

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## 2019-2024



SouthWestern Academic Health Network  
c/o Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry  
Western University  
Clinical Skills Building, Rm.3720  
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## Establishment of an AHSN in Southwestern Ontario

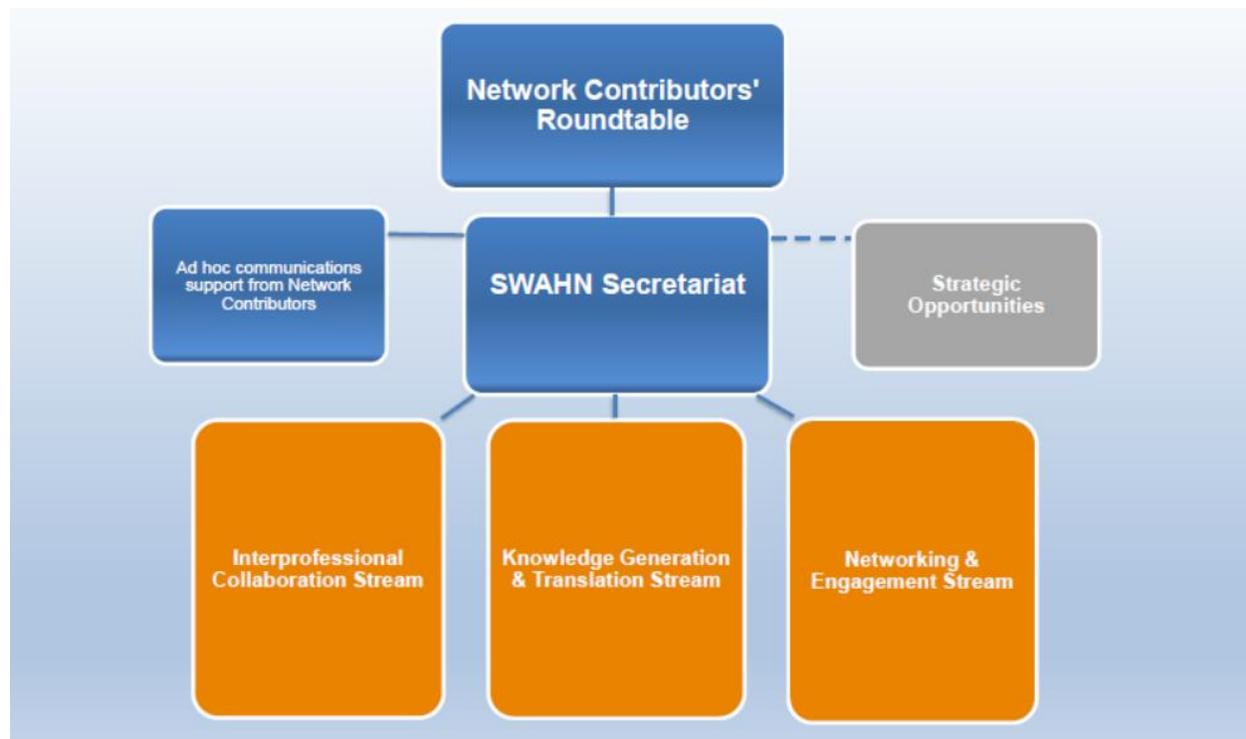


Planning for the establishment of the SouthWestern Academic Health Network (SWAHN) began in 2011 among leaders of academic and hospital organizations in London, Ontario. Over the next two years, governance and operational leads were determined and various project areas emerged along with a growing base of volunteers.

SWAHN's engagement of healthcare, academic, research and community organizations was later expanded beyond London to include the South West and Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) regions in addition to the School of Pharmacy and other health-related professional schools at the University of Waterloo (located within the Waterloo-Wellington Local Health Integration Network region). Together, these organizations began their work towards fulfilling SWAHN's vision to transform health in Southwestern Ontario through integrated excellence in research, education, and clinical practice.

In 2013, the organization's first strategic plan was crafted to guide the new organization through its first five years. A formal office with a full-time manager was established in 2015 and SWAHN's website was launched.

