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Integrating Guidelines Into A Larger Quality Framework: The Case Of Cancer Care Ontario's Program In Evidence-based Care.

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Background: The Program in Evidence-based Care (PEBC) is the practice guidelines initiative of Cancer Care Ontario (CCO), the advisory body to government on all matters related to cancer. The PEBC develops guidelines aimed to improve clinical practice and influence system and policy decisions. It is one component of a larger integrated system aimed to improve quality of cancer care. The purpose of this presentation will be to show how PEBC guidelines are implemented in this integrated system to achieve this mandate using colorectal cancer as an exemplar.

Methods and Results: The PEBC guidelines are used (i) to facilitate the development of communities of practice of clinicians and system leaders who are receptive to evidence, who understand the role, value and limitations of evidence, and who can apply evidence to decisions; (ii) as a foundation to create quality indicators that are used to measure performance, monitor adherence, and publicly report on the cancer system; (iii) as tools to facilitate restructuring of cancer services at a system level to improve safety and quality of care; (iv) as required components in policy decisions regarding access to and funding for treatment options in our publicly funded system; and (v) as levers in contract negotiations with institutions and funding models with professional bodies.

Conclusions: Integrating guidelines into a larger system of quality improvement has the potential to have a direct and measurable impact on the patient experience and on patient outcomes. Guidelines are necessary but not sufficient tools to improve a health care system.