Health in Action

Transforming Together

Pilot Project on Integrated Care
Litoral Norte Region
Nov 2018 – Nov 2019
Summary Report
Foreword

Our team from the International Centre for Integrated Care are grateful to Dr Tardelli and colleagues from the São Paulo Health in Action Central Project Coordination Unit for their vision and tenacity in making the Transforming Together collaborative project possible. Spending time with professionals and teams in the beautiful region of Litoral Norte has been a great pleasure and an enormous privilege. We were made very welcome everywhere – from city halls to primary care clinics, hospitals, ambulatory and urgent care centres, rehabilitation centres, mental health services, social services, and schools. Over the course of the year we observed many green shoots bloom as new relationships, new ways of working, and new networks of care and support developed across the region.

This summary report describes the collaborative methodology and co-production approach that has supported professionals to work together, and with local communities, to improve the lives of some of their most vulnerable citizens. More information on local actions and specific tools is contained in the full project report and accompanying handbook.

We encourage you to visit Litoral Norte to understand the many positive outcomes achieved by new ways of working in primary care and with partners from social development, education, housing and community sectors. In particular, the Community Health Agents have been empowered as change agents and integrators of people centred care at the very heart of the community. However professionals from all disciplines and partners have a contribution to make.

We hope this report will inspire those who fund, plan and deliver public health services to create the conditions for people centred integrated care to flourish.

Please continue Transforming Together towards a better future for the citizens of São Paulo.

Together, anything is possible as none of us are as smart as all of us!

Professor Anne Hendry, Director IFIC Scotland, on behalf of the Transforming Together team from the International Centre for Integrated Care
Background

Health in Action is an ambitious São Paulo state wide project that aims to:

- Strengthen leadership capacity in working with Regional Health Departments (DRS) to support a comprehensive health care network for the people of São Paulo;
- Develop mechanisms and tools for coordination, regulation and strengthening of regional health care networks in five regions (Vale de Ribeira, Região Metropolitana de Campinas, Vale do Jurumirim, Itapeva - Sorocaba and Litoral Norte);
- Increase capacity, coverage and quality of services;
- Improve system performance, including use of resources and cost-effectiveness.

A specialised team from the International Centre for Integrated Care (IC4IC) was invited to work with the Health in Action Central Project Coordination Unit (UCP) to co-design and deliver a capacity building project to develop a Regional Health Care Network across four municipalities (Ubatuba, Caraguatatuba, São Sebastião and Ilhabela) in the Litoral Norte region. The project team and UCP agreed to use integrated care as the entry point to develop the regional network.

Integrated Care is now a global health policy trend and many health care systems are reforming their organisational arrangements towards more coordinated and integrated care.\(^1\) Population ageing and the growing burden of chronic disease requires care to be well coordinated across the different levels of the Brazilian Public Health System (SUS) and between health and social care, particularly for people with multiple long-term conditions who need support from several health and social care professionals as well their families, friends and local volunteers. Unless all of these providers work together to respond to people’s needs, and treat the person as a whole, there is a risk that the care they deliver will be fragmented, inefficient and deliver poor outcomes.\(^2\) This demands a more integrated system within an intersectoral paradigm with primary care for a geographically defined population as the gateway to more complex and specialist services and to benefits of improved population health, increased quality and cost effectiveness of health care.

This report is a summary of the *Transforming Together* project, the first pilot of integrated care in the state of São Paulo. Capability was created through interdisciplinary and cross sector action learning workshops and system coaching in integrated care, at local, regional and central levels. A detailed account of the methods, tools, activities and outcomes are contained in the full project report and handbook, available by contacting Health in Action team at [http://saudeemacao.saude.sp.gov.br/](http://saudeemacao.saude.sp.gov.br/)

The project was delivered through four overlapping phases of work.

