

Introducing... the *New* Saskatchewan Transfusion Medicine Structure and Team

SK Transfusion Medicine Symposium 2025

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SK TM Clinical Lead



Transfusion Medicine (TM) -

A “Fence-Sitter” Specialty



Clinical Medicine

*Physicians order and
nurses transfuse blood;
Transfusion Safety;
Patient Blood
Management*

Transfusion Medicine



**Involvement of both Clinical and
Lab perspectives is essential to
Transfusion Safety**

*TM Lab Accreditors assess
compliance with both clinical and
lab standards*



Laboratory Medicine

*Blood collection and
manufacturing at CBS;
Hospital MLTs test samples
and provide appropriately
matched blood*

What is Transfusion Medicine (TM)?

DEFINITION

Transfusion Medicine is that domain of laboratory and clinical medicine concerned with all aspects of the collection, testing, preparation, storage, transportation, pre-transfusion testing, post-transfusion follow up, indications for, infusion, and safety of human blood components and products, nonhuman alternatives, and alternative products manufactured by recombinant DNA technology. These activities are undertaken in such a way that the rights of blood donors, patients, and families are respected, and scarce resources are appropriately allocated.



Competency Portfolio
for the Diploma in
Transfusion Medicine

2012

EDITORIAL REVISION AUGUST 2018
VERSION 1.5

Vein to Vein Philosophy

Transfusion Safety

- Ensuring the safety and integrity of the blood supply from the “vein of the donor” through to the “vein of the recipient”
 - Transfusion of red blood cells and platelets is a “temporary liquid tissue transplant”
- Hospitals work in close partnership with Canadian Blood Services (CBS) as our national blood operator and provincial governments
 - Blood is funded directly provincial Ministries of Health (MoH)
 - MoH – Blood File Leads from each province participate in annual budget negotiations for blood component and product funding
 - Decisions by the CBS-PTBLC, with clinical consultation from the National Advisory Committee on Blood and Blood Products (NAC)



National Advisory Committee
on Blood and Blood Products

Comité consultatif national sur
le sang et les produits sanguins



SaskBlood Provincial Blood Office

History

- The vision of a **Saskatchewan Provincial Blood Office** was made a reality through collaborative efforts between the Ministry of Health – Blood File and former SHR and RQHR lab leadership beginning in 2011
- “**Virtual Office**” was comprised of geographically distributed staff **operationally based under Lab Medicine** in Saskatoon (North) and Regina (South), with positions funded directly by the Ministry of Health – Blood File:
 - Transfusion Medicine Physicians – 0.5 FTE x 2 (as of 2011)
 - National Advisory Committee on Blood and Blood Products (NAC) Representatives
 - Administrative Support – 1.0 FTE (as of 2012)
 - Transfusion Safety Managers – 1.0 FTE x 2 (as of 2013)
 - Patient Blood Management Medical Lead – 0.2 FTE (as of 2016)

