



Provincial Paediatric Therapy Recruitment and Retention Coordinator

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2010 – 2011 Annual Report:

Provincial Paediatric Therapy Recruitment and Retention Coordinator

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 and youth 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, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, and the BC Centre for Ability. The following report is a summary of the recruitment and retention initiatives directed by the Office of the PPTRRC from April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011.

Work Plan Objectives and Accomplishments

The Objectives developed for the 2010-2011 work plan, and the activities and achievements of the PPTRRC corresponding to each objective are outlined below:

1. Increase the awareness of the value of therapy services for children, and the impact recruitment and retention of rehabilitation professionals has on service delivery. Ensure input from paediatric therapy services are being represented in provincial initiatives sponsored by public sector organizations such as the BC Academic Health Council, HealthMatch BC, and the BC Rehab Leader's Group.

Activities & Achievements

- 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. Participation included meetings and teleconferences in early 2010, and providing feedback and comments regarding documents generated by the contractor. The project was completed in early 2011, and is now in the dissemination stage.
- The Office of the PPTRRC, Susan Illmayer (Program Manager of Therapy Professions for the Ministry of Health's Human Resources Planning Services), Shirley Meaning (Children and Youth with Special Needs Therapies Manager, Children and Youth with Special Needs Policy), and Alex Mann (Team Lead, Surveys and Data Exchange, Ministry of Education) initiated Cross-Ministry bi-monthly teleconferences to keep informed and discuss therapy related projects and initiatives related to the recruitment and retention of therapists. The majority of the 2010 – 2011 teleconferences were focused on the Ministry of Health Services therapy related data collection used for a human resources forecasting model, ensuring paediatric data was represented. Future conversations will include opportunities to collaborate regarding children's therapy services and recruitment and retention initiatives.
- Continued communications with representatives of the BC Ministry of Education's recruitment website "Make a Future" regarding potential collaboration opportunities to recruit SLPs from out of province, and OTs or PTs if directly employed by the school district.
- Participated in meeting with Interior Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) regional advisors (Infant Development Program,

Aboriginal Infant Development Program, Supported Child Development Program, Therapies) June 18th

- Continued to keep MCFD regional leads abreast of PPTRRC initiatives via face-to-face meetings, and participation on teleconferences. Updates from the PPTRRC now a standing agenda item for the North MCFD agency Executive Directors call (EDs), and the Interior Therapies bi-monthly teleconference facilitated by the Interior MCFD office
- Participated in meeting in west Kootenay re: Children and Youth with Special Needs (CYSN) children in care
- Continued participation in the BC Rehab Leader's Group, a committee consisting of rehabilitation directors from the various BC Health Authorities, as well as representatives from Sunny Hill Health Centre. Bi-monthly meetings. Also working on a sub-committee of this group working on therapist assistant/support personnel related issues
- Met with the Ministry of Health, College of Physical Therapists of BC, Physiotherapy Association of BC, and Health Employers Association of BC re: physiotherapy Human Resources data and the lack of paediatric representation.
- Participated in Dr. Novak's session on evidence-based practice Oct. 4th in Vancouver. The session was geared towards MCFD Fraser and Vancouver-Coastal representatives involved in policy and decision making for therapy services.

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
 - Monthly traffic has increased from 2,200 visits a month at the end of the 2009-2010 fiscal year to 2,800 visits per month at the end of the 2010-2011 fiscal year
 - 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 initiatives implemented in 2010-2011 included:
 - eLibrary
 - ED/agency registry for early intervention services
 - Updated resource section to include CMERLS and Partnerships Project info
 - Adding 'New Hire Resource Person' to each of the provincial therapy councils
 - Now require therapists to have BC licensing before being able to post resumes on the website

