



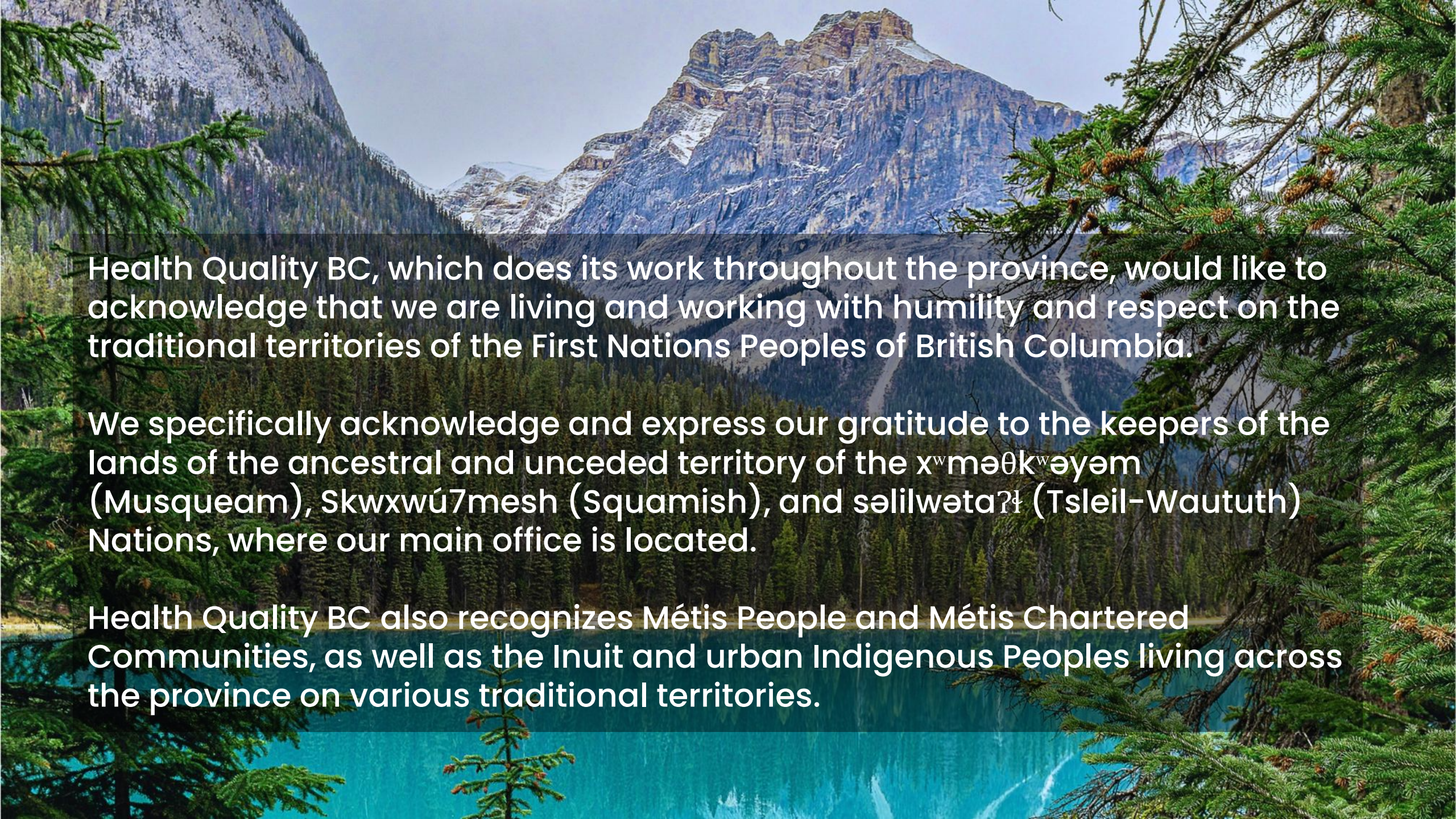
From Awareness to Impact: Shaping *“What Matters To You?”* in BC

A Learning & Action Event

International “What Matters To You?” Day

June 2, 2026





Health Quality BC, which does its work throughout the province, would like to acknowledge that we are living and working with humility and respect on the traditional territories of the First Nations Peoples of British Columbia.

We specifically acknowledge and express our gratitude to the keepers of the lands of the ancestral and unceded territory of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətaʔɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, where our main office is located.

Health Quality BC also recognizes Métis People and Métis Chartered Communities, as well as the Inuit and urban Indigenous Peoples living across the province on various traditional territories.

Coming Together

This event directly supports Health Quality BC's mandate to improve care across the province by advancing person- and family-centred approaches, strengthening partnerships, and enabling shared learning for system-wide improvement.

On June 2, 2026, Health Quality BC (HQBC) celebrated International “*What Matters To You?*” (WMTY) Day by hosting a learning and action event, *From Awareness to Impact: Shaping “What Matters to You?” in BC*, where 103 participants reflected on how WMTY shows up in practice and what's needed to better embed it into everyday clinical care. This event was about understanding how WMTY looks like in clinical settings, what shapes it, and how Health Quality BC can support it becoming part of everyday care.