- **Phase 1 - Listening, Inquiry and Discovery** Nov 2018 – Feb 2019
- **Phase 2 - Engagement and Focus** March – June 2019
- **Phase 3 - Co-design and Action** March - September 2019
- **Phase 4 - Reflect and Prepare for Spread** September – November 2019

Field work involved initial scoping and co-design in November 2018, followed by three cycles of field work March - September and reflection on progress in November 2019. The field work was conducted as a modified ‘Breakthrough series’ improvement collaborative\(^3\) mobilising multi-professional teams from each municipality to agree priorities and work together to test ideas and actions for change.
Taking Action Together

The project provided a safe space ‘social lab’ where local leaders, professionals, providers, citizens and community partners worked together to share experiences, understand each other’s needs, created a common narrative of change and took actions to transform their future together. The sessions blended theory, practice and relational aspects of transformational change and working as a network that takes a more person centred and integrated approach to health and wellbeing. They aimed to add value to other Health in Action projects on Humanisation, eSUS, clinical pathways and management training.

A co-production approach ensured staff from central, regional and local levels and other service providers and citizens were all part of a collaborative, inclusive and empathic process that starts with the question What Matters to You? Appreciative inquiry was used to discover the strengths and assets in the local system while encouraging participants to identify what could be better in future within the reality of their system and practice. The principles of the approach are summarised below.

- Start with getting the voices in the room and listen to what matters to people - the deeper the listening the greater the transformation
- Be comfortable holding the emotions of participants
- Embrace ambiguity - stop trying to fix it all - but unpack complexity by identifying some simple principles / rules
- Ask more questions than you answer
- The solutions are in the room - empower people to propose / seek out their own solutions
- Invite small but impactful practical ideas and actions
- Ask people to be clear about their actions – ask how much and by when
- Invite them to make commitments to each other - orally or in writing - and hold them to account at the next workshop
- Use stories and the creative arts to open hearts and minds
- Encourage people to share and learn from what works and what doesn’t work

The pressing reality for the four municipalities was to address population health challenges at different life stages and reach and support families with complex needs and circumstances. The IC4IC team were encouraged by the ambitious and transformative potential of these priorities relative to simply improving referral processes and pathways for specific conditions.

Every community is different. Therefore we encouraged each municipality to identify the set of actions considered to be important and meaningful in their own context. To align with the central level objectives, we positioned the emerging priorities within a House of Care framework for population health and integrated care for chronic disease. The House of Care is a visualisation of the evidence based chronic care model and has been used to support transformation of primary care in the UK. We adapted this to the Litoral Norte context as a House of Integrated Care and used this to engage professionals from different disciplines and levels of care around a more person centred and integrated health and care system.
Each municipality took actions at different points of the health and care system.

- **Ubatuba** Integrated Primary Care to improve population health and wellbeing
- **Caraguatatuba** Improving Health in a vulnerable neighbourhood
- **São Sebastião** Mental health advice and support for young people in schools
- **Ilhabela** Health in Schools and a new partnership with community sector
- **AME** Revision of regional pathways for Ambulatory Care

Although each example is distinct, they all help to build a strong House of Integrated Care. Knowledge exchange between the different projects across the region has enriched insights from different levels of the system and accelerated the spread of learning across the region.

Considerable progress has been made on actions which represent horizontal integration across disciplines and sectors. These address the foundations and two pillars of the House as well as the central focus on person centred care planning. More work is required to develop and adopt a stepped care regional model with agreed governance and standards across the regional network and development of intermediate care models as the new Litoral Norte Regional Hospital will be commissioned incrementally from March 2020. As a first step, the AME updated referral pathways for specific ambulatory conditions in collaboration with local clinicians and officials across the region.
Building Networks

Around 1200 participants from 16 different disciplines and representing 21 different secretaries, healthcare providers or NGOs took part in a series of local workshops, events and meetings. They learned about people centred integrated care and inspired each other to take action and make changes to improve the care experience and system resilience. The training covered the essential elements of integrated care, improved skills and competences for integrated practice, and helped build peer support and resilience for professionals in a complex and dynamic public health system.

