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## Developing Population-Based Knowledge Management Framework for the Alberta Radiation Therapy Corridor

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**Background:** The government funder of health care services is developing radiation services for several smaller centres, outside of the two large urban centres in the province of Alberta, Canada. There was a need to develop a *knowledge management framework* to ensure province-wide guidelines were available to support best practices being routinely used at all of these centres.

**Purpose:** To describe the implementation of a population-based knowledge management framework for the Alberta Radiation Therapy Corridor.

**Methods:** The provincial cancer service's guidelines group developed a draft framework for knowledge management. The framework explicitly links best practice provincial guidelines with cancer treatment program *planning* and *delivery*, supported by a cancer quality agenda. It encompasses six key domains: provincial guidelines and standards; setting priorities for funding decisions; harmonizing treatment pathways; knowledge transfer activities; performance measurement; and system-wide feedback. While the framework is grounded on broad business approaches for diffusion of innovation and quality improvement, *how* to implement such a knowledge management framework is less clearly defined.

**Results:** A planning day was organized in early 2009 to develop an overall implementation plan for the framework. The key actions from this day included plans for: the development of provincial harmonized care pathways; establishing a knowledge transfer work plan; developing indicators for guidelines as well as lay versions of guidelines; and working to post guidelines and educational material onto a navigable website.

**Discussion:** Guidelines by themselves don't change practice. By developing a knowledge management framework and applying it to the Radiation Therapy Corridor, we are working to assure the province-wide uptake of guidelines-based radiation and cancer care. We explicitly linked guidelines with a quality agenda, to measure and promote the routine use of cancer guidelines. We anticipate this novel, integrated approach for knowledge management will be transferable more broadly to cancer control in Canada and elsewhere.