## Structure



By 2017, the Network's leadership recognized the need to streamline SWAHN's organizational structure and processes to better support future advancement. The updated structure was

created based on the tenets of the Network's value proposition which was developed in 2016 and finalized in 2017, highlighting interprofessional collaboration, networking, and knowledge sharing opportunities across health-care related education, research, health service providers, and other stakeholders in Southwestern Ontario.

As part of the new structure, SWAHN's initial Steering Committee was renamed the Network Contributors' Roundtable (NCR) which includes representation from the leadership of each of SWAHN's 18 financial contributors, ensuring that each one has an opportunity to participate equally in priority setting and strategic planning.

## Leadership

The NCR is currently co-chaired by Dr. Gillian Kernaghan, President and Chief Executive Officer, St. Joseph's Health Care London, and Dr. Ken Blanchette, Associate Vice President, Academic, St. Clair College in Windsor. These two leaders also sit on the SWAHN Secretariat, the group that leads the Network's operations. SWAHN's co-leads, Dr. Davy Cheng, Acting Dean, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, Western University, and Dr. Robin Walker, Integrated Vice President, Medical Affairs & Medical Education, London Health Sciences Centre and St. Joseph's Health Care London, also sit on the Secretariat in addition to three other NCR representatives: Dr. David Edwards, Hallman Director & Associate Dean, School of Pharmacy, University of Waterloo; Mr. Ralph Ganter, CEO, Erie St. Clair LHIN; and Mr. Andrew Williams, President & CEO, Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance. SWAHN Manager, Catherine Joyes, is also engaged as a member of the Secretariat.

Dr. Robin Walker and Dr. Davy Cheng are SWAHN's Co-Leads in the areas of Interprofessional Collaboration and Knowledge Generation & Translation. Projects in these two streams align to SWAHN's focus on research, education, and clinical practice. These projects address priorities for the region including palliative care, interprofessional education, Choosing Wisely™, and nutrition. The Networking & Engagement Stream is directed by SWAHN's Secretariat with a focus on annual conferences and leadership meetings.

## Network of Volunteers

The Network's four active Project Teams are led by volunteer Co-Chairs who represent different professions, organizations, and regions where possible. These interprofessional teams include representatives from the 18 NCR organizations. Individuals from other health care-related institutions are also engaged, including participants from Family Health Teams, Nurse Practitioner-led clinics, hospices, and other agencies. Together almost 90 professionals provide ongoing in-kind support each year in an effort to advance the initiatives of the four active Project Teams.



**110 active volunteers  
representing  
28 organizations**

## Operational Strategy

Attention to SWAHN's operational infrastructure is key to supporting the execution of SWAHN's mission to optimize health across the region. Employing its strengths and addressing its weaknesses, while considering the current environment and the opportunities it provides, SWAHN will address its operational needs to be successful over the next five-year period. Operational strategies include increased attention to improving awareness of the Network and its areas of focus; evaluation and communication of project results; and identification of new sources of income to support projects, overall growth, and sustainability.

## Communications Plan



A communications plan that was prepared in 2017 will be updated to align with the Network's current structure and initiatives as well as its operational needs. This will help to enhance the communication of SWAHN's key messages and its ongoing interaction with the NCR organizations, volunteers, and the broader health care community in Southwestern Ontario and beyond.

## Strategic Opportunities

Potential projects for future development as suggested by the NCR members or SWAHN's volunteers are regularly captured for review. These projects will be assessed for their fit, potential for spread, resource intensity, impact, and value. Then, as capacity permits, these projects will be initiated.

## Network Contributors

Financial support is provided to fund SWAHN's operations from the following organizations (in alphabetical order):

- Bluewater Health
- Chatham-Kent Health Alliance
- Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network
- Fanshawe College
- Grey Bruce Health Services
- Hotel Dieu Grace Healthcare
- Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance
- Lambton College
- Lawson Health Research Institute
- London Health Sciences Centre
- St. Clair College
- St. Joseph's Health Care London
- South West Local Health Integration Network
- University of Waterloo, School of Pharmacy
- University of Windsor
- Western University, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Western University, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry
- Windsor Regional Hospital



18 funders



840 SWAHN  
Stakeholder Update  
subscribers



## PURPOSE, GUIDING PRINCIPLES, AND VALUES STATEMENTS

### SWAHN's Purpose Statement



SWAHN's purpose is to transform health in Southwestern Ontario through integrating excellence in research, education, and clinical practice while facilitating interprofessional collaboration, networking, and knowledge-sharing opportunities. We are guided by the voices of patients, families, caregivers, researchers, learners, educators, and health service providers in our work.

