



Provincial Paediatric Therapy Recruitment and Retention Coordinator

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Sixth Annual Report from the Provincial Paediatric Therapy Recruitment and Retention Coordinator (PPTRRC) 2009-2010

Background

The Provincial Paediatric Therapy Recruitment and Retention Coordinator (PPTRRC) is funded by the Ministry of Children and Family Development. The PPTRRC is part of an interdisciplinary approach to address issues in physical, occupational, and speech therapy services for children in British Columbia, particularly recruitment and retention of therapists working in paediatrics. Improved ability to recruit and retain therapists specializing in children and youth across this province will result in better access to therapy services that support children with special needs to achieve their full potential and ability to participate in all aspects of community life. The PPTRRC works under the direction of a Steering Committee comprised of representatives from Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech-Language Pathology and the Ministry of Children and Family Development. The following report is a summary of the recruitment and retention initiatives directed by the PPTRRC from the time period April 1, 2009 to – March 31, 2010.

Work Plan Objectives and Accomplishments

The Objectives developed for the 2009-2010 work plan, and the activities and achievements of the PPTC corresponding to each objective are outlined below:

1. Increase the awareness of the value of paediatric therapy services, and the impact of recruitment and retention issues on children and families requiring therapy services

Activities & Achievements

- Participation on the 'Partnerships Project' Steering Committee. This committee works to support ongoing training in communities throughout the province to increase the level of awareness, skills and knowledge of service providers working with children birth to 6 years of age with various disabilities. There are two therapy related learning modules available for community training, Communications and Promoting Function and Participation. There are 17 OTs and PTs across BC able to deliver the Promoting Function and Participation module, and 26 Speech-Language Pathologists across BC trained to deliver the Communications module. The status of the Partnerships Project is a bit uncertain at this time due to recent changes to the structure of IDP and SCDP in the province; however, there is a Transition Planning Working Group that is advising MCFD on how to support the Project moving forward without the IDP/SCD Consortium. Further details regarding the Partnership Program can be found at www.partnershipsproject.bc.ca.
- Participation on the 'Mapping and Modeling Project' Steering Committee. This committee is working on a project led by the British Columbia Association of Child Development & Intervention (BCACDI). The project's full title is *Mapping and Modeling of Services for Children & Youth with Special Needs and their Families in B.C.* This project is a component of the Cross Ministry Framework for Action for services for Children and Youth with Special Needs (CYSN), and will produce a comprehensive description of the services for CYSN and their families within BC through the range of community, regional and provincial specialized and sub-specialized service providers across the three sectors of health, education, and children and family services.
- Meetings and ongoing communications with Susan Illmayer, Program Manager of Therapy Professions for the Ministry of Health's Human Resources Planning Services. These discussions are regarding the Office of the PPTRC and opportunities to collaborate regarding children's therapy services and recruitment and retention initiatives. Talks also include a strategy to ensure paediatric HR needs are reflected in the forecasting data the Ministry of Health provides to the Ministry of Advanced Education.
- Presentation for participants at a CYSN Conference in the East Kootenays with a focus on children and care. Discussed recruitment and retention strategies for employers in that region.
- Attended the 'BC Therapy Forum' on June 19th to represent the interests of paediatric therapy service providers. The Forum included participants such as the Rehabilitation Directors of the various BC Health Authorities,

representatives from the UBC rehabilitation professional training programs, Professional associations and regulatory bodies, and Ministry of Health delegates.

- Continue to keep MCFD regional leads abreast of PPTRRC initiatives via face-to-face meetings, and participation on teleconferences.
- Attended 'The Rural Health Workforce Symposium' in Prince George, BC. This conference has a focus on innovations to recruit and retain health care employees in rural settings. Shared several of the projects and initiatives developed by the PPTRRC, and learned of other strategies utilized by other employers in rural areas.