SaskBlood Provincial Blood Office

History

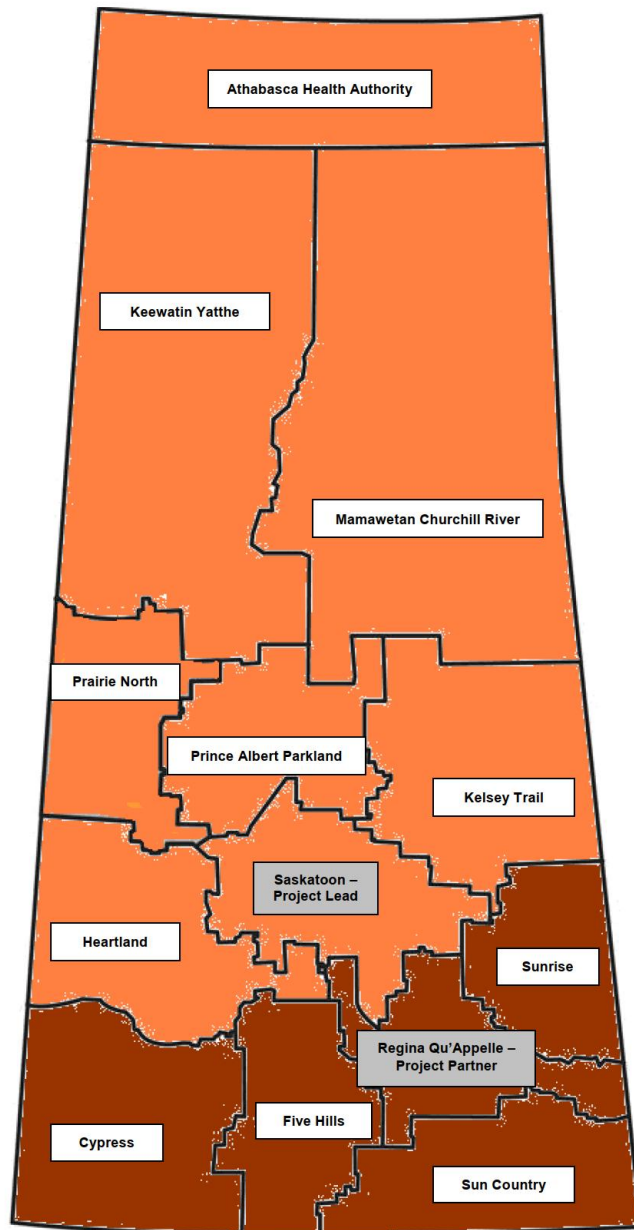
- The purpose of the SaskBlood Office was to **harmonize blood transfusion practice** amongst the 12 former regional health authorities (fRHAs) by facilitating:
 - Standardization of laboratory/technical TM practice
 - Optimization of utilization and minimizing waste
 - Improvement of transfusion prescribing practices
 - Enhancement of transfusion safety
- In former health regions, work was completed following discussions and decisions by the **Transfusion Medicine Working Group (TMWG)**
 - Ministry of Health – Blood File & Hospital Lab Management Co-Chairs
 - Former health region lab managers or delegates; clinical managers
 - SaskBlood Physicians and Transfusion Safety Managers



SaskBlood History

- The TMWG created **resource materials** for laboratory and clinical transfusion practice and safety
 - Intended to be foundational templates/frameworks for former health region labs to use for local document development
 - Resources for local Transfusion Committee use
 - Authority for implementation of policies or procedures rested within the former health regions
 - Documents on saskblood.ca since early 2016
- Coordinated work through the TMWG enabled **repatriation of rural blood transfusion crossmatch services** from CBS into SK Hospitals – 2016-17





Historical fRHA Map and Jurisdictions

■ North SK TTISS:

• **Saskatoon Health Region – Project Lead**

- Athabasca Health Authority
- Heartland Health Region
- KeewatinYatthe Regional Health Authority
- Kelsey Trail Health Region
- Mamawetan Churchill River Health Region
- Prairie North Health Region
- Prince Albert Parkland Health Region

■ South SK TTISS:

• **Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region – Project Partner**

- Cypress Health Region
- Five Hills Health Region
- Sun Country Health Region
- Sunrise Health Region

• **TM Physician On-call Support (24/7):**

• **North** – via RUH Switchboard

• **South** – via RGH Switchboard

• **North and South Transfusion Medicine jurisdictions, prior to SHA Formation**

- Most fRHAs had a functional Transfusion Committee

TTISS = Transfusion Transmitted Injuries Surveillance System

(Required annual hemovigilance reporting, supported by the Public Health Agency of Canada)

What has Changed: TM in the SHA

Lab Medicine

- **The Sask Health Authority was officially launched in Dec 2017**
 - Goal of provincial standardization among fRHAs – ongoing in TM!
- TM operations made accountable to the Transfusion Medicine Discipline Committee (TMDC) of the Department of Pathology and Lab Medicine
 - **TMDC Co-Chairs: TM Clinical and Administrative Co-Leads; lab membership**
 - Indirect involvement from the Ministry of Health
 - Interdisciplinary TMWG has been sunset
- **Non-concordant** Integrated Service Area (ISA) and Health Network borders with fRHA borders has been **challenging in TM**
 - Lab Information System (LIS) builds necessitate continued former health region operations among (8 instances of TM SoftBank; cannot 'talk')
 - Visibility of information province-wide has enabled by the eHealth Viewer, as a data repository
 - Hub-and-spoke crossmatch services and blood redistribution routes cross ISA and Health Networks, which impact transfusion reaction testing and reporting