This report represents a summary of what we learned from this event and outlines how Health Quality BC plans to move forward through this initiative.



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What is “What Matters To You?”



It began in 2012 when Dr. Michael Barry and Susan Edgman-Levitan published a paper in the New England Journal of Medicine. They explained that clinicians needed to ask patients, "What matters to you?" instead of "What is the matter with you?"¹



In 2014, Anders Vege was the first to turn WMTY into an official national day in Norway, with a goal to encourage meaningful conversations between patients, families and health care providers about what is most important to them.



Following Norway's successful national campaign, Maureen Bisognano, from the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, advanced the approach and championed the movement back to North America.



Since then, the approach has spread internationally, including to Scotland, Brazil and more than 30 countries worldwide.



British Columbia joined the movement in 2017, with participation supported through a partnership between the Patient Voices Network, Health Quality BC and provincial partners.



Background

**Ask What Matters.
Listen to What Matters.
Do What Matters.**

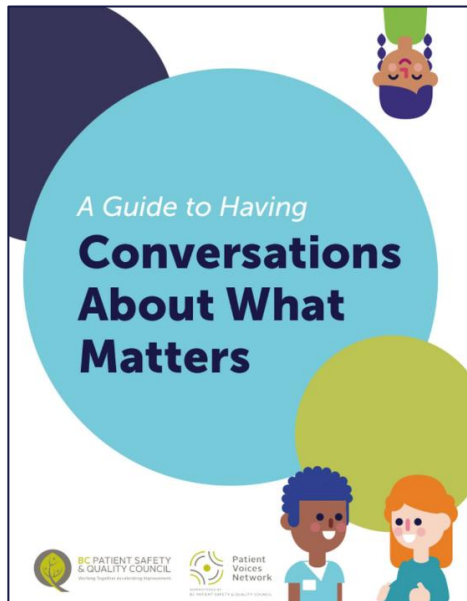
HQBC launched a WMTY awareness campaign in 2017 which included:

- Promotion of International “*What Matters To You?*” Day
- Development and distribution of a range of supporting resources, such as:
 - Posters, pocket cards, bookmarks, buttons, stickers and videos

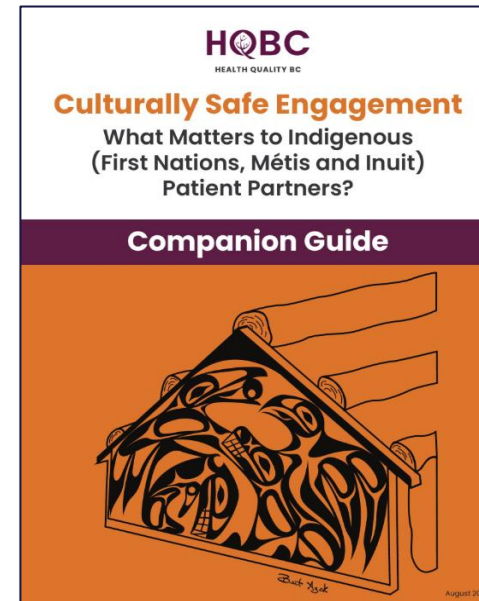
These materials have played an important role in introducing the concept across the BC health care system and have encouraged people to regularly ask, “what matters to you?”

Building Momentum for “What Matters to You?”

We have accelerated “*What Matters To You?*” by developing practical tools that support meaningful conversations and more culturally safe, person-centred care across BC.



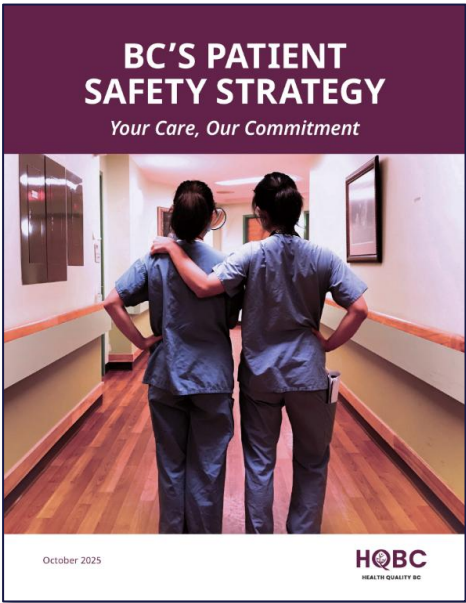
The Guide for Conversations About What Matters provides practical support for clinicians and care teams to meaningfully ask and act on what matters to patients and families. It offers simple, adaptable approaches to embed these conversations into everyday care, helping to build stronger relationships, improve communication, and ensure care decisions are grounded in each person’s values, goals and priorities.



The Culturally Safe Engagement: What Matters to Indigenous Patient Partners? companion guide builds on the “*What Matters To You?*” approach by supporting culturally safe, respectful conversations with Indigenous partners. By centring care around a person’s values, priorities and lived experiences, care teams can put cultural humility into practice and strengthen trust, relationships and safety in health care interactions.

Building Momentum for “What Matters to You?”

“What Matters to You?” is increasingly being recognized as a key approach to advancing patient safety and quality of care across BC.



