



Building Research for Integrated Primary Care

Primary Care Research Day

From Clicks to Care: Strengthening the Digital Foundations of Primary Care

Monday, May 4th, 2026

Dalhousie Student Union Building

6136 University Ave, Halifax, NS

With generous support provided by:



Foreword From BRIC NS

Dear Speakers, Guests, and Volunteers,

Welcome to Primary Care Research Day 2026! We are delighted to have you join us for a full day of learning, discussion, and collaboration.

Primary Care Research Day is an academic conference hosted by BRIC NS (Building Research for Integrated Primary Care in Nova Scotia), in collaboration with Dalhousie University's Department of Family Medicine. Now in its 8th iteration, the conference has grown into a key event for showcasing primary care research and quality improvement initiatives across the province and beyond.

BRIC NS is an interdisciplinary research network composed of students, citizens, health professionals, researchers, and policymakers who collaborate to improve health outcomes and strengthen the healthcare system through innovations in primary and integrated care. Our mission is to facilitate and amplify primary care research in Nova Scotia by fostering meaningful engagement, building research capacity, and supporting knowledge mobilization. As the provincial node of the SPOR Canadian Primary Care Research Network, BRIC NS helps facilitate research and quality improvement initiatives nationwide. We are committed to working alongside patients and community members to ensure primary care reflects real-world experiences, priorities, and needs.

This year's event is designed to be interactive, featuring multiple panels, poster and oral presentations, and a wide range of community perspectives. The day offers opportunities for researchers, decision-makers, health professionals, patient partners, and students to learn from and connect with others in the primary care community.

Our conference theme, *'From Clicks to Care: Strengthening the Digital Foundations of Primary Care'*, explores innovative approaches, challenges, and future directions for digital and e-health systems in primary care. We're thrilled for the conversations and insights in store. This theme truly reflects where primary care is headed – and how we can shape that future together.

We encourage you to engage with colleagues, form new connections, and share your experiences with us. Your insights and participation help us grow this event and continue building a strong, collaborative primary care research community for years to come.

Lastly, we extend our sincere thanks to our guest speakers and presenters, as well as the volunteers from the Maritime SPOR SUPPORT Unit (MSSU) and the BRIC NS Patient Advisory Council, whose time and contributions made Primary Care Research Day 2026 possible. We are also grateful to the CIHR SPOR Primary Care Research Network, Research Nova Scotia, Dalhousie's Faculty of Medicine Medical Research Development Office, and Dalhousie's Department of Family Medicine for their generous sponsorship and support in bringing this event to life.

Sincerely,



Ruth Lavergne, PhD
Co-Director, BRIC NS



Matthew Grandy, MD
Co-Director, BRIC NS



Emily Burke
Manager, BRIC NS

Primary Care Research Day 2026 Agenda

Monday, May 4th, 2026, | 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

8:00–8:30am	Registration and Breakfast Brewing Ideas – Discussions and Networking McInnes Room–Multi Purpose Hall
8:30–9:00am	Conference Opening, Welcome and Theme Introduction, and Opening Remarks McInnes Room–Multi Purpose Hall
9:00–10:00am	Keynote Address: Opportunities for Practice-Based Research and Learning and Clinician Involvement in Research Using EMRs McInnes Room–Multi Purpose Hall
10:00–11:00am	Poster Session & Coffee and Snacks Council Chambers: Room 270
11:00am–12:15pm	Panel #1: Health System Optimization of EMRs and Opportunities to Address Administrative Burden and Support Clinicians McInnes Room–Multi Purpose Hall
12:15–1:00pm	Lunch McInnes Room–Multi Purpose Hall
1:00–2:15pm	Concurrent Oral Presentation Sessions Rooms 224, 302, 303, and 307
2:15–2:30pm	Break: Refreshments McInnes Room–Multi Purpose Hall
2:30–3:45pm	Panel #2: Patient and Community Access to Data and Indigenous Data Sovereignty McInnes Room–Multi Purpose Hall
3:45–3:50pm	Recognition of BRIC NS 2025 Student Research Award Recipients and Presentation of 2026 Student Poster Award McInnes Room–Multi Purpose Hall
3:50–4:00pm	Closing Remarks and Key Learning Points McInnes Room–Multi Purpose Hall
4:00–5:00pm	Reception The Abstract Cafe (Main Floor – Dalhousie Student Union)