Current State: Saskatchewan TM 2025

“Blood Drop Map”

Complex Site

- Large, comprehensive blood inventory
- Full range of TM testing
- Level 1 trauma center care

Advanced Site

- Limited Inventory: RBC, plasma; some blood products
- Group/Screen, Antibody ID; Crossmatch
- Level 2/3 clinical care

Basic Site

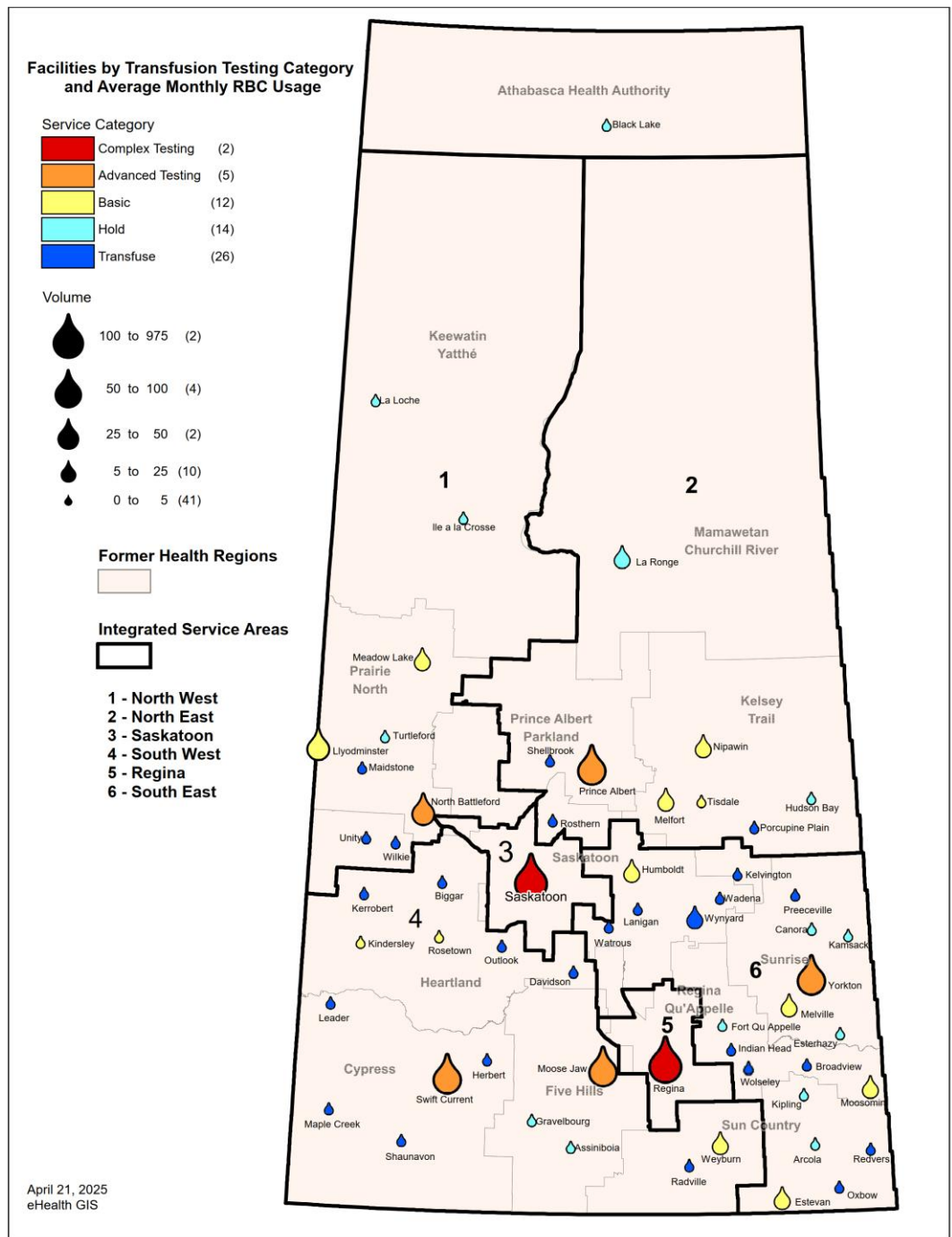
- Limited blood inventory: RBC (Group O +/- A); some blood products
- Group/Screen; Crossmatch if screen negative

