose solutions



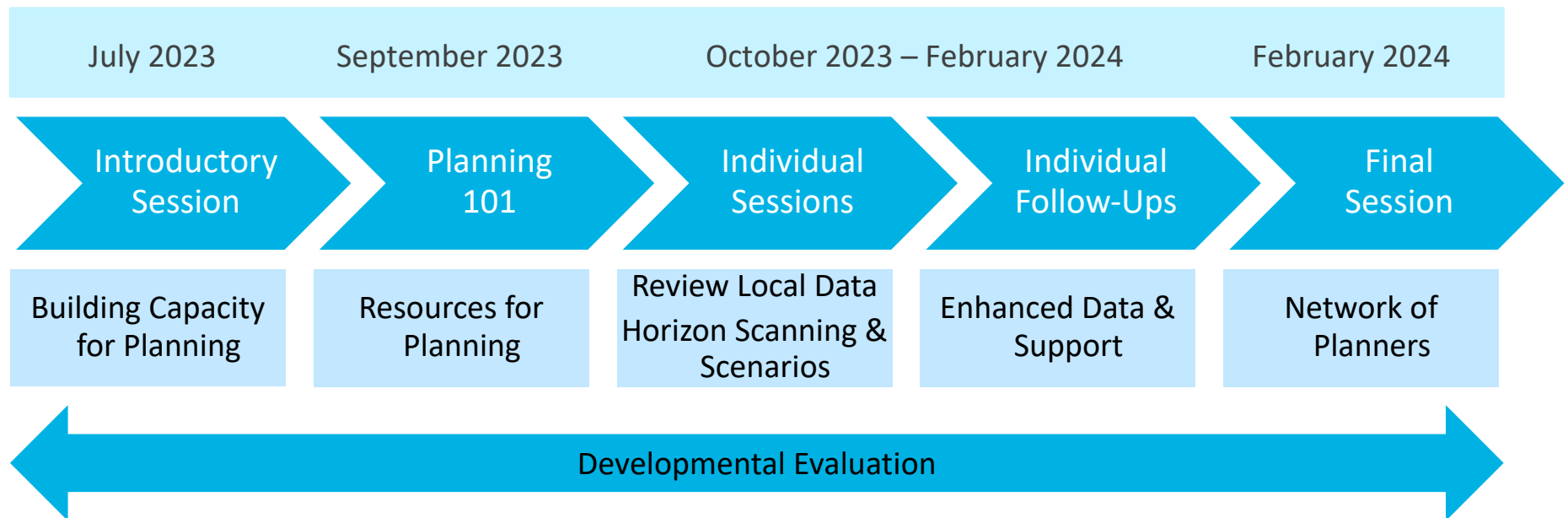
Overview of the Planning Process



- *Engagement with partners is embedded in the planning process*
- *Partners may be local-level planners, clinical leads, service providers, or patients*
- *Engagement takes place at each stage of the process*
- *Engagement can influence the outcomes of planning and the tools and resources mobilized to support planning*

Building Capacity for Planning

OHT Engagement Process



Purpose & Goals for OHT Capacity Building

OHTs and their primary care providers will be able to:

- Learn how to use the **planning approach**, the **toolkit**, and **additional data sources**
- Develop a profile of the **patients they are serving, where they come from, their primary care needs and highest need subgroups and areas**
- Estimate the **primary care resources** needed and potential service or capacity gaps
- Identify **future emerging issues** specific to their planning area
- Develop **strategies to improve and transform care** by testing a range of relevant scenarios
- Use the data to **monitor progress** of implemented strategies and do **continuous improvement**
- Advocate for the **primary care resources** needed to care for patients

Ultimate Goal: Find solutions for health system issues by moving from reactive decision-making to proactive planning



Ontario Health
Toronto



Methodology

Study Design

- Qualitative case study
- Exploratory design taking a developmental evaluation approach

Analysis

- Inductive content analysis
- Deductive framework analysis using the Institute of Health Information's Framework for Going to Full Scale

Participants

- We engaged with 5 OHTs (93 neighbourhoods with over 1.5 million residents) and 53 health system leaders, including 12 primary care physician leaders
- Nearly 200 hours were devoted to primary care planning engagement activities in Toronto

Key findings: Support is needed for planning

- Partners are enthusiastic but overwhelmed
- They feel that planning is important but have limited knowledge and confidence
- They are eager for more information to support decision-making and are keen to use data and tools for planning

“There's no way we could do this ourselves”

“I don't think there's any OHT who thinks that [health workforce] capacity planning is optional”

“Revolutionary moment where it was like wow, now we found the path, right”

Key findings: Engagement guides investment

- Engagement helps to tailor the support to the context and can inform the tools and data that are provided to support planning and decision-making
- Bespoke data packages validated some community and workforce trends while raising questions about others

“Using both the data and whatever local intelligence you get is really key to identifying needs”

“And you'll see that we did leverage extensively the workforce planning toolkit to help us come up with the estimate”

“One thing that is common that we have seen is that it is driven by local needs and the setup of the hubs is very specific to ... the data and the engagement the community has provided”

Key findings: Engagement builds relationships

- Engagement strengthened relationships between health system partners
- Engagement activities created a cascade of additional connections
- We witnessed spontaneous collaboration in real time and sharing of ideas and solutions

“It's helpful to know that others are experiencing[/]seeing similar trends”

“We're trying to reframe our thinking, look at all these amazing opportunities for us to work together”

“It's not just about primary care capacity, it's about connecting primary care with social services and community-based services in that neighbourhood so that we are creating an integrated system.”

Conclusion & Key Messages

1

Engagement can clarify local planning challenges and provide a foundation for the development and refinement of data supports and other fit-for-purpose resources

2

Engagement can enhance the impact of health workforce planning within communities and across the health system

3

Engagement creates connections and builds capacity for planning