Brewing Ideas

8:00-8:30 am | McInnes Room-Multi Purpose Hall

The purpose of this pre-conference session is to provide an opportunity for knowledge sharing, capacity building, and networking. Tables will be set up with different topics related to the theme of *From Clicks to Care: Strengthening the Digital Foundations of Primary Care*. Please have a seat and join folks around a topic of shared interest. If you have current work or ideas for future research, please share!

Groups will be encouraged to think of next steps to continue these conversations and BRIC NS will help these groups set up future meetings and make connections with others who may be interested in the topic.

Participants are encouraged to eat breakfast while participating in this session.

Table topics:

- Patient engagement
- Virtual care
- AI and primary care
- Teams and interprofessional collaboration
- Rural and small-town primary care
- Service integration and system navigation
- Create your own!

Keynote Address: Opportunities for Practice-Based Research & Learning & Clinician Involvement in Research Using EMRs

9:00–10:00 am | McInnes Room–Multi Purpose Hall

Keynote Speaker:



Dr. Donna Manca

Dr. Donna Manca, MD, BMSc, MCISc, FCFP, is a Professor Emeritus and the Director of Quality Improvement in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Alberta. With 35 years of experience as a family physician, Dr. Manca has dedicated her career to bridging the gap between frontline clinical practice and health research. She serves as a Medical Director for the Lifelong Learning and Physician Learning Program (PLP) within the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry, where she supports clinicians in navigating practice improvement and evidence-based care.

As a trailblazer in Practice-Based Research and Learning Networks (PBRNs), Dr. Manca is the Director of the Northern Alberta Primary Care Research Network (NAPCRen), a regional node of the Canadian Primary Care Sentinel Surveillance Network (CPCSSN). Her work leverages Electronic Medical Record (EMR) data to improve patient outcomes while advocating for the highest standards of privacy and ethics in health informatics. Through her leadership, she remains committed to transforming primary care by empowering community clinicians to engage in meaningful research and continuous, practice-based learning.

Posters Presentations

10:00–11:00 am | Council Chambers, Room 270

#	Presenter	Title
1.	Ashton Ferguson*	Sleep Apnea in Refugees and Other Migrant Populations: A Scoping Review
2.	Claire Keenan**	Patient Health Outcomes for Evaluation of Pharmacist-Led Primary Care: A Scoping Review
3.	Arinze Uzoezie*	Strengthening the Digital Foundations of Primary Care for Displaced Populations: A Mixed-Methods Study of Access and Equity in Nigeria
4.	Amber Lynn Hart	Autism Diagnosis Pathways Among Racialized and Ethnic Minority Families in Canada: Implications for Primary Care Digital System Design
5.	Catie Johnson*	Early Identification of Language and Reading Disorders in Bilingual Children
6.	Laxman Singh	Leveraging EMR-Integrated Clinical Decision Support to Improve Adult Vaccination Workflows in a Rural Primary Care Clinic
7.	Verna McKinnon	Improving Health Literacy Through Digital Wellness Platform: Reach and Impact of HealthyNS
8.	Ritika Pande & Martha Reid	Strengthening Chronic Disease Management through Dashboard creation in the EMR.
9.	Ritika Pande	From Segmented Workflows to Digital Care Pathways: Improving Chronic Disease Management for Patients with Diabetes Mellitus in Primary Care
10.	Christopher Consmueller*,**	Comparison of Three Frailty Measures in Older Adults: The Pictorial Fit Frail Scale as a Potential Standard Frailty Measure for Routine Care
11.	Erica Lebreton & Tanya Sheppard	Right Care, Right Provider: ClearTriage in Primary Care Clinics
12.	Haley Matthews*	Digital Companions for Academic Stress and Sleep: A Conceptual Review and Developing Study with Primary Care Implications