Hold Blood

- Group O neg/Kell neg RBC only
- No TM testing on-site

Transfuse Only

- No blood stock or TM testing on site
- Pre-arranged transfusion only

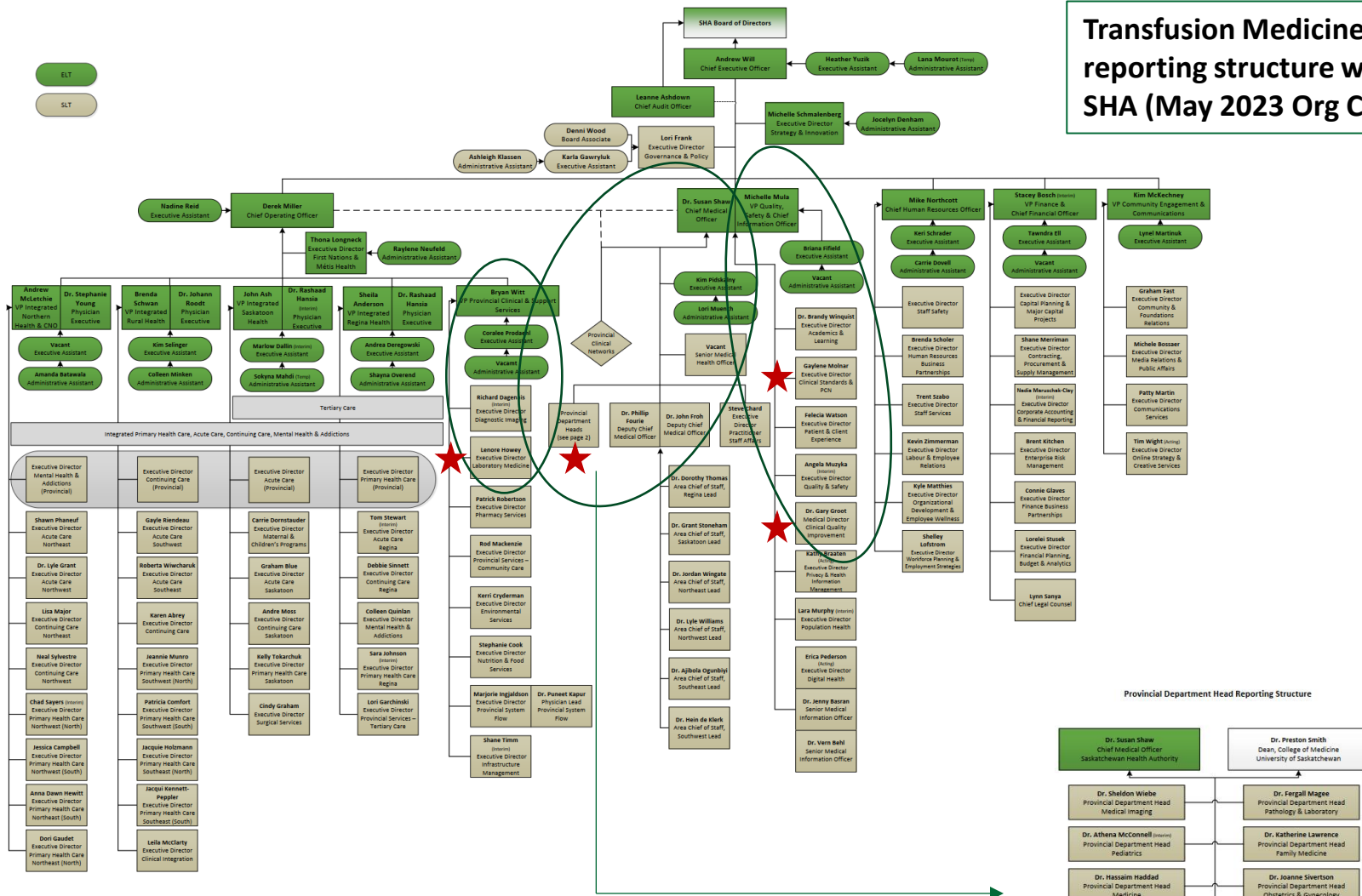


Establishment of Clinical Excellence

Shift of TSM Positions

- In 2018, Transfusion Safety Manager (TSM) Positions were shifted away from Lab and into the Clinical Excellence portfolio, affiliated with Clinical Standards
- Introduced an operational schism between team members of the SaskBlood
- Shift in roles and responsibilities of TSMs
 - Increased focus in Patient Blood Management
 - Time limitations related to North and South (Rural) support
 - Introduction of the IG Nurse Navigator reporting to TSMs
 - Hold placed on establishment of Transfusion Safety Officer roles as reporting to TSMs

Transfusion Medicine staff reporting structure within the SHA (May 2023 Org Chart)



SaskBlood Virtual Blood Office Structure – Markedly Changed

- Changes in the SHA Organizational Structure and shift of former SaskBlood staff led to a disconnect between team members
- **Lack of formal connection between TM Medical, Safety and Quality Staff = work collaboration challenges without a unified sponsor/interdisciplinary committee**

The Department Head of Public Health and Preventive Medicine (PHPM) for the Saskatchewan Health Authority also serves as the Division Leader of PHPM for the College of Medicine.

Updated as of May 4, 2023

Provincial Department Heads have a reporting relationship to both the Chief Medical Officer of the Saskatchewan Health Authority and the Dean of the College of Medicine, University of Saskatchewan.

TM Interdisciplinary Committee Vision

Building Relationships

- Clinical Standards confirmed the need for an interdisciplinary committee to support clinical transfusion document development addressing lab accreditation requirements
 - Inconsistency province-wide in terms of how former health region forms and policy committees are being dissolved/amalgamated
 - Lack of clear hierarchies for document approval as they relate to transfusion practice were halting progress and a patient safety risk
