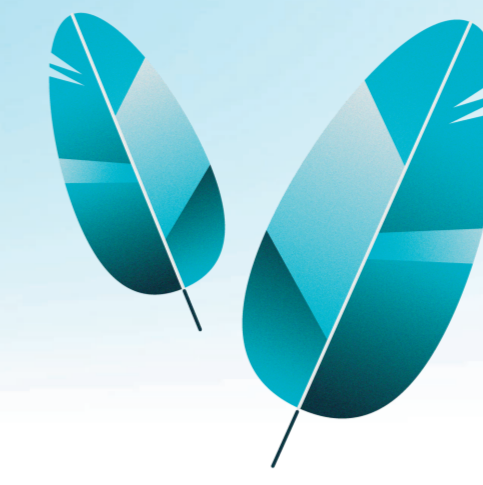# Working towards a Learning Health System for Integrated Youth Services: a Foundry case study

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· F O U N D R Y ·

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Introduction

Learning Health System (LHS) models are gaining traction as a framework for informing clinical and policy decision making within the field of mental health.

An LHS represents a way to ensure system-wide collaboration to collect and use data to guide how health care can be improved. This innovative approach is meant to ensure that emerging evidence and best practices are implemented at point of care and continuously studied. Foundry provides Integrated Youth Services (IYS) across the province of British Columbia (BC) in Canada, using an LHS model to continuously improve mental health and other health and social services.

Approach

Foundry is widely viewed as a leading model of IYS in Canada and abroad.

The "Foundry network" (13 centres open, 9 in development + provincial virtual services) brings together over 200 partners including government, community organizations and youth and families/caregivers to provide mental health, physical and sexual health, substance use, youth and family peer support, and social services together under one umbrella.

In order to ensure that youth and families/caregivers in BC receive the best possible services, Foundry has adopted an LHS approach focusing on rapid improvement and decision making that is timely; centred on youth, family/caregiver and community needs; informed by science; data-driven; and sustainable. A well-articulated LHS framework can: (i) generate and share best practices in implementation science for service standards; (ii) generate and mobilize IYS knowledge that informs and transforms IYS practices and systems; and (iii) increase capacity amongst researchers, youth, families/caregivers, service providers, decision makers and Indigenous communities to develop and apply IYS knowledge into practice and policy.

Pan-Canadian IYS LHS Model

A Learning Health System for Integrated Youth Services

Foundry is working closely with pan-Canadian partners to scale its model to create a national Learning Health System for IYS using the following strategies:

- Collaboration on pan-Canadian research, data gathering and knowledge mobilization;

- Identification of common IYS principles and standards to enable evidence-informed policy and decision making;

- Prioritization and facilitation of meaningful youth and family/caregiver engagement;

- Fostering of strong linkages and co-leadership with and by Indigenous Peoples, communities and organizations to ensure culturally safe, accessible and equitable IYS; and

- Implementation of a Foundry IYS Learning Centre offering training, tools and resources on a range of topics to support implementation, integration of services and model fidelity.