* These posters are eligible for the BRIC NS Student Poster Award

** These posters feature patient engagement

Posters Presentations

10:00-11:00 am | Council Chambers, Room 270

#	Presenter	Title
13.	Jennifer Emesih*, **	Beyond BMI: Recognizing the Hidden Burden and Treatment Opportunities for Obesity in Immigrant Women
14.	Bailey M. Selig**	Adapting an immunization assessment tool for use in Nova Scotia: An implementation pilot
15.	Jill Matlock*	Evaluating outcomes and prescribing patterns of four weight-loss medications in Nova Scotia primary care
16.	Stephen Parcell	Primary Care Architecture: Two Websites for Haligonians
17.	Kaylee Dugas*	Calorie Counting Apps for Monitoring and Managing Calorie Intake in Adults living with Weight-Related Chronic Diseases: A Decade-long Scoping Review (2013-2024)
18.	Abigail Hanson	Misinformation and Primary Health Care in the Age of Social Media
19.	Sarah Colgan	Strengthening Primary Care Through Virtual Collaboration: An NP-Clinician Scientist Developed Research CoP
20.	Tim Feltham*	Advancements in Clinical Health Using AI
21.	Karina Robb & Rachael Little	Preventing and addressing privacy breaches in Primary Health Care
22.	Yanni Wang*	Preventive Care Adherence and Diabetes Progression Among Patients with Prediabetes: A Population-Based Primary Care Cohort Study in Nova Scotia
23.	Priscilla Irabor*	Pre-visit questionnaires for improving adult patient and caregiver engagement, self-efficacy, health outcomes, and equitable access to primary health care services: A systematic review and meta-analysis
24.	Sara Hamm**	Travelling Toward Health: An Environmental Scan of Medical Travel Supports for Families of Children with Medical Complexity in the Canadian Maritimes

* These posters are eligible for the BRIC NS Student Poster Award.

** These posters feature patient engagement

Posters Presentations

10:00–11:00 am | Council Chambers, Room 270

#	Presenter	Title
25.	Maggie Byrne*	Exploring 2SLGBTQ+ Perspectives: Insights on Improving Mental Health Support in Nova Scotia
26.	Maggie Byrne*	Proactive organ donation discussions and decision-making between primary health care providers and their patients: A scoping review
27.	Krystal Binns & Katherine Wayne**	New Brunswick's first Practice-Based Research and Learning Network (PBRLN)
28.	Divine Budzi**	Resilient Roots Research Hub: A Strength-Based Community-Based Approach for Advancing Health Equity among Persons of African Descent in Nova Scotia
29.	Emily Jane Devereaux*	Understanding Emergency Department Use in a Pediatric Population: A mixed method study protocol
30.	Abraham Munene	Patients experiences with access to primary care and related services for underserved communities in Nova Scotia
31.	Alison Luke**	The Patients' Den
32.	Jenna Kedy*,**	From Crisis to Connection: How Digital Tools Support Youth During Health System Navigation
33.	Mads Murray*	Performing Care: Creating safe healthcare spaces for Indigenous clients in the era of orangewashing
34.	Zainab Zafar & Divine Budzi*	Culturally and linguistically adapted digital diabetes health applications improve self-management and clinical outcomes in racialized immigrants: a systematic scoping review
35.	Mya Dockrill*	Improving Sleep Health in Canadian Adults: Testing the Usability and Preliminary Effectiveness of the ABCs of SLEEPING for Adults Mobile Application
36.	Ammar Saad*	Mobilizing Post-COVID-19 Clinical Guidelines to Racialized Communities Through Internationally Educated Health Professionals
37.	Sarah Keeping*, **	School Health Partnership for Children with Medical Complexity in Nova Scotia: A Mixed-Methods Study Protocol

* These posters are eligible for the BRIC NS Student Poster Award.

** These posters feature patient engagement

Panel I: Health System Optimization of EMRs & Opportunities to Address Administrative Burden & Support Clinicians

11:00 am-12:15 pm | McInnes Room-Multi Purpose Hall

Moderator:



Dr. Mathew Grandy

Dr. Grandy is an associate professor, researcher, and family physician in the Department of Family Medicine at Dalhousie University. As Director of the Maritime Family Practice Research Network (MaRNet), he leads collaborations with 80+ community-based physicians to advance research and quality improvement initiatives. Through MaRNet, Dr. Grandy leverages EMR data to improve prescribing practices, strengthen chronic disease management, and explore the emerging role of AI in primary care.