“What Matters to You?” contributes to BC’s Patient Safety Strategy, particularly Pillar 1: empowering and engaging patients and families as active partners in their care. By supporting meaningful dialogue, WMTY helps build trust and creates safer spaces for patients and families to speak up, ensuring their voices are heard and reflected in care decisions.

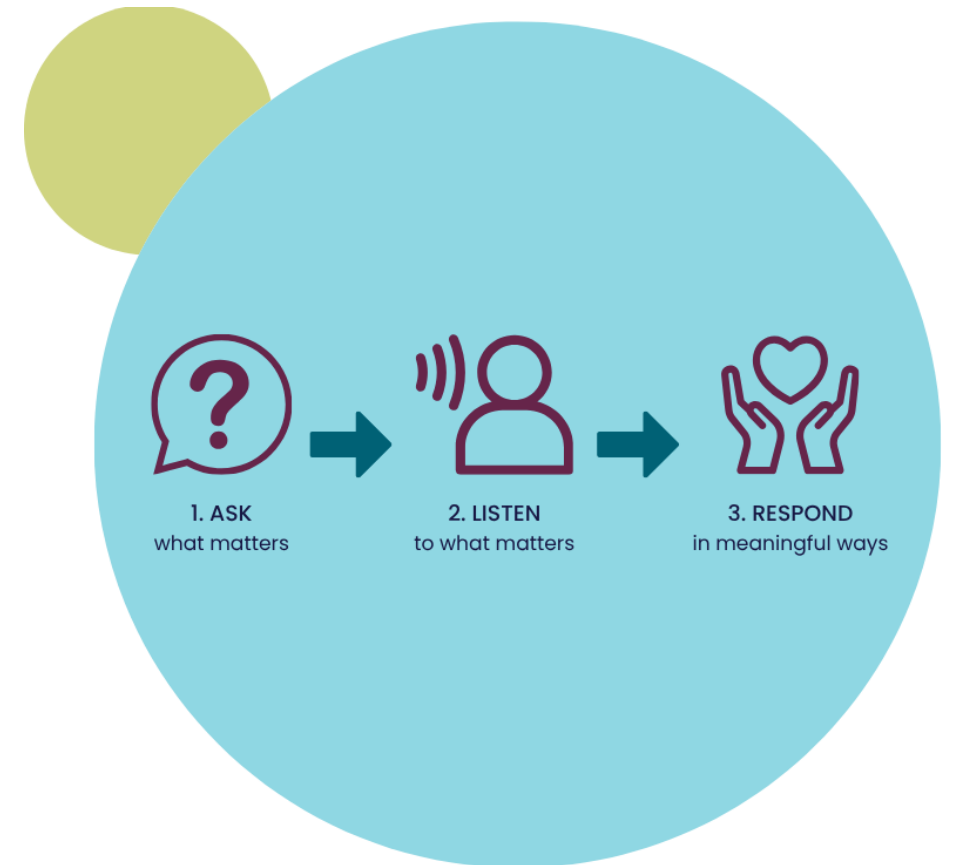
 HEALTH QUALITY BC HEALTH QUALITY MATTERS		DIMENSIONS OF QUALITY					
		RESPECT Honouring a person's choices, needs and values	SAFETY Avoiding harm and fostering security	ACCESSIBILITY How well which health and wellness services are received	APPROPRIATENESS Care that is specific to a person or community's context	EFFECTIVENESS Care that is known to achieve intended outcomes	EQUITY Fair distribution of services and benefits according to population need
AREAS OF CARE	INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVE			SYSTEM PERSPECTIVE			
	ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY						
	OPTIMIZING THE EARLY YEARS Advancing early development and maternal health and wellness						
	STRENGTHENING HEALTH & WELLNESS Promoting well-being and preventing injury, illness and disability						
	RETURNING TO HEALTH & WELLNESS Getting better when faced with acute illness or injury						
	LIVING WITH ILLNESS OR DISABILITY Care and support for living with chronic illness and/or disability						
	COPING WITH TRANSITION FROM LIFE Planning, care and support for life-ending illness and bereavement						

“What Matters to You?” supports multiple dimensions of quality on the BC Health Quality Matrix by ensuring care is grounded in each patient’s values and priorities. This approach strengthens respect and appropriateness, improves safety and effectiveness through shared decision-making, and advances equity by helping teams recognize and address barriers. By aligning care with what matters most, WMTY also contributes to more efficient, sustainable care experiences for both patients and providers.

The Problem

Across BC, awareness-building campaign efforts have sparked important conversations and inspired meaningful examples of asking and acting on “*What Matters To You?*” While many dedicated champions are driving this meaningful work in pockets across the province, we have a unique opportunity to build on this foundation, moving from awareness to sustained, system-wide implementation.

By exploring how Health Quality BC can strengthen supports, share proven practices and foster a culture where “*What Matters To You?*” is a part of everyday care, we hope to see this practice embedded more consistently across the health system and accelerate person-centred care at a provincial level.