Self assessed knowledge, competences and capability for relational practice have improved at local, regional and central levels. The network is strengthening as people begin to see the fruits of their improvement work. Using the BTS: Project scale, 60% of respondents considered there have been significant or very significant improvements and a further 40% reported at least modest improvements. Enhanced capability for integrated care is beginning to spread beyond the region as UCP begin to sensitise other Health in Action regions to this innovative approach.

Transforming Together has built a regional network that connects new local networks for integrated care across Litoral Norte. Multiprofessional teams work more closely with partners from other sectors and with AME, local hospitals, CRAS, NASF, schools, housing and community partners. Their actions are already touching many thousands of people and families across the region. The ability to track the right indicators for integrated care is still at an early stage but there is already evidence of positive health and wellbeing outcomes in the region. These new networks must be nurtured and supported to develop so that the early gains are sustained and the potential achieved.
In Their Own Words

“Transforming Together highlighted the benefit of a closer relationship with people on the ground to shape and support the local Health in Action developments. In other areas we only heard from Mayors and officials and they just wanted to focus on the buildings. In Litoral Norte we are working with the people who make the difference.”  
UCP team

“The network is not made of flows and documents – it is built by people. We have to understand everybody’s work – overcoming our egos. Put yourself in other people’s shoes and then you look at your own problems differently. Health working for education, care and the community together. It is so simple to reach out – to make connections that bear fruit - build reliable trusting relationships. We are stronger together - complement each other. Health staff have eyes and ears that can support Social Workers”
Planning Manager, Ubatuba

“Every department has extra insight that enriches the whole. This reduces our work as each can add something. Less effort, money and time wasted – better results! When we focused together and identified the demands and needs we could better target our resources.”
Social Development Secretary, Caraguatatuba

“We are here with the same goal – to see our region transformed together into one unit. Integration is already beginning in each Municipality. Now everyone has access to knowledge from other sectors.”
Health Secretary, Caraguatatuba

“A process of change to unify the system – to work as a network and include society and volunteers – we are walking on a positive path. We know people from other sectors because we met them from the project. Thinking together, mobilising other assets and services to link with public services – others can help, add and amplify to each other.”
São Sebastião Coordinator

“When we see people, identify with them, and start talking to them, we grow our affection and start caring for each other. We have started creating bonds as a network, building resilience across disciplines.”
Primary Care Coordinator, Ilhabela
Transforming Together in Numbers

1200 participants in 43 local sessions and 12 regional workshops

95% increase in self assessed knowledge, confidence and relationships

25% increase in self assessed competencies for integrated care

32 integrated care champions in 26 neighbourhood teams in Ubatuba

98% increase in home visits; 72% increase in group interventions and

165% increase in new registrations on eSUS in Ubatuba 2018-2019

300 people attended 18 public health sessions reaching a total of

3576 residents in Caraguatatuba.

86% reduction in gestational syphilis 2018 – 2019

50% reduction in dengue notification rates compared to control group.

8,000 adolescents reached through 300 gremios estudantes in 10 schools in São Sebastião

400 health education sessions for 6526 children in 37 Ilhabela schools;

330 young people and 80 parents attended mental wellbeing sessions;

327 adolescents received a new ambulatory psychological support service

20 specialty ambulatory care protocols agreed by AME and municipalities

10% reduction in average monthly DNA rates for patients referred to AME

Day of care surveys introduced in 2 local hospitals

2 municipalities now introducing intermediate care to improve flow
Integrated Care in Action

Integrated working between UBS and CRAS

Joint home visits for social vulnerability.

Optimising inclusion by outreach screening and prevention in the community

Mental health and wellbeing education for adolescents in schools and neighbourhoods
Recommendations
This report offers recommendations on how to spread and scale up the approach.