### SWAHN's Guiding Principles

All governance and committee structures are required to have representation that reflects the regional and interprofessional nature of SWAHN.

All SWAHN partners are considered equal and are respected for their contributions.

All residents of Southwestern Ontario are entitled to an optimal standard of care wherever they live and we endeavour to equalize health outcomes throughout the region.

SWAHN strives to distribute academic activities throughout the region via research and innovation, education, community participation, and advocacy.

### SWAHN's Values



We...

- ...share accountability.
- ...collaborate and cooperate.
- ...are respectful and inclusive.
- ...build trust-based relationships.
- ...innovate.
- ...transform.
- ...are community focused.

## CORE STRATEGIES

The following strategies have been implemented to address SWAHN's purpose. These three areas represent the Network's streams.

### #1: Advancing interprofessional collaboration



The primary focus is to develop and enhance education across health professions and disciplines at all levels (including undergraduate, graduate, entry-to-practice, and continuing professional development) based on priorities set by the Network Contributors' Roundtable.

**Why?** Quality healthcare requires interprofessional collaboration to optimize patient care and outcomes. The education of future health professionals as well as the ongoing education of current professionals is essential to foster interprofessional communication and teamwork across the continuum of health care delivery.

### #2: Championing knowledge generation and translation



The primary focus is the acceleration and attainment of research-based/informed evidence and its dissemination into clinical practice that supports improved patient care across the region. This goal encourages the integration of innovative collaborative models of health research and translation through the active engagement of SWAHN participants.

**Why?** Employing innovative, evidence-based/informed treatments, solutions, and systems that address identified needs specific to the region will support improved patient care. We need to develop creative solutions for existing barriers to knowledge translation and foster collaborative health research partnerships in the region.

### #3: Creating opportunities for networking and engagement



The primary focus involves the development and execution of semi-annual gatherings for SWAHN's Network Contributors' Roundtable (NCR) members. While these gatherings may also engage other SWAHN volunteers, a specific component will be designed and offered to the NCR members alone.

**Why?** SWAHN plays a unique role in connecting leaders, volunteers, and stakeholders across the region's NCR organizations and other health institutions, strengthening the Academic Health Science Network and addressing its purpose to integrate research, education, and clinical practice. These connections also encourage the fulfillment of SWAHN's purpose by creating opportunities for collaborative efforts that identify and address gaps to improve the health of individuals, families, communities, and systems.

## CORE STRATEGIES WITH CURRENT PROJECTS/GOALS



### #1: Advancing Interprofessional collaboration

#### Current Project Teams:

##### 1. Interprofessional Education Project Team:



To encourage the employment of best practices across the region with respect to Interprofessional education and practice to advance teaching, learning and practice transformation that will ultimately lead to improved health outcomes in Southwestern Ontario through collaborative, patient/family-centred care.

To explore how interdisciplinary training, teaching, and resources across Southwestern Ontario can be enhanced and promote ongoing dialogue between educators and practitioners.

#### 2019/20 Goals:

- Continue to organize and execute IPE Day – a half-day, two-city event for health care learners from across the region
- Finalize research and share IPE Day outcomes
- Facilitate, support, and champion the development of an Interprofessional Education Collaborative for the SWAHN region.

#### Potential Future Initiatives:

- Revisit IPE Grand Rounds – possibly including palliative care
- Enhanced IPE program, starting with a collaboration with Schulich Distributed Medical Education to expand “Skills Day” at Discovery Week to include professions beyond medicine across the region.
- Expand IPP educational opportunities in a clinical setting
- Coordinate IPE/IPP across the region

#### *IPE Days 2016-2019 (Totals)*



2,495 students



9 programs



218 facilitators

## **2. Palliative Care Project Team:**

**To explore the current state of education and training related to palliative care with respect to all health and human service providers across the continuum of education in Southwestern Ontario. This analysis will allow the Project Team to inform the future state of educational programs, encouraging the incorporation of palliative care education into the curriculum.**

### **2019/20 Focus:**

- Palliative Care Entry-To-Practice Curriculum Review Project – Complete RN/RPNs review and identify the next profession to address e.g., medicine, nurse practitioners, developmental and personal support workers, social workers, and pharmacists.