2. Promote recruitment initiatives within physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech language pathology disciplines; and explore innovations to engage students in paediatric settings

Activities and Achievements

- Continued operation and development of www.therapybc.ca website
 - Advertised nationally via professional association (CPA, CASLPA, CAOT) websites and newsletters
 - Also advertised on Ontario Physiotherapy Association website, and the Atlantic Provinces Physiotherapy Association website
 - Advertised on the University of Alberta Health Sciences Career Opportunities online job posting service
 - Positioned in the top 5 search results for 'Therapy jobs in BC' in major search engines such as Google and Yahoo
 - Consistently receives over 2,200 hits a month
 - Continues to provide free job posting services for all publicly funded paediatric therapy positions in BC
 - All new job postings forwarded to all therapy students and job seekers registered with the site
 - New initiative of a social marketing strategy utilizing Facebook and Twitter. Tracking traffic to the site using this new strategy and will evaluate it's effectiveness in the next year
- Participation on the 'Practice Education Committee' of the BC Academic Health Council. The Practice Education Committee works towards developing and implementing strategies to strengthen the delivery of student practice education in BC.
- BCACDI presentation on October 2nd, 2009 to keep employers and members of this association abreast of PPTRRC initiatives
- Attended the UBC OT 'Capstone Conference' Aug. 28th to recruit and network with graduating OT's
- Worked in conjunction with the Paediatric SLP council and the UBC School of Audiology and Speech Sciences to develop an online survey to investigate barriers to SLP's supervising students interested in paediatric placements. Shared the results of this survey with Dr. Valter Ciocca, director of the UBC SLP program, and Lisa Avery, UBC SLP clinical coordinator. Ongoing discussions with this group to address some of the issues raised in the survey.
- Attended the UBC OT/PT/SLP career fair May 28th to represent all BC publicly funded paediatric agencies

- Communications with Kathy Copeman-Stewart, coordinator of the Interprofessional Rural Practice program of BC re: opportunities within the program for therapy students interested in paediatrics and how the PPTRRC can support rural placements.
- Discussions and ongoing communications with 'Make a Future' group. This is a Ministry of Education recruitment and job posting website for the school sector. Met with representatives from 'Make a Future' to discuss a collaborative approach to recruiting out of province and international therapists
- Created the 'Clinical Educator Support Document' designed to be a resource for therapists that supervise clinical practicums for students interested in working in a paediatric environment.
- Attended "Lost in Knowledge Translation? Innovations in Health Human Resources Policy" conference in Vancouver March 30/31st, 2010. Conference hosted by the UBC Centre for Health Services and Policy Research.
- Presented 'A Career in Paediatrics' to several student groups:
 - UBC PT Sept. 16 (32 students)
 - University of Alberta OT Sept. 26 (25 students)
 - University of Alberta SLP Sept. 26 (42 students)
 - UBC OT Oct. 15 (38 students)
 - UBC SLP Oct. 23 (16 students)

3. Support initiatives that foster retention of therapists working in paediatric settings. Facilitate networking and continuing education opportunities for paediatric therapists across BC

Activities and Achievements

- Utilized funds earmarked for 'eLearning' to support therapists using technology to access continuing education opportunities. Also, used these funds to electronically capture Update Symposium, regional workshops and other education sessions for posting online.
- Facilitated the following videoconferences:
 - North region of BC Sept. 17th, 2009
 - Island region Sept. 24th, 2009
 - Interior region February 24th, 2010
- Facilitated a webinar on 'Effective Literature Search Strategies for Paediatric Therapists' that was delivered on February 3rd, 2010
- Attended the Canadian Society of Telehealth conference in October '09 to investigate alternate methods of delivering continuing education and networking opportunities
- Initiated planning for a Paediatric Update Symposium to be delivered in March 2011
- Attended BCASLPA annual conference in October '09 to participate in a discussion on workload

4. Continue to Promote Manageable Workloads for BC's Paediatric Therapists by developing an online library of workload related resources. Support employers and therapists in accessing and utilizing these resources. Develop a plan to receive feedback from employers and therapists on the effectiveness of the resources offered through the Promoting Manageable Workloads project.

Activities and Achievements

- Activated the PMW eLibrary phase 1 'Referral Management Strategies' on the therapybc website
- Contracted with Kathy Davidson, Physiotherapist at the Okanagan South Neurological Society, to support further research and development of the 'Points-Based Caseload Management Tool' explored in her Masters research study. Funding will support development of a valid and reliable caseload management instrument. A future phase of her planned research includes expanding the sample size of paediatric therapists to help identify a points-based reference for a manageable workload
- Contracted with Christie Diamond, former Provincial Paediatric Therapy Consultant, to complete phase 2 of the eLibrary. This resource will be an online repository of template forms, policies, and other resources. The intent is to decrease workload and increase efficiency within agencies through the provision of easy to modify templates for agencies to draw from when creating a form, policy, and/or handout.

5. Improve the ability of the Office of the PPTC to facilitate the immigration of internationally trained therapists to BC paediatric work settings.