Foundry is hosted by Providence Health Care and supported by the Province of BC and donors to St. Paul's Foundation.
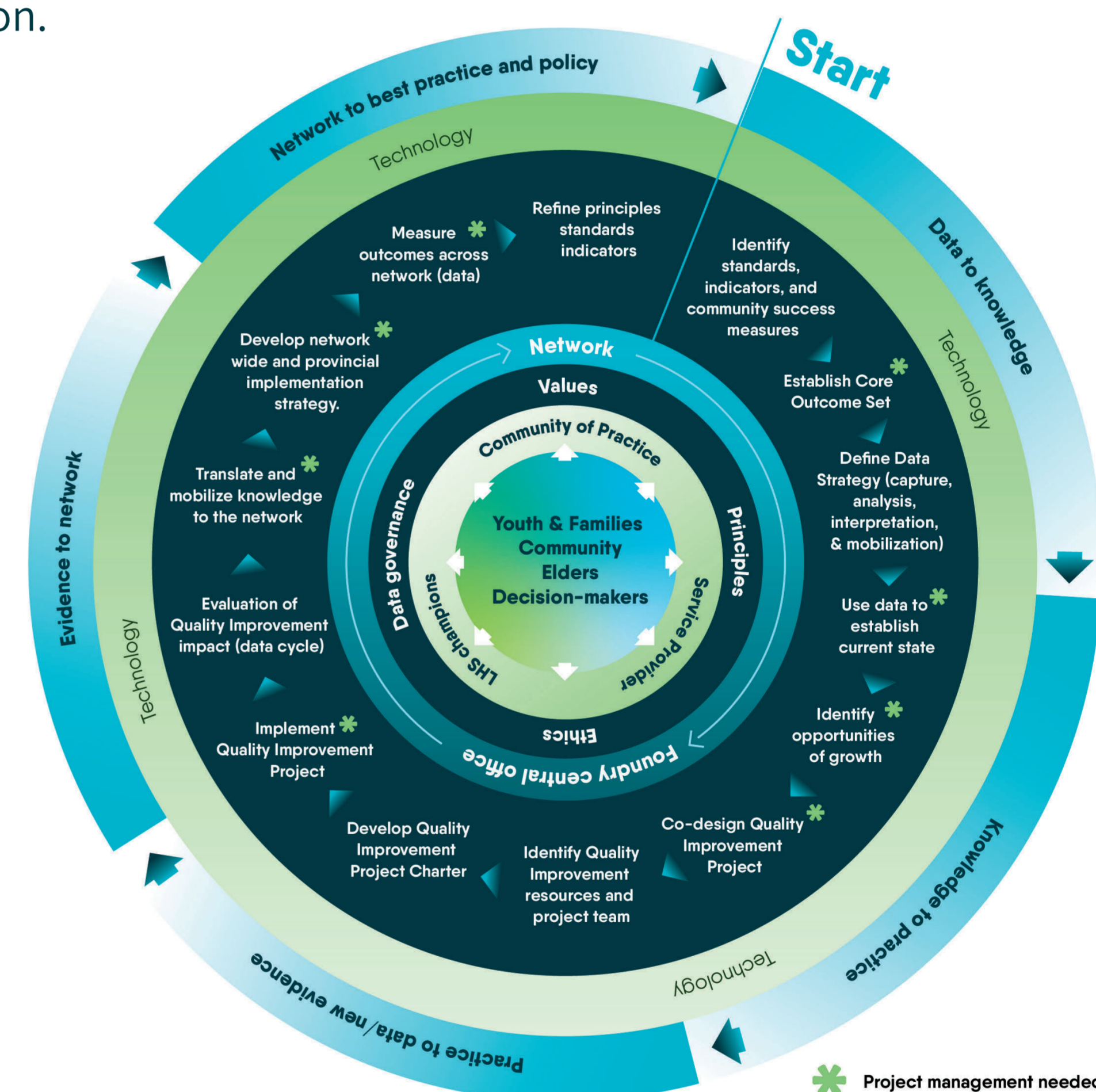
Objectives

The overall goal is to describe Foundry's progress towards developing and implementing an LHS for IYS.

The objectives are as follows:

- To describe how Foundry has implemented an LHS for IYS;

- To explain the benefits of an LHS in the context of IYS;

- To share key lessons learned; and

- To discuss next steps for implementing a national IYS LHS across Canada.

Foundry's LHS Model

Foundry Central Office (FCO) oversees the administration and management of all aspects of the Foundry network including service innovation, capacity building, research, evaluation and knowledge translation, exchange and mobilization.

Conclusion

Foundry is an emerging scalable example of how an LHS can be successfully developed and implemented for continuous improvement and innovation in IYS best practices and model implementation.

Key lessons include the following:

- It is important to have integrated data systems to support seamless data collection across an IYS network and to establish a shared minimum data set across sites;

- It is important to prioritize and embed research within the LHS model to support the testing and generation of new evidence; and

- There is a critical need to create pathways for access to and mobilization of data in real time to support the activities of an LHS.

Next steps include the creation of an online IYS resource repository and a national/international Community of Practice for IYS to share and exchange best practices and learnings.

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