### **Potential Future Initiatives:**

- Develop an event to gather/connect palliative care researchers from across the SWAHN region

## CORE STRATEGIES WITH DETAILED PROJECTS/GOALS



### #2: Championing knowledge generation and translation

#### Current Project Teams:

##### 1. Choosing Wisely Project Team

**To develop and implement a strategy to advance the knowledge translation of recommendations highlighted by Choosing Wisely Canada in the SWAHN region (i.e., Southwestern Ontario) which speak to improving clinical practice both in terms of patient care and reduced healthcare costs.**

#### **2019/20 Focus:**

- The spread and augmentation of an opioid reduction initiative (through reduced prescribing) across the region, focused on surgical and emergency units, and linking it to Choosing Wisely Canada's Opioid Wisely recommendations.
- Establishing a knowledge translation plan and seeking grant funding for its spread.
- Building awareness and identifying champions across the region to advance the initiative.

#### **Potential Future Initiatives:**

- Expand opioid reduction initiative to community dental clinics and family practitioners.
- Engagement with the leaders of the Middlesex London Drug & Alcohol Strategy and the Windsor Essex Community Opioid Strategy, noting how SWAHN's work intersects with the strategic recommendations
- Collaboration with Schulich Family Medicine and Schulich Distributed Medical Education for an event in connection with "Resident Project Day" to highlight involvement in research.

## 2. Nutrition Project Team



To engage health/human service providers and academics from different professions, students, and service users from across Southwestern Ontario in the development and implementation of interdisciplinary initiatives that address nutrition-related concerns in the region. Specifically, the role nutrition can play with respect to prevention and management of chronic diseases or conditions prevalent in the area (i.e., diabetes, obesity, hypertension and cardiovascular diseases) will be explored as will nutritional issues concerning vulnerable populations (e.g., those living in poverty).

### **2019/20 Focus:**

- Delivering a second knowledge translation workshop for community pharmacists and dietitians, building awareness re: nutrition screening and assessment tools for seniors.
- Completing a retrospective research project reviewing malnutrition and frailty in patients over 65 scheduled for elective surgeries.
- Launching a prospective research project involving the study of, and employment of interventions to address malnutrition and frailty in patients over 65 scheduled for elective surgeries.
- Studying malnutrition and frailty data as part of a collaborative research study involving a hip fracture cohort and the design of a dedicated hip fracture unit – leading to recommendations for interventions that contribute to improved post-surgical outcomes.

### **Potential Future Initiatives:**

- Spread of the nutrition research outcomes to other institutions across the SWAHN region – including establishing a link with LTC/seniors' homes, Family Health Teams, Community Health Centres, and Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics

## CORE STRATEGIES WITH DETAILED PROJECTS/GOALS



### #3: Creating opportunities for networking and engagement

Through annual conferences, semi-annual SWAHN Network Contributors' Roundtable meetings, and ad hoc events, SWAHN creates opportunities for networking and engagement.

#### **2019/20 Focus:**

- Articulating SWAHN's value within the health care system as its structure transforms across the community and region.

#### **Potential Future Initiatives:**

- Enhanced engagement with Family Health Teams, Community Health Centres, and Public Health across the region
- Renewed connections with regional hospitals and educational institutions/faculties not currently engaged as Network Contributor Roundtable members
- Fostering Communities of Practice

### **Retreats/Forums/Symposia/Conferences**

Simulation Retreat – 2013 (London)  
SWAHN Planning Conference – 2013 (Chatham)  
Nutrition Symposium – 2015 (London)  
Leadership/Volunteer Retreat – 2016 (Sarnia)  
Mental Health & Addiction Symposium – 2016 (Windsor)  
Choosing Wisely Forum – 2017 (London)  
SWAHN Conference – 2017 (London)  
SWAHN Conference – 2018 (London)