



NOURISH

The future of food
in health care.

Food is Fundamental to Health and Healing

Nourish Wasan Retreat | September 2017

For four days from Thursday, September 7th to Sunday, September 10, 19 leaders from across healthcare, government and food sectors convened together on Wasan Island in order to explore the role of food in healthcare in Canada. The core belief of the group was that food is fundamental to health and healing, but is currently undervalued within the healthcare system. Through systems mapping, the group explored the dynamics of the current healthcare system and prototyped actionable opportunities for a future of food in health care that nourishes patients, communities and the environment.

The group mapped the current system through design tools such as rich picture, concept-maps and service blueprints to surface some of the following insights about what current systems looks like:

- ▶ **The patient is currently lost within the hospital food system** and is often unhappy with the food in spite of its role in recovery, contributing to extended stays and food waste. For example, many healthcare facilities don't serve food in a way that gives patients flexibility around when or what they eat.
- ▶ **Health care in hospitals has become reduced to acute care**, prioritizing crisis management over prevention and community well-being.
- ▶ The need to serve safe food in hospitals may lead to **inflated risk aversion**, making innovations in menu planning and sourcing a challenge.
- ▶ Translating values into **reductionist menus, contracts and dietary restrictions** leads to a loss in the knowledge and appreciation of the complexity of food, making it difficult to address the cultural, social, psychological dimensions of nourishment.
- ▶ The **food systems and health systems are disconnected**, and there are missed opportunities along the patient journey to connect with food, community health, and building stronger food systems.
- ▶ There is an **opportunity for building a strong business case for good food in healthcare**, but this requires more benchmarking and research around the role of food in recovery, and measurement of the social and economic benefits of sustainable food procurement.

Through an interactive game exercise to generate best case and worst case scenarios for food in health care, criteria for identifying and measuring systems change in food and healthcare were developed through three measures:

▶ **Food becomes more valued in healthcare rather than seen as an amenity**

This measure identifies the shift between how much food is prioritized or deprioritized within the healthcare system as a part of health and well-being.

▶ **Moving towards full life-cycle analysis rather than reductive budgeting**

This measure looks at whether healthcare institutions take full lifecycle approaches to assessing the benefits and costs of sustainable food purchasing.

▶ **Focus on flourishing populations rather than maintenance of the status quo**

This measure looks at whether the healthcare sector has a maintenance mindset to fixing acute problems, or can take a preventative and flourishing population health approach.

Understanding the system was crucial in grounding a collaborative brainstorm, where 80+ opportunities and interventions around food in health care were generated by the group. The group then selected four ideas to bring to life by prototyping them into actionable solutions and next steps:



▶ **Pan-Provincial Food + Healthcare Summit:** Inviting provincial leaders, senior hospital leaders, experts and key innovators from international organizations to a summit to collaboratively develop and commit to a pledge for improving food in healthcare in Canada.

▶ **Business Case for Better Food in Healthcare:** Developing evidence-based research and tangible measures to assess impact on health outcomes and social and economic return on investment from spending on high quality and more sustainable food in healthcare.

- ▶ **Regional Environmental Nutritional Hub:** Hospitals invest in the wellness of their community through purchasing by building menus around the supply of food produced in the community, and based on the needs of that community (e.g. cultural foods; investment in infrastructure).
- ▶ **Family Buffet Kitchen:** Bringing a culture of sociability to food in hospitals by setting up family buffet kitchens in hospitals that provide fresh and local food to patients and their families within the clinical care units.

The retreat brought together this cross-disciplinary group to address the current barriers and challenges within the food and health systems, and to mobilize the opportunities for the future of food in health care that nourishes patients, communities and the environment.

We look forward to the ripple effects of this gathering through the initiatives pursued by Nourish and its many passionate partners!



Nourish Wasan Retreat Participant List

Alex Ryan, VP of Systems Innovation & Program Director, MaRS Solutions Lab

Ann Ellis, Manager of Dietary Guidance, Health Canada

Beth Hunter, Program Director, J.W. McConnell Family Foundation

Bridget Davidson, Director, Canadian Malnutrition Task Force

Cheryl Hsu, Design Researcher and Communications Strategist, Nourish Healthcare

Gail Bastow, Health Lead, Syilx Nation

Hayley Lapalme, Program Designer and Facilitator, Nourish Healthcare

Howard Abrams, Director of OpenLab and Division Head of General Internal Medicine, University Health Network.

Jeff O'Donnell, Team Lead of Healthy Eating, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs

Jennifer Reynolds, Institutional Food Program Manager, Food Secure Canada

Kapil Khatter, Family physician, University of Ottawa

Kathy Macpherson, Vice President, Strategy and Programs for the Greenbelt Fund

Kevin Stemmler, Product, Business Development Co-coordinator and Co-Owner for Stemmler Meats & Director, Ontario Independent Meat Processors Association.

Margaret Melanson, Vice President, Quality and Patient Centred Care for Horizon Health Network

Mary L'Abbée, Earle W. McHenry Professor & Chair of Department of Nutritional Sciences, Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto

Pat Vanderkooy, Public Affairs Manager (Food & Nutrition Policy), Dietitians of Canada

Stacia Clinton, National Director, Healthy Food in Health Care Program, Health Care Without Harm

Steve Crawford, Business Development Specialist, GFS Ontario

Wendy Smith, Contract Specialist, MEALsource, St. Joseph's Health System Group Purchasing Organization

Territorial welcome by **Tracy Pawis**, Wasauksing First Nation



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Nourish is national network of innovators shaping the future of food in healthcare in Canada. To learn more, visit: www.nourishhealthcare.ca

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