

Our Promise

DRAFT – 31 October 2007 – work in progress.
We would like to hear from you.
Please send your comments or suggestions
to quest@cdha.nshealth.ca



Capital Health

Contents

This is Our Promise	1
The Quest We Started	2
Our Declaration of Health	3
Our Mission	4
The Primary Transformation	5
Keeping Our Promise	6
Our Outcome, Our Obligation	10
Additional Thoughts	11
Notes	12

This is Our Promise

Stories abound in our lives and our homes, in our communities and our workplaces, in our hospitals and clinics. They are stories of joy and pain, acceptance and anxiety, courage and uncertainty. They are the stories of our human journey.

The nature of this journey – fulfilling or fear-filled – is up to each of us. Our life is what we make of it. That is our right – and our responsibility.

Capital Health believes optimal health is essential to our ability to exercise fully this right and responsibility. In health – in optimal physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health – we have a grand capacity to be all that we can be, as individuals and as a society. We can, in health, develop the strong relationships necessary for a journey filled with confidence, generosity and shared joy.

Capital Health acknowledges and accepts as privilege the vital role it has in making gentle our human journey. In this, we dedicate ourselves.

We will shift our perspective as providers of patient care exclusively treating illness and injury. We will embrace a new role as learners committed to creating the conditions for the behavioural changes necessary – in us and in our citizenry – to achieve optimal health.

In so doing, we will become a world-leading haven for health, healing and learning.

This is Our Promise to you.

The quest we started

Our Promise is the work of many hands, many minds and many hearts. It took shape over many months starting in early 2007. Thousands of people – those from within the organization of Capital Health as well as from the broader community – came together and sought a different path. Together, we undertook a Strategic Quest.

From its beginning, our Quest has been about an intense cultural transformation. We uncovered deep wounds in the spirit of our people and a sharp hunger for a better way. We heard the plea for a bigger tomorrow grow ever louder – a call for a tomorrow in which each and every one of us are awakened to our essential humanity and that of our fellow traveller.

Along the way, we came to understand our Quest is incomplete work. Its very nature calls for a continuous commitment to make a difference in the lives of the 10,000 people who work at Capital Health, as well as the 400,000 who live in the health district and the thousands more who arrive from around the region for tertiary and quaternary care.

Our Promise, as articulated in the pages that follow, is our collective intention to honour that continuous commitment. It expresses where we intend to place our attention over the next several years. And it does so in words that defy standard strategic planning lingo – for in truth, how can we describe a new reality if we are mired in traditional systems thinking and language?

Do not misjudge, however. The contents of Our Promise are every bit as strategic in their perspective, positioning and practice as any conventional 10-year plan. We are challenging an age-old assumption that we are mere observers and powerless in chaotic circumstances. With Our Promise, we acknowledge that we are the ones who create our reality.

We begin with Our Declaration of Health – a result of some hard listening and painful truths uncovered during our Quest. The Declaration is our philosophy, our vision, our values, our belief system – everything that we are, believe, feel and do, and everything that we aspire to. It is the lens through which we view our health care decisions. It launches a new understanding that we are our community and our community includes us.



Our declaration of health



Health is among the most precious of our personal possessions. It is in health that we are best able to care for one another and contribute to a more vibrant, generous society. It is in health that we have the full capacity to pursue the possibilities and potential of our shared human experience.

We believe Capital Health comprises every person who lives within the district and every person from beyond who seeks our care, and that in our collective strength we can achieve many successes, face tough issues and make difficult decisions.

We believe every person has the right and the responsibility to achieve their individual optimal state of health, and that such health embraces all aspects of our humanity: the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual.

We believe in each of us lies the courage and the confidence to decide how best to reach our health potential, and we are entitled to the full knowledge, respect and trust that empower wise decision-making.

We accept as shared responsibility the need to promote healthy living, prevent and treat illness and disease, and provide end-of-life care, and we do so in a safe and giving community that insists on compassion, kindness, empathy and humility.

We acknowledge a reality of finite resources; yet in accepting limits, we commit to pushing against them to achieve more, ever mindful that our decisions and actions must be just, equitable and for our greater good.

We, the members of the organization called Capital Health – the employees, physicians, learners and volunteers – are people caring for people

We care for the whole person before us.

We care with our hearts as well as our hands and our minds.

We care by bringing to bear the sum of our individual knowledge and humanity.

We care by helping to build a better tomorrow, as lifelong learners, educators of the next generation and researchers of new frontiers in health and healing.

We care by embracing our place in the broader community and working with our friends and neighbours to address the many social conditions that affect well-being.

We do all this so that, together, we can realize our shared vision of healthy people, healthy communities.

Our mission

Our desire is to become, as a society, a world-leading haven for health, healing and learning. During our Quest, members of the broader Capital Health community welcomed this mission as compelling and, ultimately, required to provide the care and conditions we desire.

World-leading. We are committed to discovering and enacting leading-edge, evidence-based practices in care, research, education and advocacy.