Goals of the Event

①

Reflect on where we currently stand with including WMTY in a clinical setting

②

Identify ways to more effectively embed WMTY into clinical care and organizational culture

③

Co-design a shared vision for how HQBC can support teams in moving from awareness to practice



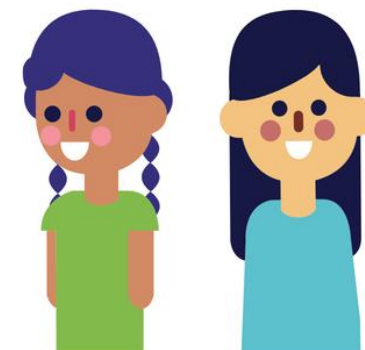
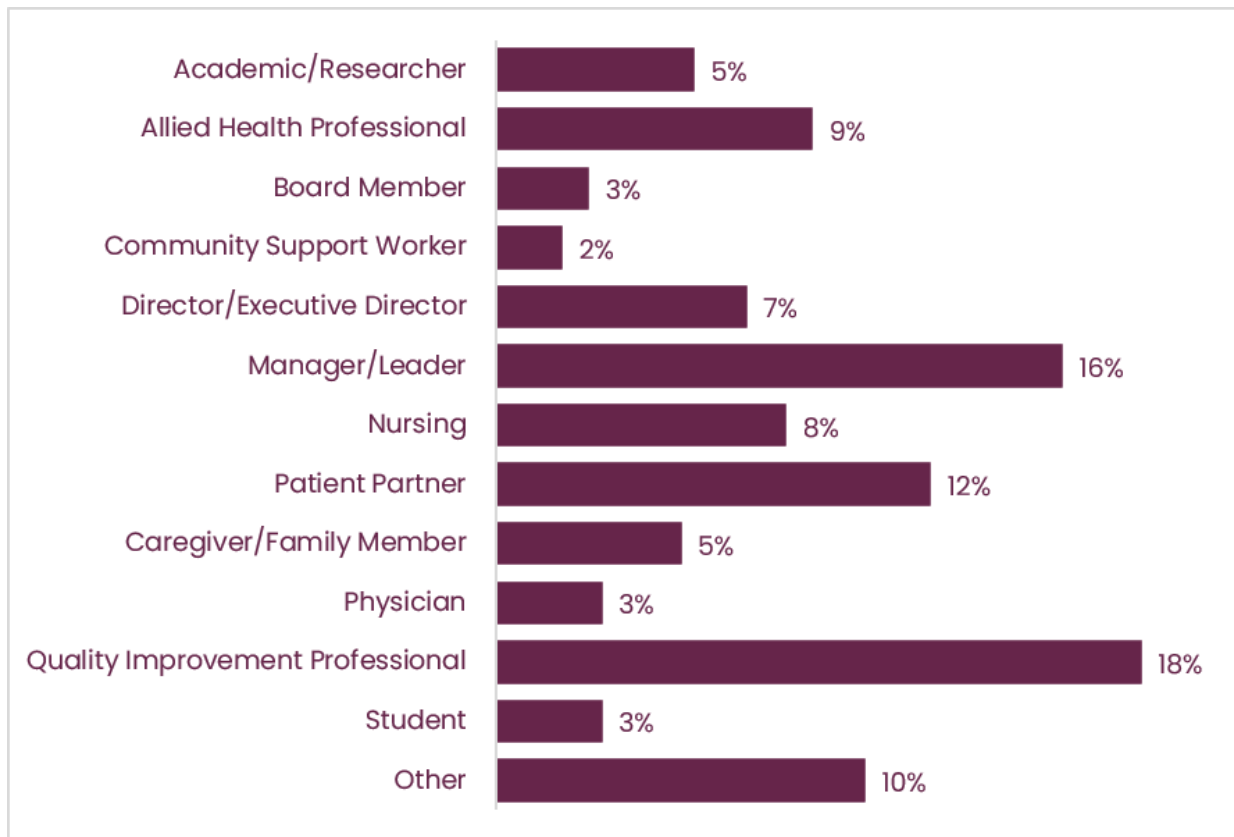
Data Collection & Analysis

Health Quality BC used a variety of methods to collect and analyze data generated by participants during and after the event including surveys, Slido and breakout room notes. A thematic analysis was also completed after the event.



