

Change - by Kim Eggers

Recently, I was asked to be the Patient Partner Advisor with Northern Health's (NH) Physician Quality Improvement (PQI) team, since by then, I had been a patient partner with Patient Voices Network (PVN) for almost 9 years and had been involved with PQI on and off over the past 3 years. I've been fortunate to take the Virtual Action Learning Series (VALS) training, be part of a PQI project, and help co-create a PQI workshop, which my team and I presented at a recent Northern BC Research and Quality conference.

One of the main purposes of NH PQI is to work with a physician lead, to help them create a project that addresses something in the health care system that the physician would like to see improved. There's a team of PQI professionals to help facilitate that process, from beginning to end.

So why is this type of work important? There is the obvious (and important) answer: this can help improve the delivery of health care to patients. And since there is a symbiotic relationship between patients and health care professionals—by improving something for one group, ultimately, it benefits both groups.

But it's also a chance to enact a positive change to a system that can feel broken at times. It's a chance to remember the "why" of what motivated you, the physician, to spend so many years becoming a doctor. It's a chance to start making improvements to a healthcare system, bit by bit, brick by brick—until, along with many others working to make positive changes—you *have* changed things for the better.

Of course, I'm looking from the outside through the patient's lens. But because of all the years I have been a patient partner working at many levels of the healthcare system, I have been able to observe some of the inner workings of that very complex system. I know that in spite of the need to implement much needed changes, there can be a lot of obstacles to surmount in order to do so. This can be incredibly frustrating, and I have felt that frustration many times, that despite putting in thousands of hours of my time over the years, I sometimes see very little change take place.

But I have also been privileged to see a sense of optimism take root when a PQI physician-led project is initiated and felt the shared sense of satisfaction when it was successful. This type of work can continue to motivate everyone: physicians, PQI professionals, and patient partners alike, to work towards making much-needed improvements within our health authorities. This motivates *me* to keep pushing that proverbial boulder uphill—and I hope it can motivate you, the always-busy physician, to do the same. There's hope and joy at the top of that hill.