

Definitions - Change Agency and Change Agents

The formal and grey literature offer up many definitions of a change agent. [Everett Rogers](#) presents the concept of change agents as people who "introduce innovations into a client system that they expect will have consequences that will be desirable, direct, and anticipated."^[1] The [Cambridge Dictionary defines change agent](#) as "a person or thing that encourages people to change their behavior or opinion". While these definitions are relevant to the idea of supporting the transformation of primary care and the health neighbourhood in Alberta, in this *Blueprint*, we have adopted these more provocative and inspiring definitions of *change agency* and *change agent* from the United Kingdom's National Health Service Horizon's Group:

Change Agency: The power, individually and collectively, to make a positive difference. It is about pushing the boundaries of what is possible, mobilizing others, and making change happen more quickly.

Change Agent: Someone who is actively developing the skills, confidence, power, relationships, and courage to make a positive difference.

Through all levels of the Alberta health care system we see change agents at work. They are found at the highest levels of government supporting change through policy and funding decisions, to health system administrators, health care providers, all the way to the level of the patient actively involved in advocacy, or the patient simply providing feedback to their clinics.

However, not all working in the system are change agents by default. Individuals choose to be a change agent. One can show up and fulfil their job requirements and contribute to a positive difference, yet not be pushing boundaries, mobilizing others, or making change happen more quickly. There is however, one group that is the exception to this and that is the Health Transformation Workforce (practice facilitators and physician champions). By their very nature, these roles exist specifically to do all of those things provided in the definition of change agency. (More on this in the next section.)

The content found in the role specific section of this *Blueprint* offers a plan for various roles found in PCNs and provincial support structures.

^[1] Everett Rogers