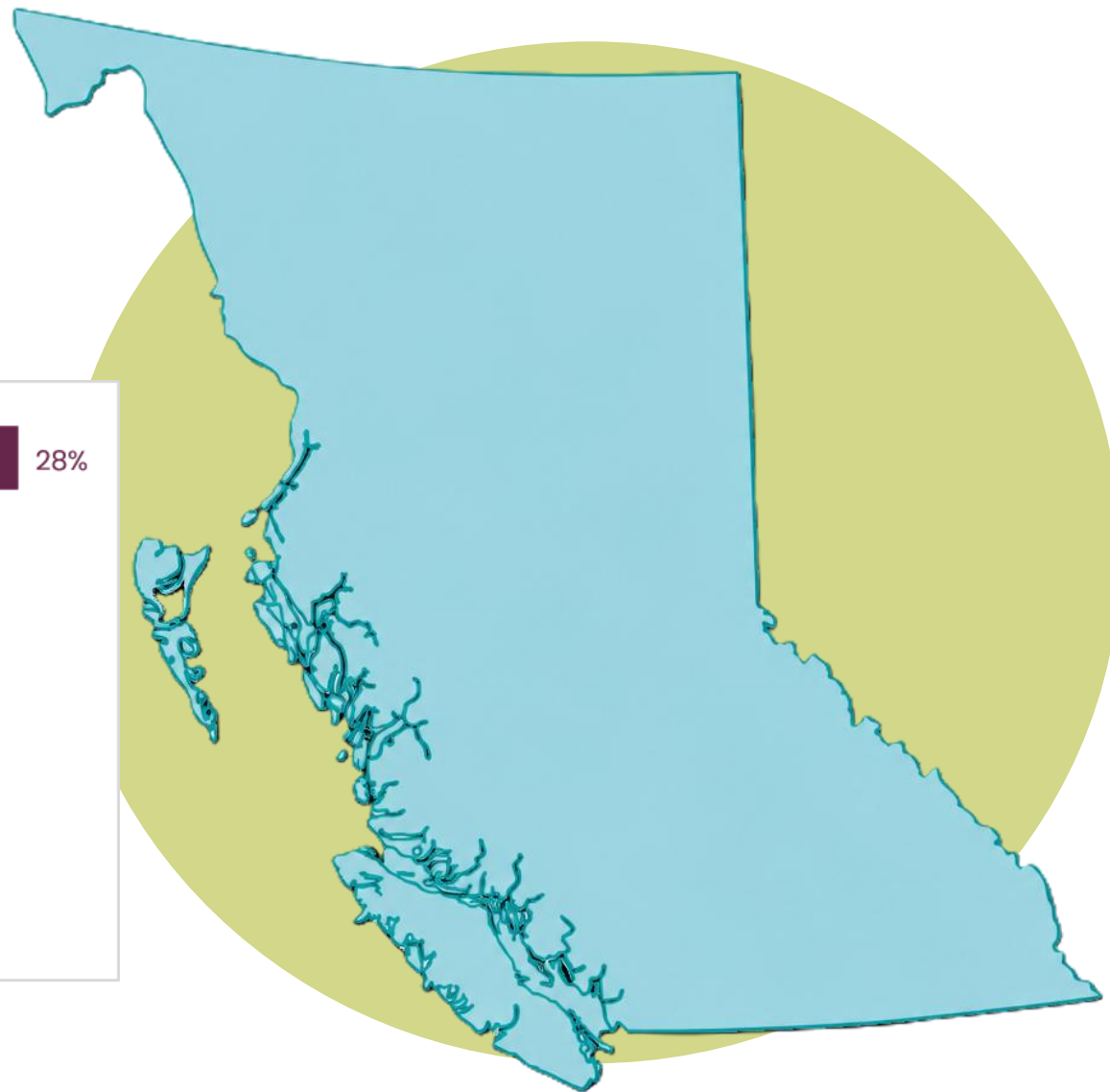
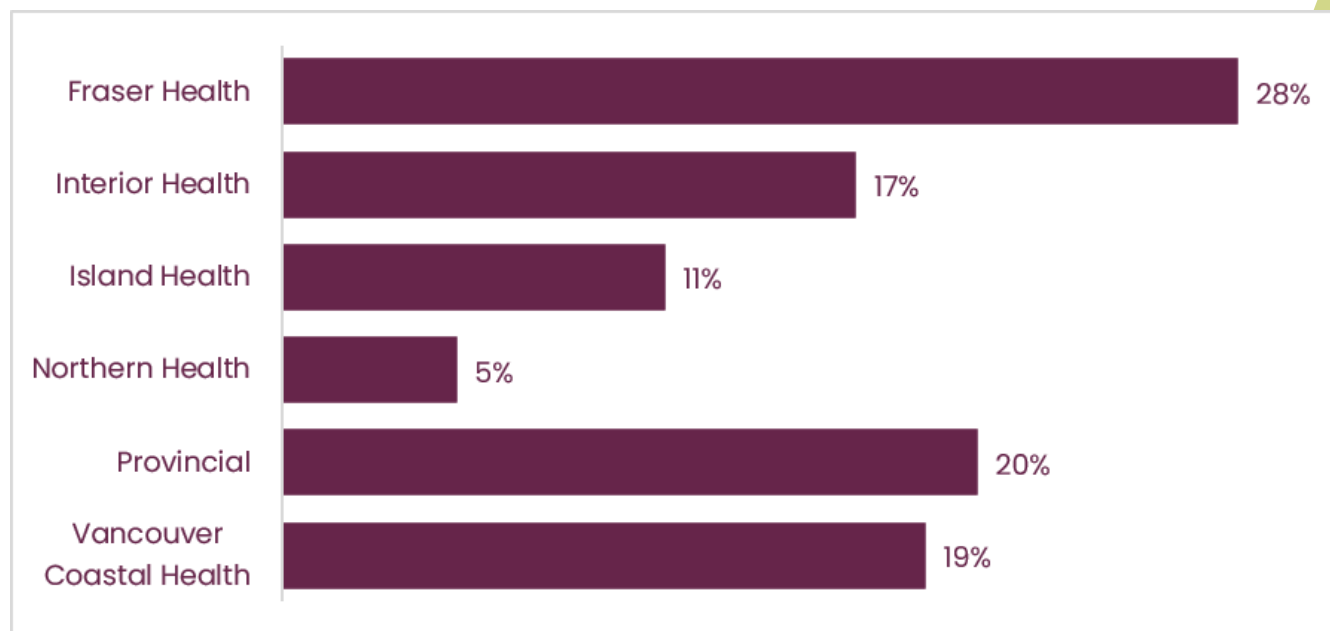
Who Was There?

