

# How to Use Communities of Practice to Support Change in Learning Health Systems

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## BACKGROUND

- Communities of Practice (CoPs) support evidence-based practice and can be, in and of themselves, applied learning spaces in organizations.
- Little guidance exists on how to design and resource CoPs to effectively serve learning health systems.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- 1) Where can CoPs contribute to learning health systems conceptually?
- 2) What resources and/or management do CoPs need to support learning health system settings?

## METHODS

- Semi-structured interviews (n=21) with participants representing 16 CoP and 5 CoP facilitation platforms in Canada that support evidence-based practice.
- Used the Conceptual Framework for Value-Creating Learning Health Systems to characterize the roles that CoP can take to support learning health systems.
- Pulled insights from the interviews on properly resourcing and managing CoPs.

## RESULTS

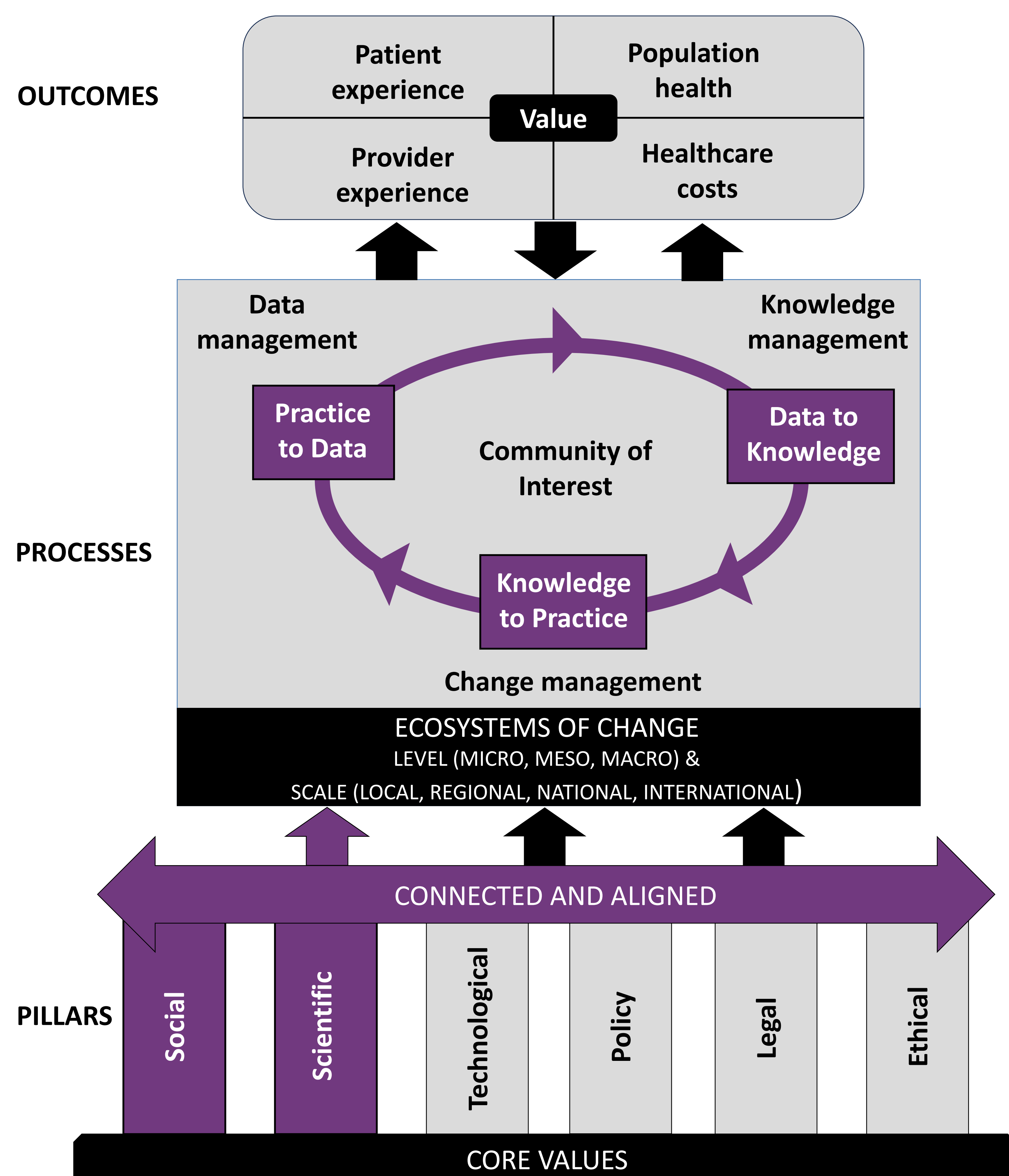


FIGURE 1. Menear et. al.'s Conceptual Framework for Value-Creating Learning Health Systems (adapted to show results of this study)

*We would like [healthcare delivery teams] to come back to us and say, "You're connected with the researchers, could you connect us with a researcher or let them know that in the trenches where we're trying to apply the research, this is working, and this is not." We look for that bidirectional flow. (CoP 1)*

## CoP FACILITATION PLATFORMS

- Provide administration support, tools, and oversight for multiple communities of practice.
- Can be a mechanism to coordinate critical activities.
- Reduce staff members' workload, in turn, creating greater efficiency and effectiveness across CoP lifespans.

*Management and leadership support within our organization is essential to remove barriers, discuss any challenges, etc. You need a CoP manager, someone in the driver's seat. I will always say when someone is starting a community of practice if you don't have someone with dedicated time and support to run that community of practice from a very administrative, operations level the car will not go forward. I've mentioned if you don't have champions and experts there to support you and to advise you and to help you with the work from more content expertise, you are not going to be successful. (Platform 4)*

## CONCLUSION

- CoPs can perform numerous learning health system functions.
- Health system leaders can employ CoPs with intention to support learning and change.
- Organizational investment in overarching CoP facilitation platforms will strengthen and accelerate CoP supports in learning health systems.

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