Activities and Achievements

- Established links with Eliza Chan, representative from HealthMatch BC, an organization that facilitates the immigration of Physicians, Nurses, and hospital Pharmacists. HealthMatch expanded their mandate in the fall of 2009 to include allied health professionals. The PPTRRC communicated this new development to BC employers to alert them that HealthMatch is now a resource available for PTs, OTs, and SLPs.
- Added to the therapybc website a document written by an internationally educated physiotherapist on her experience emigrating to BC from Israel.
- Updated the therapybc website to include the new licensing requirements for internationally educated SLPs now that BC has a regulatory body for this profession as well.

- Monitoring progress of the CAOT and McMaster University's work on developing a program for internationally-educated Occupational Therapists. This program is similar in nature to the IEP program at UBC for internationally-educated Physiotherapists. These programs provide tutorials and mentoring to assist internationally-educated therapists in writing and successfully passing the national licensing exams.

6. Support a comprehensive provincial mentoring strategy for therapists by utilizing professional expertise within this province.

Activities and Achievements

- In conjunction with Sue Stewart and Sunny Hill Health Centre, developed a provincial eMentoring program available to agencies across the province. Funded a 6 month pilot to test the format of the program
- Disseminated the availability of the provincial eMentoring program via the therapybc website email distribution list, paediatric therapy councils, and face-to-face meetings and teleconferences with regional MCFD leads
- Ongoing communications with Sue Stewart and Sunny Hill to evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot

7. Link with Aboriginal resources to enhance the delivery of service to First Nations communities

Activities and Achievements

- Connected with Tanya Lewis, Health and Human Resources Coordinator for the First Nations Health Council of BC. Informed Tanya regarding the mandate and activities of the PPTRRC, and requested to be alerted to future Career Fairs with a focus on Aboriginal communities and learners.
- Participated in several phone calls and a teleconference regarding a SLP model for the Laichwiltach Family Life Society in Campbell River. Therapybc website and email distribution list utilized to advertise position. Position filled in December 2009.
- Posted a 'Practice Profile' on the therapybc website of a model to provide SLP services to 3 aboriginal communities on the west coast of Vancouver Island. The model utilized an Aboriginal community member as a SLP assistant
- Briefly met with D'Anne Epp of Seabird Island band to discuss the model of SLP services used on Seabird
- Attended a Job Fair May 7th, 2009 in Kelowna for high school Aboriginal students throughout the central Okanagan

8. Ensure timely communication of information between the Provincial Consultant and the Provincial Steering Committee, and other relevant parties

Activities and Achievements

- Monthly reports submitted to the Sharepoint site, and available to the Provincial Steering Committee
- Monthly teleconferences with the Provincial Steering Committee
- Monthly/bimonthly teleconferences with the Provincial Therapy Councils
- Quarterly reports disseminated to MCFD provincial and regional staff, Ministry of Education provincial staff (to be filtered to each school district through their provincial system), BC Health Authority Prevention Managers, provincial paediatric therapy councils, BCACDI and employers, Susan Illmayer (Ministry of Health Services Program Manager - Therapy Professions, Health Human Resources Planning), and paediatric therapists registered with the therapybc mailing list. Reports also posted on the therapybc website. The quarterly reports outline projects and initiatives currently being supported through the PPTRRC Office.

Planned Initiatives for 2010-2011

1. Continuing Education and Networking

- The Office of the PPTRRC has had the opportunity to facilitate a variety of continuing education and networking opportunities over the past several years. Events have ranged from large conferences and courses to teleconferences, videoconferences, and webinars. Feedback has been clear: Therapists appreciate any continuing education opportunity regardless of format; however, they prefer the opportunity to meet face-to-face in a group. The challenge in the current fiscal climate will be to continue to facilitate cost-effective continuing education while still providing opportunities for therapists to meet face-to-face and network. The Office of the PPTRRC will continue to explore technological innovations in the delivery of continuing education and sharing of knowledge in 2010-2011. In addition, the Office will help provide a provincial face-to-face networking opportunity by participating in the planning and delivery of a large conference in the spring of 2011.