Primary Roles



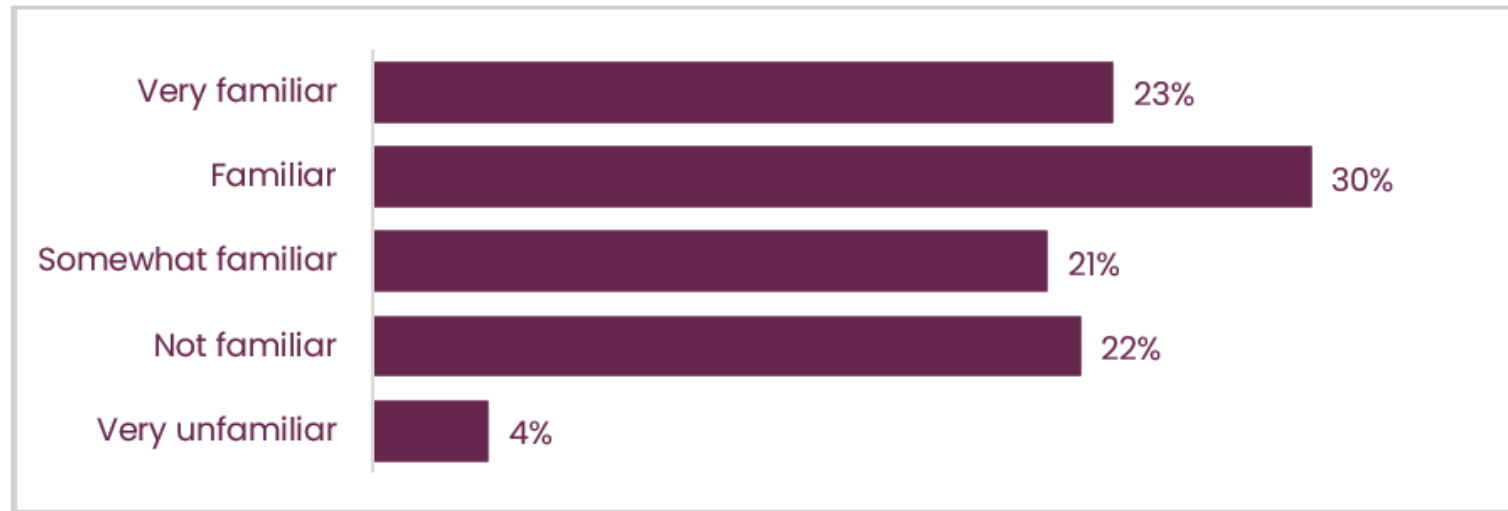
Who Was There?

Health Region



Who Was There?

Familiarity with “What Matters To You?”



Who Was There?

Voice of Connection

35%



Those who facilitate and/or coordinate with multiple groups in their role or can connect with diverse communities to ensure their voices are heard.

Voice of Capability

19%



Those who have access to resources that can contribute to this work, or have specialist knowledge, skills and tools in this space.

Voice of Experience

20%



Those who have lived experience of this issue or may be affected by changes made in this space.

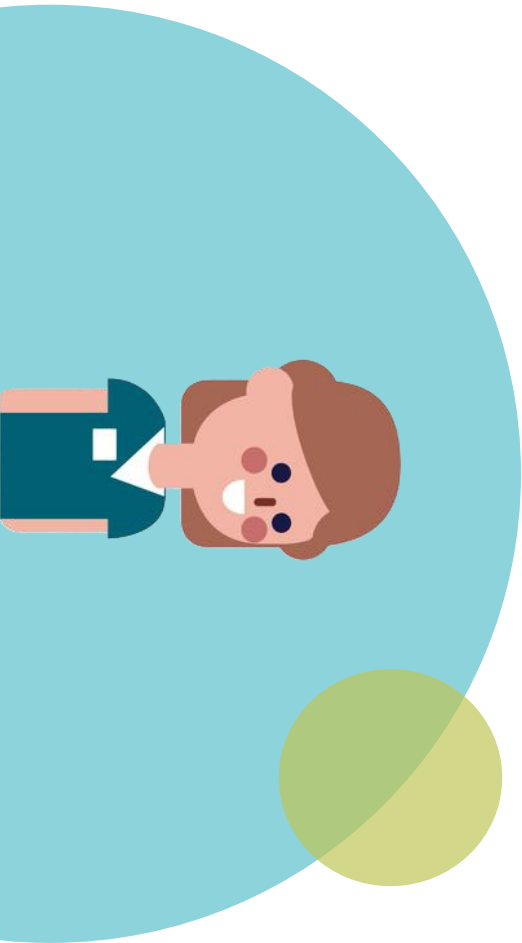
Voice of Intent

26%



Those who have the passion and motivation to take action or have the authority or mandate to drive change in this space.