**Transforming Together** builds on a similar experience from the Primerissima Infancia programme. There could be considerable synergy between the two programmes.

- The programmes should work more closely together and develop a joint regional committee to provide shared governance for Cuidados Integrados and Primerissima Infancia.

The self-assessment exercise on the maturity of the network highlighted the areas that require most support to increase resilience and move to the next level of maturity. The issue that required most urgent attention was network governance and structure.

- Central, regional and local levels should agree a governance framework that gives the local and regional networks legitimacy and is endorsed by health, social development, education and housing secretaries as a minimum.

The second urgent issue was to identify dedicated capacity to lead and facilitate the network.

- The central level should ensure DRS and DRADS staff provide support for primary care articulators and coordinators to lead, coordinate and facilitate the regional network.

As the new Regional Hospital is commissioned during 2020 there will be a need for further technical support on patient flow, regulation of referrals and discharges, intermediate care, management of frailty, and services for people who need palliative and end of life care needs.

- The management and staff of the new regional hospital should be engaged in the network going forward and have access to technical support to improve micro-regulation and flow.

Further work is required to develop a participatory assessment and evaluation framework for integrated care in line with the information needs and resources for different sectors in the region.

- The regional committee should track outcomes for citizens, professionals and for the system. This should include novel indicators such as joint assessments, proactive visits to vulnerable families and integrated outreach work with schools and communities.

Having achieved proof of concept in the Brazilian public health system, the **Transforming Together** prototype is ripe for spread to other regions. It provides many lessons for systems seeking to address population health, enhance integrated care and well-being and improve the quality and sustainability of health and care services for people with increasingly complex care and support needs.

- There should be a state wide interdisciplinary training program on integrated care for managers and professionals from different sectors.

*The first year is just for the lights to blink and to establish the basis to continue. Connecting with other projects and training opportunities reinforces the ideas and will keep the lights on for a long time.*
Consultancy Team

The Consultancy team is from the International Centre for Integrated Care (the Centre), hosted by the University of the West of Scotland with core partners, the International Foundation for Integrated Care (IFIC) and the Health and Social Care Alliance, Scotland. As the home of IFIC Scotland the Centre is a unique collaboration of policy, delivery, academic, Third sector and international expertise to enhance education, knowledge transfer, system coaching, and research and evaluation on implementing people centred integrated care. All members of the team have extensive experience of implementing integrated care and of leading transformational change in primary care and community services, including a strong focus on people centred care, use of technologies to enable integrated care, and the use of information to evidence progress on outcomes.

The International Foundation for Integrated Care (IFIC) is a non-profit membership-based Foundation that operates as a network to bring people together across organisational and professional boundaries to advance the science, knowledge and adoption of integrated care policy and practice throughout the World. IFIC is led by a Board drawn from 16 countries and engages a ‘community’ of over 18,000 individuals and organisations. The Foundation’s work includes managing an open-access and impact-rated scientific journal (International Journal of Integrated Care); organising a major conference and events programme; running a small research and development faculty that participates in collaborative research and development; engaging in a range of education and training activities through its Integrated Care Academy ©; and supporting innovation and knowledge translation across its members through its website http://integratedcarefoundation.org/

References

i. WHO Framework on integrated, people-centred health services, 2016.
http://www.who.int/servicedeliverysafety/areas/people-centred-care/en/

ii. Continuity and coordination of care - A practice brief to support implementation of the WHO Framework on integrated people-centred health services. WHO. Geneva
http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/274628/9789241514033-eng.pdf?ua=1


iv British Heart Foundation 2018. The House of Care Programme evidence and findings.

http://www.ihi.org/IHI/Results/WhitePapers/

vi The Health Foundation. Effective Networks for Improvement.
Cuidados Integrados in action - Ubatuba June 2019

“One drop of water becomes a waterfall’

Planting the seeds of Cuidados Integrados in Vale do Jurumirim
November 2019