- **Examples of necessary provincial TM documents:**
 - Blood administration policy and procedure
 - Blood product monograph references
 - Standard blood product order sets
 - Transfusion adverse reaction recognition and management protocol

Advocacy for the TUSIC - SC

- Transfusion Medicine Discipline Committee, together with Clinical Standards leadership, collaborated to develop a draft Terms of Reference for the **Transfusion Utilization and Safety Interdisciplinary Committee – Steering Committee (TUSIC-SC)**
 - Steering Committee structure and membership modelled after the Medication Utilization and Safety Interdisciplinary Committee (MUSIC) under Provincial Pharmacy Services
- Intention for **Integrated Service Area (ISA) TUSICs** to function as Transfusion Committees within geographic areas of the province
 - The lack of an identified Transfusion Committee has been an accreditation deficiency in several transfusing facilities

TUSIC-SC Approval and Establishment

- Proposal for **TUSIC-SC** establishment presented to the SHA Chief Operations Officer (COO) and **approved in November 2023**, with support for the establishment of four **ISA TUSICs** to function as **regional Transfusion Committees**:
 - Saskatoon
 - Regina
 - North
 - South (Rural)
- TUSIC-SC Terms of Reference finalized in January 2024
 - Inclusion of function as the Provincial Emergency Blood Management Committee (PEBMC) in case of a blood shortage
- **Inaugural TUSIC-SC meeting in July 2024**
 - Working Groups established to complete project-specific tasks

Interdisciplinary Team Successes

2024-25

- Collaborative development of the Administration of Blood and Blood Products Clinical Standard [CS-CS-0018]
 - Workshop in June 2024
 - **Document release November 26, 2024**
- Blood Component and Product Monograph Standardisation
 - SHA Lab Transfusion Medicine webpage
 - Support the Administration of Blood and Blood Products CS
- Blood Administration Consent Form Development
 - Working Group established under the TUSIC-SC
 - Pending stakeholder feedback



