



Family Advisory Council for Children's Healthcare Canada Statement of Shared Purpose and Vision

Background

Children's Healthcare Canada (CHC) recognizes that family partners (parents, caregivers, and those with lived experience supporting children through the healthcare system) bring essential expertise needed to inform and improve child and youth health systems. While past family engagement structures, such as the Family Network, have provided valuable opportunities for connection, CHC and family partners' needs have evolved, creating an opportunity to build a refreshed approach that better reflects current priorities.

Families have consistently expressed the need for a clearer purpose, more strategic involvement, and tangible opportunities to inform CHC's work. In alignment with CHC's evolving strategy, the Family Advisory Council is being created to provide focused, meaningful, and impactful contributions from family partners.

Shared Purpose

The Family Advisory Council will:

- Review criteria and eligibility for the Children's Healthcare Canada Family and Person-Centred Care Award every two years, ensuring the award reflects current realities and continues to honour meaningful contributions.
- Annually adjudicate the Family and Person-Centred Care Award and select recipients.
- Identify one Advisory member to sit on the CHC Innovation and Impact Awards Committee and contribute to the adjudication of the full slate of awards.
- Collaborate with the SPARK team to support the development of a three-part podcast mini-series in alignment with priorities defined in CHC's strategic plan.
- Act as ad hoc advisors on SPARK Impact initiatives.
- Provide ad hoc advice to CHC staff seeking to incorporate the expertise of family partners in policy formation, event development, and knowledge mobilization.
- As needed, act as spokespeople in key media moments, amplifying the lived experience perspective in public conversations about child health. This role is voluntary, with support provided by CHC.

How We Will Work Together

Meetings of the Family Advisory Council will be held virtually each quarter, with additional engagements as needed to support CHC initiatives. All meetings will be facilitated by CHC staff, with agendas and materials provided in advance. Summaries of action items will be shared following each meeting. Advisory Council members will also be invited to participate in relevant CHC practice networks and events, ensuring their perspectives inform work across the organization. Family partners will continue to be embedded as co-chairs within individual networks as appropriate.

As members of the Family Advisory Council and CHC, we commit to:

- Listen actively and speak respectfully: make space for all voices, allow others to finish their thoughts, and challenge ideas (not people) with curiosity and openness.
- Stay systems-focused: bring a solutions and systems-improvement lens to discussions, rather than advocating solely for individual experiences or organizational positions.
- Contribute constructively: share knowledge, lived experience, and skills in ways that support shared goals and advance children's healthcare at the system level.
- Build and protect trust: assume good intent, maintain confidentiality where appropriate, and create conditions where members feel safe to speak openly.
- Use inclusive and respectful language: engage in ways that are welcoming of diverse perspectives and experiences.

Membership

The Family Advisory Council aims to bring together four to six members whose perspectives and lived experiences reflect the diverse realities of families across Canada, including:

- Varied caregiving experiences (acute, chronic, complex, community, and home care)
- Geographic diversity (urban, rural, and remote communities across Canada)
- Representation across different cultural backgrounds and identities
- Balance of genders and family roles

Members will serve a two-year term, with an option to renew for a second two-year term. At the end of the first term, Advisory Council members and CHC staff will review progress against deliverables and make recommendations on future scope of work and membership.

Recognition of Experience

CHC acknowledges the time, expertise, and lived experience of family partners. To recognize these contributions, CHC will provide:

- Financial remuneration consistent with CHC's engagement guidelines
- Complimentary registration and reimbursement for travel expenses associated with the CHC annual conference
- Opportunities to co-author publications and media outputs
- Access to professional development opportunities relevant to the Advisory's work

CHC Staff: Ryan Voisin, Director, Practice & Policy and Catherine Riddell, Manager, Health Networks