

BACKGROUND

Primary care in Canada is in crisis and millions of Canadian adults do not have access to a family doctor. The public is rarely involved in conversations about how to improve primary care. OurCare is a national initiative to engage the public on the future of primary care.

METHODS

- Deep dialogues about primary care were conducted in 2023 in Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia and Nova Scotia
- 29-36 participants were randomly selected in each province to match provincial demographics
- The members of the public spent 30-40 hours learning about primary care and discussed what values, issues, and recommendations matter most
- In each province, members of the public wrote a report summarizing areas of consensus. We looked across reports to identify commonalities



OurCare members of the public from Ontario and British Columbia.

RESULTS

Figure 1. Common Values

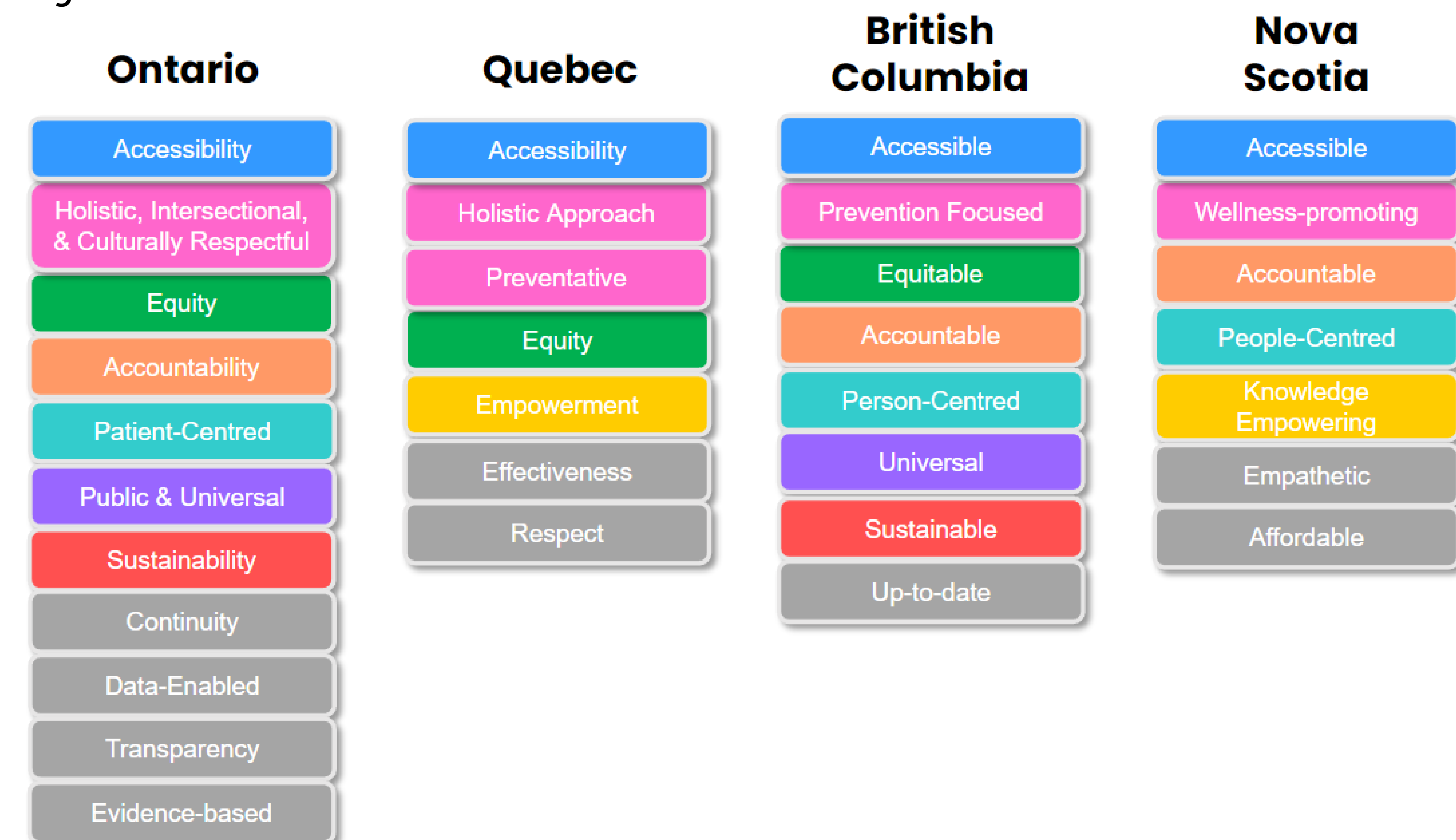


Table 1. Common Recommendations

Consensus Recommendation	Examples
Scale up team-based care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand team-based care to every resident and prioritize underserved communities (ON, BC) • Move toward automatic rostering (similar to the public school system) where health teams are mandated to accept any patient from their catchment area (ON, BC)
Legislate Electronic Medical Record (EMR) interoperability to create a single health record for each person that they and their delegates can access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish (or strengthen) a central medical data platform for clinicians and patients that provides province-wide access to EMRs regardless of software (ON, BC, NS) • Have a singular, easy point of access • Include push-style updates • Ensure adherence to best practices
Address upstream factors that impact health through investing in primary care, expanding public coverage, and addressing social determinants of health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest a greater proportion of total healthcare funding in primary care (ON) • Expand public coverage to include wholistic care including - but not limited to - pharmaceuticals, vision, dentistry, physical therapy and mental health services (ON, QC, BC) • Create links between primary care clinicians and community agencies (ON, QC, NS)
Reduce financial and logistical barriers to care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand flexible modes of care, including comprehensive virtual care models and mobile care options (ON, BC, NS) • Fully fund and implement an internet/satellite-based infrastructure so rural communities can access virtual care (BC)
Strengthen and diversify our primary care workforce through a multipronged strategy that enhances education, recruitment and retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significantly increase the number of seats for primary care residents, specifically in underserved communities and rural and remote locations (ON) • Integrate newcomer practitioners and accelerate and improve accreditation processes (ON, QC, BC) • Offer centralized administrative support and technology infrastructure to teams and clinicians (ON, QC)
Educate and empower the public and strengthen community governance models for primary care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate the public on their rights and explain how the primary care system works (ON, QC, BC) • Establish and strengthen community governance and involvement (ON, QC, BC, NS)
Collect metrics and track progress within primary care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect metrics on health and wellness best practices tied to expected outcomes and implement a public dashboard so the public can track progress on health outcomes over time (NS)



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CONTACT

Dr. Tara Kiran

 Tara.Kiran@utoronto.ca

 @tara_kiran

CONCLUSION

Diverse members of the Canadian public in four provinces agreed on common values that should underlie primary care and provided several consensus recommendations for improvement. Their values and recommendations provide a roadmap to clinicians, researchers and policy makers for system redesign.

NEXT STEPS

A fifth deep dialogue is occurring in Manitoba in October 2023 and more conversations are being had with members of marginalized communities across Canada. We will conduct qualitative interviews with members of the public who participated to learn from their experiences.

LEARN MORE

Explore the national survey data and related blogs at OurCare.ca/nationalsurvey. Read more about the Priority Panel recommendations at OurCare.ca/prioritiespanels.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Photos by Yuri Markarov and Oliva Neale.