How We Connected



We came together as a diverse group of patients, caregivers, clinicians and system partners, united by a shared commitment to person-centred care.

Through a dynamic mix of presentations, interactive Slido activities and small-group breakout discussions, participants reflected on their experiences, exchanged ideas, and explored what it truly means to ask “*What Matters To You?*” in practice. Stories and insights were shared from across settings and perspectives, highlighting both the impact and the challenges of embedding this approach in everyday care.

Together, these conversations moved us beyond reflection toward action, identifying practical ways to integrate “*What Matters To You?*” into daily practice.

Overview of the Event

Welcome

Presentation: Maureen Bisognano, Institute for Healthcare Improvement

Slido Activity

Breakout Discussion: Current State

Presentation: Anders Vege, Norwegian Directorate of Health

Breakout Discussion: Refinement

Presentation: Greg Andreas, Palliative Care Physician, Cranbrook, BC

Breakout Discussion: Action

Slido Activity

Closing



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What's One Word That Captures The Impact of *"What Matters To You?"*

We asked participants to begin the event by sharing one word that illustrates the impact of *"What Matters To You?"* The words were sorted into a word cloud by popularity.



Shared Stories

Throughout the event, we heard stories from across the world that highlighted the powerful impact of asking “*What Matters To You?*” in diverse care settings. The speakers demonstrated how small, meaningful conversations can strengthen relationships and improve experiences for patients, families, and care providers.

These stories helped create a sense of shared purpose and understanding about what we are collectively trying to achieve: a shift toward more person-centred, compassionate and equitable care, where people feel heard, valued, and are actively involved in decisions that affect their health and well-being.



Shared Stories

Maureen Bisognano shared a recorded video message for the “*What Matters To You?*” Day event.

Maureen is one of the global leaders who helped spread and sustain the “*What Matters To You?*” movement. She is President Emerita and Senior Fellow at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement and a long-time leader in health care quality improvement. She has advised health care leaders around the world and helped advance the practice of asking “*What Matters To You?*” as a way to better understand patients, families and staff.



Watch the recording



In her message, Maureen highlighted how asking “*What Matters To You?*” can transform care by shifting the focus from tasks to relationships. She emphasizes the importance of listening, building trust and creating space for patients to share what truly matters, while encouraging continued action to embed these conversations into everyday practice.



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Shared Stories

Anders Vege also shared insights as part of our “*What Matters To You?*” Day event.

Anders is a Senior Nurse and Advisor in the Department of Quality Improvement and Patient Safety at the Norwegian Directorate of Health. He has been a key leader in advancing the “*What Matters To You?*” approach in Norway, including embedding it into clinical frailty assessment. Through this work, he has helped demonstrate how understanding what matters most to patients can guide more personalized, coordinated and meaningful care.



His presentation emphasized a shift from focusing on “what’s the matter?” to “what matters to you?” as a driver for improving health, functioning and quality of life. It highlighted the importance of aligning care with patients’ goals, especially for those with complex needs, and using structured approaches to turn meaningful conversations into coordinated, goal-oriented care.



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Shared Stories



Greg Andreas was the final speaker at our “*What Matters To You?*” Day event.

Greg believes that “*What Matters To You?*” is as ancient and as powerful as gathering around our first fire — learning from yesterday, listening to each other, and finding the courage to walk together into the uncertainties of a new day, wherever we are in life.

With over three decades as family practitioner combined with quality improvement work, rigorously tested at bedsides, in hospitals and around kitchen tables, Greg has developed a curious, coach-based approach that transforms the beautiful yet daunting WMTY question into something actionable.

His framework embraces the changing landscape of illness, beliefs, culture and medical guidelines — translating what matters most into care planning for best possible wellness, at any stage of life.

One person, one story, one conversation at a time.

Current State

The first breakout activity was used to explore participants' experiences and insights related to understanding and acting on what matters to families and communities.

Participants reflected on how they have experienced WMTY within their own contexts.

Reflections identified some factors that can support or hinder meaningfully using WMTY at both a system level and during care interactions.



Key Insights

Enabling Conditions

Participants identified key conditions that enable meaningful WMTY practice

System prioritization: Embedding WMTY into organizational priorities, workflows and leadership expectations

Relationship building: Creating trust and connection to support open, meaningful conversations

Flexibility: Adapting approaches to fit different care contexts, needs and time constraints

WMTY is most effective when systems are **ready** to support both asking and acting on what matters



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Key Insights

Barriers

Participants identified key challenges that limit the meaningful use of WMTY

Task-focused systems: Designed for efficiency, rather than understanding and acting on what matters to patients

Unclear roles and accountability: Leading to gaps in communication and uncertainty about who is responsible

Limited system support: Making WMTY practices inconsistent, difficult to act on, and easy to overlook.