Panelists:



Dr. Donna Manca

Dr. Donna Manca is a Professor Emeritus at the University of Alberta with 35 years of experience in family medicine. A trailblazer in Practice-Based Research and Learning Networks, she leads NAPCReN and serves as a Medical Director for the Physician Learning Program. Her work empowers clinicians to leverage EMR data for research and continuous practice improvement.



Dr. Ashley Miller

Dr. Miller is an academic general internist, virtual care advocate, and passionate champion for digitally-enabled health care transformation. After graduating from medical school at University of Ottawa, she completed her residency in Internal Medicine and General Internal Medicine at Memorial University. She also holds a Masters of Science in Health Policy, Planning and Financing from the London School of Economics and the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine. Ashley is an Associate Professor in Dalhousie University's Department of Medicine. She enjoys a parttime academic role and clinical practice in diverse settings in addition to her role as Chief Medical Information Officer for IWK Health and Nova Scotia Health. As CMIO, she is championing digital transformation across Nova Scotia, including as a clinical leader of the One Person One Record (OPOR) initiative.

Panel 1: Health System Optimization of EMRs & Opportunities to Address Administrative Burden & Support Clinicians

11:00 am-12:15 pm | McInnes Room-Multi Purpose Hall

Panelists (cont.):



Dr. Jonathan Fitzsimon

Dr. Jonathan Fitzsimon is the Medical Lead of the Renfrew County Virtual Triage and Assessment Centres. He is a family physician researcher, practicing community-based family medicine in Renfrew County, Ontario.

Jonathan graduated from Sheffield University Medical School (U.K.) in 2007 and worked for two years as a hospital physician in the British National Health Service. From 2009 – 2010 he worked as a volunteer physician in Oruro, Bolivia, before returning to the U.K. to complete the General Practice Specialty Training Program. He moved to Ontario, Canada in 2014 and started a family practice in Renfrew County.

Jonathan's research aims to provide policy makers with evidence of the impact of lack of access to primary care (particularly the duration of unattachment), barriers to accessing primary care, and the use of virtual care as a means of improving access to primary care in rural, remote and underserved communities. Jonathan is also the Medical Lead of a hybrid primary care program, providing comprehensive, team based primary care through a blend of in-person and virtual care options, to thousands of previously unattached residents of historically hard to serve communities. Jonathan is Co-Chair of the Digital Enabler Committee of the Ottawa Valley Ontario Health Team and was previously Chief of Medicine at Arnprior Regional Health. He is an Assistant Professor at the University of Ottawa, Department of Family Medicine and a Clinician Researcher at the Institut du Savoir Montfort.

Jonathan was the recipient of the Ontario Medical Association's 2021 Glenn Sawyer Service Award.

Concurrent Oral Presentations

1:00–2:15 pm | Rooms 224, 302, 303, 307

Concurrent oral presentations showcase innovative research and quality improvement projects, with sessions organized by theme and time allotted for Q&A.