Haven. We are committed to helping to create and sustain a safe and enriching environment for well-being.

Health. We are committed to supporting an approach that moves beyond mere absence of illness and disease to one that acknowledges optimal well-being as the sum of our physical, emotional, mental and spiritual states.

Healing. We are committed to supporting the natural restorative capabilities of the human body.

Learning. We are committed to seeing ourselves as a community of learners with those we serve and those who serve us. We are all members of learning networks designed to realize our individual and collective health.

This mission is born of the deep commitment of those who have chosen to make Capital Health their place of employment, training and volunteerism. It is a commitment to make a difference in the lives of those they care for and of their families. What it looks like will evolve over the next several years. Such is the dynamic nature of the world we create.



The primary transformation

Our Promise begins here: with a shift in how we fundamentally see ourselves and our purpose. To achieve our mission, we are moving from the perspective that the patient-care role of Capital Health is exclusively about preventing or treating illness or fixing body parts. Our new perspective embraces the belief that individually and collectively we can create the conditions to support people in changing behaviour to realize their optimal level of health.

We are moving beyond systems thinking and its focus on fixing discrete parts of people. We are becoming learning networks designed to facilitate and sustain healthy behaviours. Such a network emerges when diverse groups connect and draw from their collective experience, expertise and wisdom to learn about the behavioural changes needed to manage, enhance and sustain health and healing within a safe environment.

The ramifications of this shift cannot be underestimated, particularly in terms of power, roles and functions. We are leaving behind a system controlled by administration, one in which care providers have held the power in the relationship with the patient. We are redesigning a current context in which the almost invisible power of the citizen has been in the democratic vote every four or so years, and the patient sits on the lowest rung of a hierarchy of autonomy affecting his or her health care. No longer.

The transformation involves a collaboration of roles: citizens, patients, staff, physicians, volunteers and community members come together to realize healthy behaviours and healthy living. Power lies where it has the most impact. It begins with the individual holding autonomy over his or her own health and well-being. It is facilitated by well-positioned support from others as members of a vital learning community.

Since learning is a dynamic process, the realization of healthy behaviours in the individual is itself a transformation that comes from a fundamental change in behaviour. The overall function of a learning network is therefore to produce changes that result in establishing and sustaining healthy behaviours and healthy living.

The beliefs articulated in Our Declaration of Health reflect this shift in thinking on several levels: as citizens who hold society's rights and responsibilities for our collective quality of life; as patients who have primary authority over their health and well-being; and as staff, physicians, volunteers and community members who are accountable for our respective contribution to high-quality care.



Keeping Our Promise

The deep cultural transformation we are undertaking will be achieved through six strategic streams. These streams reflect our core business (health, healing and learning), our essence (people), our foundation (citizenship), our passion (performance excellence), our strength (innovation and learning) and our driving force (a concept we call leadershift). The streams will act in parallel to improve health care for all. They will also act together in a network to keep Our Promise.

The network concept denotes the intricate and interrelated nature of all the strategic streams. Consider a neural network – the complicated and complex way our mind works – and you begin to understand the power of this approach. An input into such a network does not provide a linear output. Instead, the new information is added to and learns from prior knowledge, which changes the output, which in turn can be returned to the network to affect more new information. In this continuous feedback, our knowledge grows and behaviour can change.

The Promise Councils

Each strategic stream in the network is critical to realizing the commitments we are making to one another. Each serves a specific function, and as such forms its own distinct learning network that in turn feeds into the whole. Broad-based groups called Promise Councils will help frame the actions within each stream. They are tasked with creating the operational plans that keeps Our Promise.

The origins and elements of the six streams are outlined below. The question at the end of each description guides the work of its respective Promise Council.

Health and healing

Inherent in Our Promise is the appreciation that each of us is called to the role we play in health, healing and learning. Capital Health's services span the spectrum of wellness and illness. Assessment and intervention points are designed to catch the breakdown of cellular health before deterioration to disease. Similarly, on returning to or maintaining health, services address and support the requisite healthy behaviours.

The health and healing stream embraces strategies that most directly address health outcomes. Its function is directed to the design and delivery of interventions and supports that help people realize and sustain changes toward healthy behaviours. Individual power resides with the person most affected. Decision-making on the delivery system resides in multidisciplinary teams and networks aligned to the population being served.

What is required for people to access and engage in health and healing practices and services that will best support and sustain their optimal health?

People, relationships and well-being

People are Our Promise – it is through and with one another that we are able to meet our commitments. Our strategy is one of honouring the human condition as evidenced by behaviour. It requires that we aspire to well-being as people in relationship with one another. It is in the quality of these relationships that we are best able to understand and trust what we each bring to another.

The people, relationships and well-being stream addresses strategies that sponsor people as the essence of Our Promise – their relationships with each other and their aspired well-being. Its function is to create and sustain the human conditions that support healthy behaviours and healthy living. People hold the power to develop the relationships and strategies that best support their changes in beliefs and behaviour leading to well-being – their own and those for whom they have a health and healing bond.