- BCACDI presentation on February 3rd, 2011 to keep employers and members of this association abreast of PPTRRC initiatives
- Attended the 2010 UBC OT Capstone in Vancouver August 26th to recruit and network with graduating OT's
- Attended the UBC OT/PT job fair June 3rd to represent all BC publicly funded paediatric agencies
- Created the 'New Graduate/New Hires Support Document' designed to be a resource for therapists starting practice in BC, which will be posted on the therapybc website and distributed to employers in April 2011.
- Recruitment trip to Ontario:
 - Met with graduating University of Toronto SLPs (35)
 - Met with graduating University of Western Ontario SLPs (14)
 - Attended and had a display booth at McMaster OT/PT job fair. Over 100 OTs and PTs in attendance
- U of Alberta job fair September 25th
- Worked with UBC PT rep to help connect class with community PTs for paediatric related lectures
- Mailed therapybc key chains to CASLPA, CAOT and CPA conferences for inclusion in the delegate kit bags
- Presented 'A Career in Paediatrics' to several student groups:
 - UBC PT November (9 students)
 - UBC OT Feb.3rd (55 students)
 - UBC SLP November (21 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

- Facilitated the following webinars in 2010-2011:
 - May 12th on Literature Search strategies
 - Two DCD webinars in Jan/Feb 2011 by Jill Zwicker
- Lead organizer for the 2011 Paediatric Update Symposium that occurred in Vancouver February 28th and March 1st, 2011. Ensured the event was available via videoconference to 17 agencies across BC.
- Lead organizer for a Vickie Meade level 1&2 course at the Kelowna CDC June 24-26th 2010
- Presented Continuing Education poster at BCASLPA and OT West conferences
- Presented eMentoring poster at OT West
- Initiated retention survey of North therapists in conjunction with Northern agency EDs. Compiled survey results and shared with EDs and North MCFD office representatives in the North during teleconference on recruitment and retention

- Launched the inaugural Office of the PPTRRC Awards. There were two Award categories: Dedication to the Profession/Lifetime Achievement, and Mentoring/Education. Each category was represented by three therapists, one from each of the therapy professions (OT, PT, SLP).

4. Promoting Manageable Workloads: - disseminate availability of the new eLibrary resource to all BC stakeholders in paediatric therapy services. Collect feedback from therapists and employers, and review this feedback with the SC on a quarterly basis. Update resource accordingly as budget allows. Keep abreast of developments with the Interprofessional Caseload Management Tool Project being created by CPA, CAOT, and CASLPA.

Activities and Achievements

- eLibrary – successfully launched on website. Main index page receives more than 100 page visits per month
- Continued work with Kathy Davidson, Physiotherapist at the Okanagan South Neurological Society, to support further research and development of the ‘Points-Based Caseload Management Tool.’ Office of the PPTRRC helped support research establishing reliability of the Tool. Information and Tool now posted on the therapybc website. To explore funding and resources for a large sample project to establish points-based caseload guidelines.
- Met with therapists and quality assurance manager of NONA in Vernon to help develop a plan to implement and evaluate several workload management strategies
- Presented workload management strategies at a conference in Burns Lake. Facilitated therapist networking session over lunch on the use of therapist assistants
- Presented on workload management to North region EDs via webinar. Shared strategies to address therapist workload manageability recommended within the resources created via the Promoting Manageable Workloads project.
- Presented eLibrary to School-Aged Therapy Interest Group in the lower mainland. Discussed strategies to provide support to School-Aged Therapists.

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

Activities and Achievements

- On advisory committee for a government funded project (with COTBC)
- investigating the licensing of internationally educated OTs in BC
- Ongoing support and communications with internationally educated therapists contacting Office for assistance/information regarding work in BC

6. Support a comprehensive provincial mentoring strategy for therapists by utilizing professional expertise within this province. Investigate why the eMentoring project has not had much uptake and address these issues with employers, Sunny Hill, and the eMentor coordinator.