2. Promoting Manageable Workloads

- Workload and caseload management issues continue to be a high priority for paediatric therapists in BC, and the most common questions and discussions amongst paediatric therapists are regarding referral management and prioritizing waitlists. The Office of the PPTRRC will continue to provide resources in this area through ongoing support of a research project by a BC physiotherapist investigating a points-based caseload management tool. Once completed, this tool will significantly contribute to the small but

growing body of resources and tools available to paediatric therapists to address workload issues. In addition, in the late spring of 2010 the Office of the PPTRRC will launch the second phase of the eLibrary. This resource is an online repository of template forms, policies, and other resources designed to make the process of creating such resources much more efficient. The PPTRRC will monitor the effectiveness of this resource and develop a strategy for keeping it current and responsive to the demands of therapists.

3. Clinical Education

- BC has been quite successful over the past year increasing interest in paediatric career opportunities amongst students in the therapy professional training programs. However, this has also created issues for UBC clinical coordinators in that they are often unable to locate enough paediatric clinical practicum opportunities to meet the demand. The Office of the PPTRRC will continue to work with the UBC OT, PT, and SLP clinical coordinators in an effort to increase the number of paediatric clinical practicum opportunities available to students. One resource developed by this Office to address this issue, the Clinical Educator Support Document, has only recently been shared with BC therapists. The Office will evaluate the effectiveness of this resource during 2010-2011 through discussions with BC therapists.

4. Other recruitment/retention initiatives

- The Office of the PPTRRC will continue to work with the Ministry of Health Services, Education, and Advanced Education and Labour Market Development to ensure paediatric therapy has a voice in all recruitment and retention strategies being developed and supported with public dollars. The Office will also look to build upon collaborative opportunities with other partners such as 'Make a Future' and HealthMatch BC. Increasing our profile across the country and internationally will continue to be a high priority.

Recommended Strategic Initiatives for the Ministry of Children and Family Development 2010-2011

The Ministry of Children and Family Development can support the recruitment and retention of therapists working in paediatrics by championing the following initiatives:

- 1) *Support coordinated implementation of a wage scale that acknowledges the education, experience, and demand of therapists across employment sectors, with the goal of alleviating some current challenges with hard-to-fill vacancies.* This initiative will require collaboration amongst the Public Sector Employer's Council, employers, therapists, union bargaining representatives, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Health, in order to be successful. Current wage discrepancies between different unions and different Ministries place some employers at a disadvantage when recruiting therapists.
- 2) *Support the caseload guidelines made in phase 2 of the Promoting Manageable Workloads project.* Workload and caseload concerns continue to be common discussion items amongst BC therapists working with children and youth with special needs. The PPTRRC will continue to strive to develop useful resources and strategies to assist therapists in managing workload; however, recognition of a

'Preferred Practice' guideline by employers and funding sources will help convey to therapists their concerns are being addressed. This is vital for retention and the morale of therapists working in BC.

- 3) *Support a provincial plan to increase the number of student seats for SLP students.* Vacant Speech-Language Pathologist positions continue to dominate the therapybc job posting service. BC has recently moved to increase the number of seats in the Physiotherapy training program from 48 to 80 by 2012. The Occupational Therapy program was recently increased from 40 to 48 2 years ago. Unfortunately, the number of training seats in the Speech-Language Pathology program at UBC has remain unchanged for the past several years, and remains at 24.

Closing Remarks

2009-2010 was a challenging yet productive year for the Office of the Provincial Paediatric Therapy Recruitment and Retention Coordinator. The Office was successful in facilitating several continuing education opportunities despite the fiscal climate, and was able to produce more tools and resources for BC therapists. Traffic to www.therapybc.ca continues to grow, as does the therapybc email distribution list helping to keep therapists across BC updated on our initiatives and projects. The level of dedication and commitment demonstrated by the paediatric therapists of BC continues to be a huge source of inspiration for the Office. In addition employers, government representatives, and other stakeholders in the delivery of paediatric therapy services should be commended for their resiliency during this difficult fiscal climate.

Over the past year the provincial Steering Committee saw some familiar faces leave and welcomed new representatives. I'd like to sincerely thank past and present Steering Committee members for their valuable time and dedication. It is only through the commitment and hard work of the Steering Committee that this Office is able to achieve our work plan objectives and continue to be a valuable resource for employers and therapists of BC. Steering Committee members:

- Shirley Meaning, MCFD CYSN Therapy Manager
 - Susan Stacey, OT, steering committee chair 09/10
 - Janice Duivestein, OT
 - Lianne Matsuo, SLP
 - Maureen O'Connell, SLP
 - Kathy Davidson, PT
 - Donna Sims, PT
 - Dianne Cameron, BC Centre for Ability
- Members leaving in 09/10 include Nancy Corrin and Jenny Zoia