What is required for people to experience and sustain their optimal well-being as they come together as members of the Capital Health community?

Citizenship

Our Promise is built on a new social contract between society and individuals in relation to our health care system. More than an enhanced community health board infrastructure, this new contract requires a rethinking of the role, relationship and accountability of citizens in the design and delivery of their health care. It is a call to citizenship – with the citizen as the driver of the system.



Keeping Our Promise

The citizen stream embodies strategies that bring to life the foundational role of citizenship in Our Promise. It sponsors the collective rights and responsibilities of citizens focused on our quality of life as a society. Citizens who recognize and use their democratic rights to affect societal change hold power.

What is required of us as members of our society to demonstrate accountability for our health system and our respective roles in it?

Performance excellence

We fulfill our roles using best practice, for which we are personally accountable. We recognize that the quality of our attitudes, beliefs, thoughts and actions determine the quality of the environment and services we provide. We are committed to the best of these.

The performance excellence stream involves strategies that establish and offer stewardship for organizational excellence, patient safety, fiscal effectiveness and technological enablement required by Our Promise. It manages a feedback loop to ensure population health indicators guides performance excellence within the network. Each person holds power through the accountability he or she is prepared to assume.



Leadershift

Our Promise calls for a fundamental shift in how we show up. Each of us is required to look into the mirror and commit to the personal transformation that will manifest in our overall ability to realize our mission. Each of us is being asked to show up as leaders in a new way of thinking, believing, feeling and doing.

The leadershift stream embodies the strategies directly dedicated to the meaningful transformation of Capital Health. It sponsors the underlying shift in beliefs, behaviours, assumptions, values, roles and functions that drive the cultural transformation. Each person who is committed to “showing up” differently holds power.

What is required for us to transform our culture to one that continues to evolve as we evolve?

What is required for us to deliver our outcomes with outstanding performance for which we feel personally and collectively passionate and accountable?

Innovation and learning

The ability to realize Our Promise comes from a profound commitment to doing things differently. The current way cannot withstand the pressures of medical advances, stretched public funds, aging buildings and limited human resources. Innovation is our ability to bring fresh thinking to old problems. And learning is the process that will effect the changes in behaviour needed for optimal health.

The innovation and learning streams focuses on strategies that establish and reward the beliefs, principles, processes, practices and structures associated with the spirit of inquiry, the discovery of new methodologies, the performance of evidenced-based practice and the development of competencies and specialties. It sponsors creation and learning that fuel the learning network. Power belongs to the person or group working to improve an aspect of the network with those most affected.

What is required for us to create and sustain a culture in which the spirit of inquiry and the pursuit of higher learning underscore all we do?

Our outcome, our obligation

Our outcome: health

Health outcomes are the markers to which all operations will be driven. Mindful that we “get what we measure” and that targets historically have not consistently secured better health, we direct our attention to identifying population health outcomes that indicate the overall state of health and well-being of the broader population, as well as that of targeted populations served by Capital Health.

Our obligation: societal well-being

We are trustees of the public’s money. We are obligated to allocate resources to the highest-priority health targets, as directed by society and as evidenced by the health status of our population. Our stewardship demands astute and ethical decision-making.

The mere task of facilitating dialogue on what constitutes societal well-being and the associated ethical allocation of resources is a key outcome in its own right. But our society has reached the point in history where we have to face tough issues and make hard decisions. Every day, ethical decisions are awaiting us – decisions such as between life-changing

treatments for a few and protocols that benefit the many. Fast disappearing is our ability, if we ever had it, to be all things to all people. Our obligation is to undertake – with patients, government, communities and all our partners – the wise decision-making on issues that will have the most impact on our societal well-being.

Our Promise is an assurance that we are creating the future that we want for ourselves, our families and our communities. It is our potential of being all that we can be – the sum of all our knowledge and skills, experience and humanity. Our collective change in behaviour, as evidenced in how we identify needs and issues, solve problems and make decisions, take action and reconcile results, and come together and function as one, will lead to improved health and well-being for all.

This is the outcome we pursue, and the obligation we keep.

Additional thoughts

We are talking about changing behaviours that determine health, healing and learning in our communities – we are talking about changing our behaviours.

What about the patient? It is the question I get whenever we talk about changing behaviours.

We are, and will always be, in the business of caring for people. It is core to what we do, here at Capital Health.

And yet in our hearts we know that if we focus our vision for the future solely on patient care we will achieve exactly what we set our sights on. We will make continuous quality improvements that we are able to measure and hold ourselves accountable for improving patient care. We do this today. As a result, we make incremental changes. And in our hearts we know that incremental changes are not enough.

Transformation only occurs when we change the underlying premise of what we do. Yes, we will still provide outstanding care – but now it will be in the context of helping our patients to change their mental, emotional, physical and spiritual states so as to motivate and support them in realizing their optimal level of health.

This is the essence of Our Promise.

Chris Power
President & CEO
Capital Health





Capital Health