

# Building Care Teams for Every Resident in the Community - A Co-Learning Exchange

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Photo of CHI 21<sup>st</sup> Masterclass. From left to right: Dr Doug Eby and Mr Gerard Asselin from Southcentral Federation, Dr Jonty Heaversedge from CHI, Dr Ziliang Lim from Yishun Polyclinic, and Dr Wei Ting Chen from NHG Population Health.

The Centre for Healthcare Innovation (CHI)'s 21st Masterclass (co-organised with POP Class), "Building Care Teams for Every Resident in the Community – A Co-Learning Exchange" brought together leaders from two leading systems in population health that are transforming care in the community. Dr Doug Eby, Executive Vice President of Specialty Services, Southcentral Foundation, Mr Gerard Asselin, M.S., Director of Operations, Southcentral Foundation, Dr Ziliang Lim, Head, NHG Yishun Polyclinic, and Dr Wei Ting Chen, Clinical Director, Community Health, NHG Population Health, explored how two distinct healthcare systems, operating in vastly different geographical and cultural contexts, were working to achieve similar goals of **accessible, relationship-based and place-based care**.

## The case for Southcentral Foundation (SCF) in Alaska, United States – The power of customer-ownership and having them at the core

Over three decades, SCF has transformed their care model, maintaining an unwavering dedication to relationship-centricity and customer-ownership. SCF has fundamentally reimagined healthcare delivery by placing customer-owners (**reframed from what we recognise as 'patients'**) at the centre of everything they do, achieving remarkable outcomes while

maintaining high levels of satisfaction among both customer-owners and staff.

*“ We went from being the usual medical model to being completely driven by the people for whom we exist,” - Dr Doug Eby*

Drawing from their experience, Dr Eby and Mr Asselin presented their perspectives on the successes of SCF's Nuka System of Care that has earned them the prestigious Malcolm Baldrige Quality Award in 2011 and 2017, which offers profound lessons for healthcare systems worldwide.

### 1. Strong foundation and alignment across the organisation through “RELATIONSHIPS”

SCF's commitment to relationship-based, customer-owned care is reflected in its enduring vision of "A Native Community that enjoys physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellness", supported by its mission to "Work Together with the Native Community to achieve wellness through health and related services".

Rather than relying on rigid rules and regulations, SCF brings these values to life through thirteen operational principles,

forming the acronym "RELATIONSHIPS". These principles ensure that meaningful connections remain at the heart of SCF's care delivery, where SCF places focus on customer-owners and their needs, and how SCF can support them.

Together with the operational principles, SCF's Core Concepts serves as the organisation-wide relational culture cornerstone that guides all staff, regardless of position, in connecting, creating and sustaining healthy, trusted relationships with both customer-owners and colleagues.

“ From day 1, we set the stage about what it is to work at Southcentral Foundation and the purpose around the mission and vision and then how to work together as a team.” – Mr Gerard Asselin

## 2. Customer-owners and their family at the core of everything

SCF's philosophy centres on recognising customers as active owners of their health journey rather than passive recipients. This approach enables SCF to build supportive, empowering systems that adapt to customer-owners instead of judging or

## DID YOU KNOW?

CSF's customer-owner and family-centred approach is exemplified in their paediatric care model. Rather than maintaining separate paediatric clinics, SCF strategically integrated paediatricians into every primary care clinic to better support customer-owners.

*“Healthy child development depends not on isolated clinical encounters, but on the entire family ecosystem – the parents, grandparents, extended family members, and the broader environment within which the child is growing.” - Dr Doug Eby*

This "healthy nest" approach recognises that supporting children within their family context strengthens continuity of care and enables more comprehensive support for the whole family unit.

## 3. Integrated care and ensuring access to care

SCF's dedication to accessibility is perhaps their next most distinctive feature. For 25 years, they have mandated same-day access through channels convenient to customer-owners – phone, text, email, or in-person – five days a week.



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