Activities and Achievements

- Continued to advertise the availability of the provincial eMentoring program via the therapybc website email distribution list, paediatric therapy councils, employers, and face-to-face meetings and teleconferences with regional MCFD leads
- Completed a six month pilot between an OT in Penticton receiving mentorship from an experienced OT in the Fraser Valley. Created a poster presentation available in each of the therapy 'resources section' on therapybc based on this pilot. Presented this poster at OT West, and submitted this poster to CPA Conference 2011 (not accepted) and AACPDM 2011 (pending)
- Surveyed employers to regarding eMentoring program and why uptake has been poor. Shared results with Mentor Coordinator Sue Stewart
- Working with BC SLP council and BCASLPA on mentoring ideas, existing resources, and the needs of SLPs with respect to mentoring

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

Activities and Achievements

- Presented PPTRRC/VIHA/MCFD pilot to build capacity in aboriginal communities for speech and language stimulation activities at BCACCS conference. Liaised with other stakeholders in the delivery of therapy services to aboriginals, and discussed strategies to support therapists (Alison Gerlach, Deanne Zeidler, BCACCS)
- Attended a Job Fair May 6th, 2010 in Kelowna for high school Aboriginal students throughout the central Okanagan
- Preliminary discussions with Deanne Zeidler and Alison Gerlach regarding a potential workshop for therapists "Delivering Therapy Services in Aboriginal Communities." To liaise with other stakeholders such as FNECS and Aboriginal IDP for further strategizing.

8. Improve therapybc employer network

Activities and Achievements

- Started an 'Employer' database on the therapybc site. Initiated the process with agencies contracting with MCFD to deliver therapy services. Will look to expand the database in 2011/12

9. Ensure timely communication of information between the PPTRRC 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 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 2011-2012

1. Continuing Education and Networking

- The Office of the PPTRRC will continue to facilitate continuing education and networking opportunities of both technology-based and face-to-face in nature. Last year face-to-face opportunities were provided in the Interior and the Lower Mainland, and the PPTRRC traveled to the North region to participate in a conference. Thus, this year's focus will be on facilitating a face-to-face opportunity on the Island, and opportunities in other regions of the province as resources allow.

2. Promoting Manageable Workloads

- Workload and caseload management issues are an ongoing concern for paediatric therapists in BC. The Office of the PPTRRC will continue to work with Kathy Davidson to pursue resources for continued development of the Workload Assessment Tool-Therapists

(WAT-T) points-based caseload management tool. In addition, the PPTRRC will help disseminate results and recommendations throughout the paediatric community from the National Caseload Project being lead by the Canadian Physiotherapy Association, Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists, and the Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists. Finally, the eLibrary will continue to be expanded as resources allow.

3. Other recruitment/retention initiatives

- The Office of the PPTRRC will continue to work with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education 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 2011-2012

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 inclusion of non-client direct activities such as professional development and research related activities in EIT and SAT contracts.* The experience and demographics of the therapy workforce combined with all three professions now graduating with Master's level training involving research is significantly evolving the practice and activities of BC therapists. The availability of research-related activities such as knowledge brokering, knowledge translation, and the pursuit of evidence-based practice are now vital recruitment and retention factors that employers and funding sources need to strongly consider. MCFD can demonstrate progressive leadership and vision by acknowledging such activities contribute to the recruitment and retention of service providers.
- 3) *Support the caseload guidelines created in 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. Recognition of the Preferred Practice Guidelines

(see <http://www.therapybc.ca/pdf/PreferredPracticeGuidelines.pdf>) by employers and funding sources will help convey to therapists their concerns are being addressed. These guidelines can be a good reference for conversations amongst stakeholders regarding therapist caseload size and workload manageability.

- 4) *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 in 2009. Unfortunately, the number of training seats in the Speech-Language Pathology program at UBC has been unchanged for the past several years, and remains at 24.

Closing Remarks

The Office of the Provincial Paediatric Therapy Recruitment and Retention Coordinator continues to grow its profile within the paediatric therapy community. The website www.therapybc.ca continues to build traffic and the therapist email distribution list continues increase in number demonstrating the valuable service the Office is providing to stakeholders in BC paediatric therapy services. The 2011 Paediatric Update Symposium was definitely a highlight from the past year. To observe the enthusiasm and sharing of knowledge at that event was truly inspiring.

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 10/11
 - Janice Duivestien, OT
 - Lianne Matsuo, SLP
 - Maureen O'Connell, SLP
 - Kathy Davidson, PT
 - Donna Sims, PT
 - Dianne Cameron, BC Centre for Ability
- Members leaving in 10/11 include Lianne Matsuo