	Room 307 System navigation & virtual care	Room 303 Optimizing clinical data	Room 302 Supporting workforce & primary care capacity	Room 224 Health promotion & chronic disease management
	Facilitator: Michael Liddell	Facilitator: Elizabeth Lappin	Facilitator: Clare Keenan	Facilitator: Divine Budzi
1:00–1:15	Primary Care Attachment and Healthcare Complexity: Associations with Utilization, Unmet Need, and Trust in Rural New Brunswick and Nova Scotia Comfort Adegbola	Strengthening the Digital Foundation for Health Homes: Practice Facilitation and EMR Optimization Carah MacIsaac, Antonios Diab	An Examination of Primary Care Clinician Workloads from 2013–2023 in Nova Scotia Emran Hasan	Evaluating the Cost-Effectiveness of the Pictou County Personal Empowerment Program: Early Evidence from a Rural Chronic Disease Cohort Calvin Butler
1:15–1:30	From Registry to Patient Management Tool: Transforming the Need a Family Practice Registry in Nova Scotia Cheryl Watson-Doucette, Arjun Sethi	When AI Takes the Notes: Reimagining Documentation in Primary Care Breanna Lloy, Alex Petropolis	Recruiting Families, Not Just Physicians: A Narrative Review of Rural Primary Care Recruitment Through the Recruiter Lens Matteo Biglioli	Advancing Health Equity in Black Nova Scotian Communities: Co-Creating Community-Driven Knowledge Mobilization Strategies for Chronic Diseases and Mental Health Ron Milne, Divine Budzi
1:30–1:45	VirtualCareNS: Scaling Virtual Primary Care to Improve Access and Reduce System Pressure in Nova Scotia Katie Meisner, Norm Pinsky	From Clicks to Care: Automating Cervical Cancer Screening Recall Through EMR Optimization in Primary Care Laxman Singh, Brooklyn Boudreau, Holly Zwicker	Advancing Health Home Attachment Through Stabilization Planning and Digital Foundations in Primary Care Maria Alexiadis, Vanessa Varalli	Using behaviour science and inclusive methods to increase the completion of periodic health checks for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities Karen McNeil, Jillian Achenbach, Alannah Delahunty-Pike, Kate Awen
1:45–2:00	Episodic virtual care in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia: A mixed methods study Rebecca Correia, Emran Hasan	A Learning Health System Case Study: Using electronic patient safety records to inform practice change in Nova Scotia Mari Somerville	Belonging and Success for Black Nursing Students in Nova Scotia: An Exploratory Mixed-methods Research Study Crenda Marfo	Individualized Exercise Prescription by a Clinical Physiologist Improves Physical Activity Behaviours and Physical Function in Primary Care Brianna Leadbetter
2:00–2:15	From Clicks to Care on Wheels: A Comparison of Virtual Care and In-Person Home Visits Through the Mobile Health and Wellness Unit in Northern Zone Hannah Pugh, Chelsea Atwin	Implementing a Nurse-Practitioner Led Screening Tool for Social Determinants of Health: A Quality Improvement Project Amanda Hines	Patient Perceptions of the Experiences and Outcomes that Matter Most When Receiving Pharmacist-Led Primary Care Amy Grant	Case management in primary care for individuals with complex health and social care needs: Lessons learned from early implementation in New Brunswick Alison Luke, Jennifer Taylor

Panel 2: Patient & Community Access to Data & Indigenous Data Sovereignty

2:30-3:45 pm | McInnes Room-Multi Purpose Hall

Moderator:



Dr. Ruth Lavergne

Ruth Lavergne is an Associate Professor in the Department of Family Medicine at Dalhousie University and a Tier II Canada Research Chair in Primary Care. Ruth's program of research aims to address disparities in access to care and build evidence to make sure primary care organization, delivery, and workforce meet the needs of people in Canada now and in the future. She leads interdisciplinary mixed methods studies in collaboration patients, clinicians and policymakers.

Panelists:



Khadija Abawajy

Khadija Abawajy is an incoming Family Medicine resident at Dalhousie University in Halifax. She completed her undergraduate degree in Medical Sciences with a minor in Psychology, as well as her medical degree, at Dalhousie. Born and raised in Halifax, Khadija hails from Oromiya, an Indigenous tribe in southern Ethiopia. Khadija is passionate about community-engaged work and has been involved in initiatives supporting Black and Muslim communities at both local and national levels. She is pleased to participate in this panel discussion.



Camryn Sock

Camryn is Mi'kmaw and a member of Eskasoni First Nation in Unama'ki (Cape Breton, Nova Scotia), with familial roots in Elsipogtog First Nation, NB. Camryn is the Outreach Coordinator for the Mawkim team at the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq. In her role, Camryn assists with engagement and communications on behalf of the Mawkim team. Camryn is passionate about Indigenous Data Sovereignty, Mi'kmaw cultural preservation, and Mi'kmaw language revitalization. As the Outreach Coordinator, she has been able to utilize her passions, traditional knowledge, and perspective to drive her work.