WMTY requires system **realignment**



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Time Pressure

While time pressure is a major challenge in providing care, research shows that patients usually only need **90 seconds** or fewer at the beginning of a conversation to state their concerns.^{2,3}

Asking, “*What Matters To You?*” also **saves time** in the long run by strengthening the provider-patient partnership, which can make care more efficient.³

WMTY Becomes Sustainable in Practice When...

In the second breakout, participants were invited to build on earlier discussions by exploring what their shared stories reveal about health care systems, clinical environments and organizational culture. Participants explored what makes WMTY uniquely challenging to implement within clinical environments.



Key Insights

WMTY becomes sustainable in practice when it is built into the system

Organizational and leadership support: Prioritizing person-centred care through clear direction and visible commitment

Defined expectations for practice: Setting consistent standards for how WMTY is asked, documented and acted on

Alignment with systems and resources: Integrating WMTY into metrics, workflows and time allocation to support meaningful use

Systems must be **designed** to expect, support and reinforce person-centred care.



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HQBC's Focus for Greatest Impact

In the third and final breakout, participants shifted from exploring experiences to identifying practical supports, structures and priorities to help embed WMTY into everyday care. Participants were asked to consider the most valuable role Health Quality BC could play in supporting and advancing this work.



Key Insights

Participants identified priority areas to support WMTY integration into routine care

Awareness: Strengthening understanding and visibility of WMTY across the system

Education and training: Building skills and confidence to ask, listen and act on what matters

Tools and resources: Providing practical, adaptable supports for different care contexts

Measurement: Defining meaningful ways to track, evaluate and improve practice

Participants are not asking for more awareness alone, they are asking for **practical supports** to operationalize WMTY



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Emerging Themes

Embedding WMTY requires both cultural commitment and coordinated system supports.

- Early conversations highlighted the importance of person-centred care, trust, flexibility and meaningful relationships, alongside the need for visible leadership and organizational commitment.
- Participants identified four interconnected areas of support as critical to embedding WMTY into everyday care: education and training, tools and resources, measurement, and awareness.



Moving to Action

While efforts to build awareness of “*What Matters To You?*” have been sustained over time, feedback from participants suggests that awareness alone may not be sufficient to drive meaningful change. There is an opportunity to evolve our approach by integrating awareness with more targeted education and training.

Participants emphasized the need for practical, context-specific supports that reflect the realities of different care settings. This may include co-developing tailored resources with teams (e.g., emergency departments) to ensure relevance and usability in practice. Embedding opportunities for engagement in this work could strengthen uptake and impact.



**Ask What Matters.
Listen to What Matters.
Do What Matters.**

Moving to Action

There is also an opportunity to incorporate clearer approaches to measuring impact, defined in partnership with those delivering care, to better understand what is working and where to adapt. Strengthening communication, accountability, and setting realistic expectations around time and effort (including quick, practical approaches) may further support implementation.

Advancing this work will likely require ongoing leadership support to enable alignment, prioritization and sustainability.



**Ask What Matters.
Listen to What Matters.
Do What Matters.**

Evaluation Feedback

Event Objectives

100% of evaluation respondents agreed that the event was interactive and engaging

92% of evaluation respondents agreed that the event explored what WMTY looks like in current clinical practice

92% agreed they engaged in dialogue to discover what is needed to embed it into clinical practices and overall workplace culture

92% agreed that they co-designed ways to shift WMTY from awareness to sustained, system-wide implementation

Evaluation Feedback

Participant Satisfaction

100% of evaluation respondents agreed that the content was relevant and useful

Evaluation respondents were most satisfied with:



Presentations
100%



Breakout Discussions
100%



Content Overall
96%



Organization & Flow
96%

Evaluation Feedback

Participant Learning

100% of evaluation respondents agreed that the event stretched their thinking about “*What Matters To You?*”

92% of evaluation respondents agreed that the event inspired action to address existing challenges and opportunities

96% agreed the event showcased leading practices, tools and techniques to improve health care quality

88% agreed that they learned new ideas that they will be able to apply to their work



Evaluation Feedback

After attending this event, I am motivated to change how I work in the following ways:



“Incorporate more WMTY conversations into my area of work – ask the question, speak to it, share examples.”

“Talk to leadership about ways we can implement some of these strategies.”



“Ask others more often ‘WMTY?’ in a variety of settings.”

“Ask what matters to the person before continuing a conversation. Listen and respond with action.”

“Advocate for tools to incorporate WMTY in primary care workflows.”

“Integrate WMTY into the quality improvement process.”

Thank You

Thank you for your interest in how to embed person-centred care into the BC health system!



Scan here
for resources!



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Acknowledgements

Health Quality BC is grateful to our partners from across the globe, who are supporting this initiative.

- Our speakers, for their leadership and shared learning
- Our “*What Matters To You?*” Provincial Community of Practice members, for their continued commitment to this work
- The global “*What Matters To You?*” movement and the Beryl Institute, for advancing this work worldwide
- All participants, for engaging in meaningful conversations and sharing their perspectives



References

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3. Halpern J. What is clinical empathy? *J Gen Intern Med*. 2003; 18(8), 670–674.

