

# Health Sciences North 2022 Annual General Meeting

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Report from the Chair,  
Patient and Family Advisory Council

**Jessica Grenier**



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**Report from the Chair, Patient and Family Advisory Council**  
**Jessica Grenier**  
**Annual General Meeting - June 15, 2022**

It's my pleasure to present to you the progress that the Patient and Family Advisory program has made over the past year and to highlight Health Sciences North (HSN) and Health Sciences North Research Institute (HSNRI) in their continued commitment to engage with patients and their families to ensure that we remain the focus of all that HSN does.

Patient and Family Advisors serve as a “voice” for patients who have and are receiving care and treatment at HSN and their family members. The Patient and Family Advisory Council (or PFAC) is dedicated to strengthening collaboration between patients and family members and the health care team to enhance HSN's ability to deliver the highest standard of safe, comprehensive and compassionate health care. Information and requests flow into the PFAC program through hospital and organizational-wide committees, councils and programs seeking the patient and family's perspective. PFAC members continually look for new opportunities for communication and collaboration among patients, families and staff and strive to identify and support opportunities for improvement from the patient and family perspective.

I have had the pleasure of working with the Patient and Family Advisory Council for several years. I initially got involved to advocate and make a difference following my experiences with the Cardiac program, Cancer Center and NEO Kids. Looking back, this was a great decision which has allowed the opportunity for firsthand discussions, opportunities to question and advise on decisions and recommendations leadership and management are making. I feel my voice and OUR collective voices are being heard. Participating at different levels, including planning committees and operational tables over the years and throughout the pandemic, has been both inspiring and challenging. I have been inspired listening and watching the staff and leadership work through some extremely challenging and relentless circumstances. Their unwavering drive to provide excellent patient care has been incredible to be part of, even from a distance. It has been challenging to hear and watch the ever-changing demands the system has required of everyone during the pandemic. I have literally “felt” the emotions in some meetings.

Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, both I and PFAC Vice-Chair, Lauri Petz, have continued to partner with HSN virtually as members of HSN's Incident Command and Operations teams. We've provided input and decision-making at a senior level and have been involved in the execution of various policies, procedures and communications. Our voice continues to ensure a balance between HSN's responsibility to keep patients, families and staff safe during the pandemic while maintaining a patient and family- centred approach.

In order to provide high quality, effective and meaningful care, HSN strives to ensure

that the engagement of patients and families remains the top priority in the delivery of care. Partnering with patients and families has enabled their experiences to be showcased and has helped shape organizational improvements. Our input has been valued throughout each level of the 2019-2024 HSN/HSNRI Strategic Plan's goals:

### **Be Patient and Family-Focused:**

In alignment with HSN's organizational key goal to be **Patient and Family-Focused**, HSN continues to engage patients and families to increase satisfaction with communication, specifically between patients and their health care team. Involving patients and families in nursing handover at shift change remains one of our focused areas of improvement work. Patients voiced the importance of ensuring bedside discussions respecting privacy and highlighting the key elements that support their safety. In response, and with patients being part of the process, posters designed in collaboration with Patient and Family Advisors were hung in patient rooms to educate patients and families on what to expect during nursing shift change and practices such as introducing the incoming nurse and discussing their care at bedside. Patient feedback included them feeling more secure in their care and better equipped to ask questions in order to obtain clarity, as required.

### **Be Digitally-Enabled**

In alignment with HSN's key goal to be **Digitally-Enabled**, Patient and Family Advisors continue to act as voting members of the Electronic Medical Record Steering Committees, Physician Advisory Council and working groups. In these settings, they are able to share feedback and experiences which inform the design and build of the Electronic Medical Record. In April 2021, HSN launched a new app called Seamless MD, designed for patients undergoing total hip and knee replacement surgery. This user-friendly information and communication tool allows the surgical program to virtually connect and support patients at home before and after surgery. Patient and Family Advisor involvement was instrumental in the development of the Seamless MD app by providing feedback on a demo app, ensuring patient-friendly language, designing ways to introduce the tool to patients and assisting the committee in understanding the patient's journey.

### **Be Socially Accountable**

In alignment with HSN's key goal to be **Socially Accountable**, HSN has proudly partnered with members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and Patient and Family Advisors as part of our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion. In celebration of 2021 Pride Week, HSN joined Fierté Sudbury Pride at the annual flag-raising event where individuals of multiple representations shared their experiences. Pride t-shirts, stickers, and an infographic on the use of pronouns were distributed across the organization to remind patients that HSN is a safe space for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

## **Support and Develop our People**

In alignment with HSN's key goal to **Support and Develop Our People**, the Workplace Violence Prevention Committee continues to benefit from active participation of dedicated Patient and Family Advisors. Feedback obtained from Patient and Family Advisors was instrumental in designing communication tools. Patient and Family Advisors have also been integral in the advancement of our Behavioral Escalation Support Team through sharing personal experiences and reminding us to always keep the patient and family at the forefront of safety planning. When critical safety events occur and are reported at the Workplace Violence Committee, input from Patient and Family Advisors offer a different and patient-centered perspective. Their involvement emphasizes the value of including the patient and families in discussions related to workplace violence prevention.

## **Strengthen our Academic and Research Impact**

In alignment with HSN's key goal to strengthen our **Academic and Research Impact**, HSN and the HSNRI are active participants in the Canadian Remote Access Framework for Clinical Trials project, designed to investigate and overcome barriers to bringing clinical trials to remote and rural patients. Both organizations were selected as one of three locations in Canada to be named a "Proof of Concept" site for this work. Patient and Family Advisors actively participate in monthly committee meetings and have joined other Advisors across Canada in sharing experiences and expertise to help bring research to patients.

As my final year concludes as the Chair of the Patient and Family Advisory Council, I want to sincerely express my thanks and gratitude for the opportunity to work with this council and the staff and leaders within HSN. I will continue to participate and advocate when and where I can to ensure patients and families remain at the center of all things at HSN.

Let me conclude by also acknowledging the members of the Patient and Family Advisory Council who served with me this past year:

Lauri Petz – 2022-2023 PFAC Chair;  
Andrea Desjardins;  
Andrea Fortin;  
Darlyn Hansen;  
Jill Kirwan;  
Todd Menard;  
Debbie Rainville;  
Rylee Restoule;  
Courtney Skuro;  
Leslie Steel; and  
Kimberly Wagg.

Our collective efforts and passion for excellent patient and family health care

experiences will continue to be our driving force as we work together with HSN staff and leadership well into the future.

Thank you.