

For Immediate Release | June 9, 2022

Interior Health paving the way in medical leadership training

IH WIDE –The inaugural cohort of the NAVIG8 Emerging Medical Leaders Program at Interior Health has graduated. These 26 participants completed a two-year, one-of-a-kind program that equips medical staff (physicians, midwives, nurse practitioners and dentists) with the knowledge, skills, and behaviours to become the next generation of medical leaders in Interior Health.

“Interior Health is paving the way in medical leadership training in B.C. and across Canada,” said president and CEO Susan Brown. “NAVIG8 aims to build a community of medical leaders who are partners in continuously improving care and creating and sustaining change in health care. I am thrilled Interior Health has people with a genuine connection to their work and a career that aligns with who they are.”

This medical leadership training program is part of Interior Health’s continuous work in medical staff engagement. The idea originated from a late-night brainstorm and notes on a napkin. From there, it grew into a comprehensive leadership development program.

“Our NAVIG8 program is an innovative approach to mentoring the next generation of medical leaders at Interior Health,” said Dr. Mike Ertel, vice president medicine and quality. “I have been privileged to speak with each participant in post-session calls and in these conversations, I heard timely and valuable feedback about what was working well and what can be improved. This has been instrumental in shaping the success of the program.”

NAVIG8 is designed for medical staff who aspire to, or currently occupy, formal administrative leadership positions in Interior Health and who wish to supplement their medical background with applied operational skills. The program format includes experiential learning projects, a mentorship partnership, and in-person and virtual learning sessions.

“Participants learn operational and administrative skills; receive mentorship from medical and administrative leaders; develop a deeper awareness of their own leadership strengths and opportunities; and gain deeper insights into how to engage, inspire, and motivate teams,” said Harsh Hundal, executive medical director, physician engagement and resource planning.

Through faculty presentations, case studies, group discussions, workshops, and individual exercises, participants examine the distinctive characteristics that define successful leaders. The curriculum balances thought-provoking analysis and dialogue with self-reflection and personal development. The

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aim of the program is to build a community of medical leaders who can be effective partners in continuously improving care.

NAVIG8 is the only health authority-based medical leadership program in Canada recognized by the Canadian Society of Physician Leaders as a pathway to certification as a physician executive. This unique two-year medical leadership training program has garnered significant interest from other health authorities and provincial organizations.

Now in its third year, with the second cohort consisting of physicians, a midwife, and an oral surgeon, NAVIG8 has had a significant impact on program participants.

"There is no question in my mind that the program is helping to transform me into a more confident and thoughtful leader. Networking with a group of my peers early on in the program was invaluable. I'm learning as much from my peers as from the speakers," said a NAVIG8 participant.

At the inaugural NAVIG8 graduation event, held April 21 in Kelowna, participants had the opportunity to hear presentations, view project posters, and connect in person. NAVIG8 Cohort 2 began fall 2021 and will graduate summer 2023.

To learn more, watch a video about [NAVIG8](#).

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Photos Attached:

- Group Picture: NAVIG8 Emerging Medical Leaders Program Graduates: Juliann Aitchison, Susan Benzer, Jill Boulton, Sarah Broder, Paul Carey, Joslyn Conley, Jeffrey Douziech, Dante D'Urbano, Brian Forzley, Kaveri Gupta, Meghan Guy, Jeff Hussey, Jasmine Kerr, Nerine Kleinhans, Launny Lowden, Paul Magnuson, Elizabeth Parfitt, Annemie Raath, Michael Robinson, Andrew Sellars, Julian Sernik, Michael Slatnik, Jacobus Syen, Aleksander Tkach, Shauna Tsuchiya, and James Wiedrick.
- Picture 2: Dr. Julian Sernik (Vernon) presenting his leadership project, Diabetic Foot Ulcer Clinic, at the NAVIG8 graduation event.
- Picture 3: NAVIG8 graduates (L-R) Dr. Juliann Aitchison (Salmon Arm), Dr. Sarah Broder (Penticton), Dr. Sue Benzer (Trail), Dr. Nerine Kleinhans (Creston).

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MEDIA, FOR INFORMATION:

PHONE 1.844.469.7077 EMAIL media@interiorhealth.ca