

# 2016 International Health Workforce Conference

## Canadian track: Leadership in the context of health workforce change

### Issue Statement

“Strong leadership” is recognized as a “critical success factor in improving performance and quality of our health system”<sup>i</sup>, including health workforce innovation. Leadership, a subtext to IHWC country experiences, is particularly challenging where change must be coordinated across sectors, be they defined by health profession groups, regulatory agencies, jurisdictional or public authorities, legislative acts or otherwise.

Schools of thought abound about what leadership styles are needed to meet today’s healthcare challenges. There are calls to move from strategic, tactical or adaptive leadership to generative leadership<sup>ii</sup>, collective leadership<sup>iii</sup> or high-impact leadership<sup>iv</sup>.

Recognizing the emerging schools of thought needed for today’s leadership styles, leadership training models, the science of leadership training and the complex environment where leadership is called for, it is becoming increasingly important to “produce” and nurture leaders who can steward health workforce change. Thus, an important question then is: are we failing in health workforce development and planning because of a paucity of competent and skilled leaders or are political imperatives, professional agendas and individual vested interests trumping leadership efforts?

### Leadership Stream Objectives

Recognizing that innovation of the health workforce can be anchored on developing personal leadership skills, the next generation of leaders primed to meet the challenges of a complex and adaptive health care system, or leveraging small system change leadership to achieve large system change, the IHWC Leadership Track will provide IHWC conference participants with an opportunity to:

- Learn about individual and system leadership factors to enable system change, which can be translated to health workforce innovation
- Discuss how to leverage leadership at the micro level to achieve larger system change
- Discuss how to translate leadership concepts, practices and enablers into one’s professional responsibilities/job and at the system level to enable health workforce innovation

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<sup>i</sup> Canadian Health Leadership Network. Closing the Gap: A Canadian Health Leadership Action Plan. (2014). Retrieved from <http://chlnet.ca/wp-content/uploads/Canadian-Health-Leadership-Action-Plan.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> Van Aerde, J. (2014, Fall). The Condition of the Canadian Health Care System Does Not Have to be Discouraging. The Canadian Journal of Physician Leaders.

<sup>iii</sup> West, M. Eckert, R. Steward, K. Passmore, B. (2014, May). The King’s Fund. Retrieved from <http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/developing-collective-leadership-health-care>.

<sup>iv</sup> Swensen S, Pugh M, McMullan C, Kabcenell. (2013). A. High-Impact Leadership: Improve Care, Improve the Health of Populations, and Reduce Costs. IHI White Paper. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Institute for Healthcare Improvement. Retrieved from <http://www.ihl.org/resources/pages/ihlwhitepapers/highimpactleadership.aspx>.