Panel 2: Patient & Community Access to Data & Indigenous Data Sovereignty

2:30–3:45 pm | McInnes Room–Multi Purpose Hall

Panelists (cont.):



Dr. Amy Grant

Dr. Amy Grant (she/her) is the Director of Research at the Nova Scotia site of the Maritime SPOR SUPPORT Unit, where she provides research support through consultations and leads priority health research projects. Amy's work focuses on mixed-methods research that advances patient-oriented health services and policy across the Maritimes. Her recent projects have explored pharmacist prescribing, implementation of collaborative family practice teams, transitions of care for pediatric patients with chronic conditions, and the mental health impacts of COVID-19.

Amy is also actively involved in advancing the implementation of Learning Health Systems in the region, helping to bridge research, practice, and policy to improve health outcomes.



Jenna Kedy

Jenna Kedy is a proud Nova Scotian, born and raised in Halifax, where she still lives and does her thing. At 21, she's a lifelong warrior and disabled young adult living with arthritis (diagnosed at 11), fibromyalgia (diagnosed at 14), dyscalculia, and mental health challenges, and is immunocompromised. She's also a septic shock survivor who has lived through serious complications including kidney and heart failure—experiences that shaped her grit, empathy, and fire. Jenna is neurodivergent, queer, and has been an advocate and storyteller since age 14 (seven years and counting!).

She's a third-year Family Studies undergraduate student, a part-time nonprofit employee, community volunteer, public speaker, and workshop facilitator who believes lived experience belongs at the table. When she's not changing the world, you'll find her fueled by coffee, loving panda bears, baking something sweet, making art, or collecting tattoos as a form of self-care and self-expression. She's beyond excited to be a speaker at Primary Care Research Day with BRIC NS, supporting better health and primary care across Nova Scotia

Recognition of BRIC NS 2025 Student Research Award Recipients & Presentation of the 2026 Student Poster Award

3:45-3:50 pm | McInnes Room-Multi Purpose Hall

BRIC NS Student Poster Award

As part of our commitment to student engagement, BRIC NS provides annual grants to student researchers pursuing topics related to primary care. Each Primary Care Research Day, we host a Student Poster Award for one student that had an exceptional poster and poster presentation. This student will receive a monetary award and will also be invited to present during one of our upcoming BRIC NS Primary Care Learning Series. The winner of the 2026 Student Poster Award will be announced during the afternoon of Primary Care Research Day.

BRIC NS Student Research Award

The BRIC NS Student Research Award is offered annually to a minimum of two eligible recipients, to provide financial support for the completion of a research project that meets the priorities of BRIC NS. The aim is to encourage future health researchers to consider primary care research as part of their career path.

In 2025, we saw a large number of applications from graduate students conducting high-quality work across Nova Scotia. Submissions were evaluated through a peer review process and after careful review and ranking, the top 3 projects were selected to receive the prestigious award. We're thrilled to acknowledge these outstanding students and celebrate their contributions to primary care research!

BRIC NS 2025 Student Research Award Recipients:

Chris Consmueller

MSc Kinesiology, Dalhousie University

Project title: "A Randomized Controlled Protocol: Study on blueberries, protein, and exercise for improving frailty and cardiovascular disease (STRONG)"

Melanie Dunlop

PhD Nursing, Dalhousie University

Project title: "Including Social Determinants of Health Screening in Primary Care: A NP-led Quality Improvement Study"

Arezoo Mojbafan

PhD Health, Dalhousie University

Project title: "Exploration of Lived Experiences of Health Inequity among Older Immigrants"



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Care

BECOME A BRIC NS MEMBER!

BRIC NS is a growing network of people with a shared interest in primary and integrated care. **Membership is free and open to everyone.**

Our members include:

- Primary care practitioners (physicians, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, and others)
- Researchers
- Decision-makers
- Patients and citizens
- Students and trainees
- Other health and community professionals

To become a BRIC NS member and receive email updates, please complete our registration form at <https://bricns.com/join/> or scan the QR code below.



To learn more about BRIC NS and the support we offer, visit www.bricns.com or email bricns@dal.ca