Provincial Program Links with TM

IG Stewardship
Program

PRAMS
Program

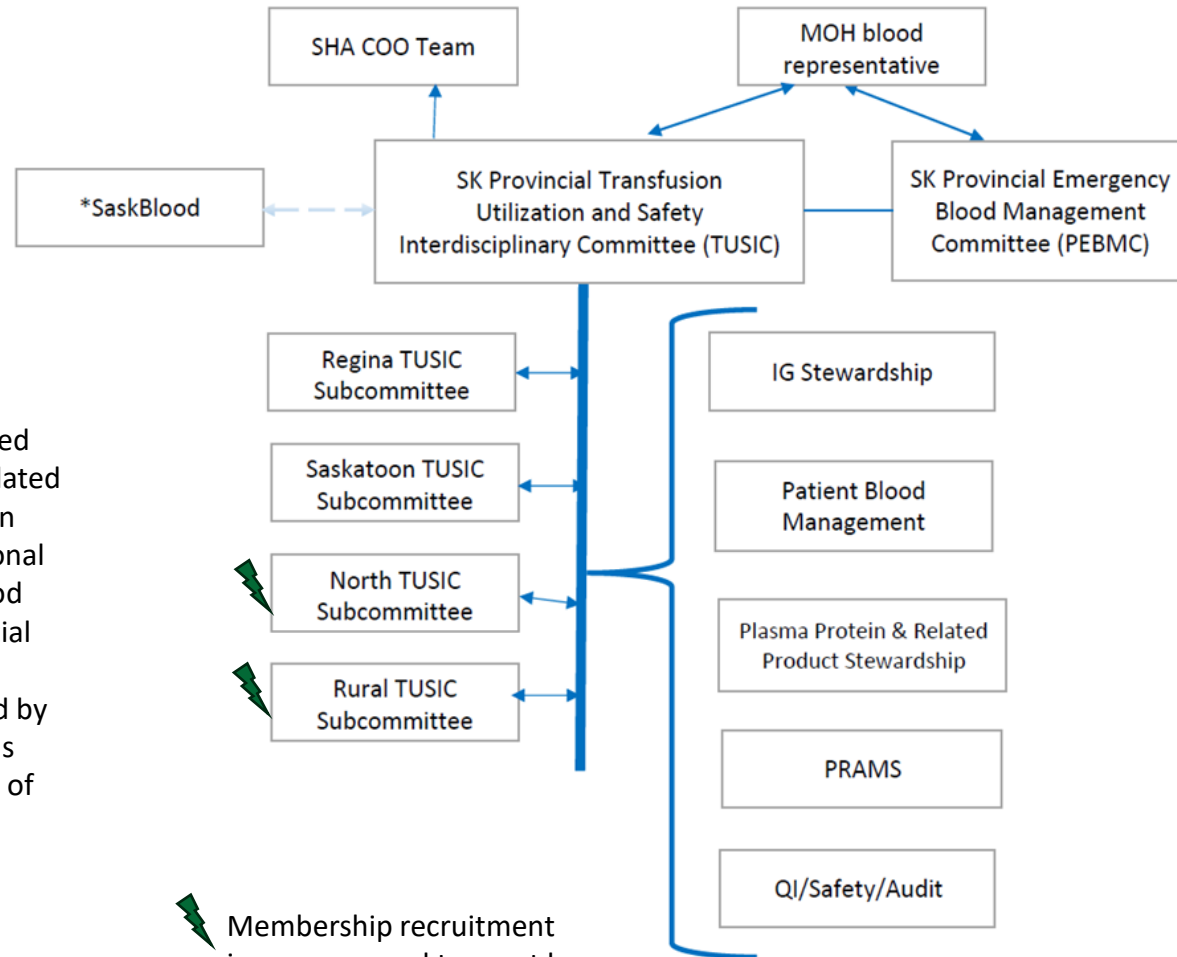
Regina Patient
Blood
Management
Program

SBDP Plasma
Protein and
Related Product
Utilization

- Establishment of a formal structure via the SHA TUSIC-SC helps ensure system-wide program awareness and impact
 - Intended expansion of programming to become provincial in scope
 - Patient Blood Management – beyond Regina
 - PPRP Utilization – beyond the SK Bleeding Disorders Program (SBDP)

Current SK TM Organizational Structure

TUSIC-SC ToR



*[SaskBlood](#) is a website-based resource with content populated by the SK TSMs and Physician Representatives to the National Advisory Committee on Blood and Blood Products. The initial website and resource development were endorsed by the SK MoH- Blood File Leads and preceded the formation of the SHA.

⚡ Membership recruitment in-process; goal to meet by Oct 2025

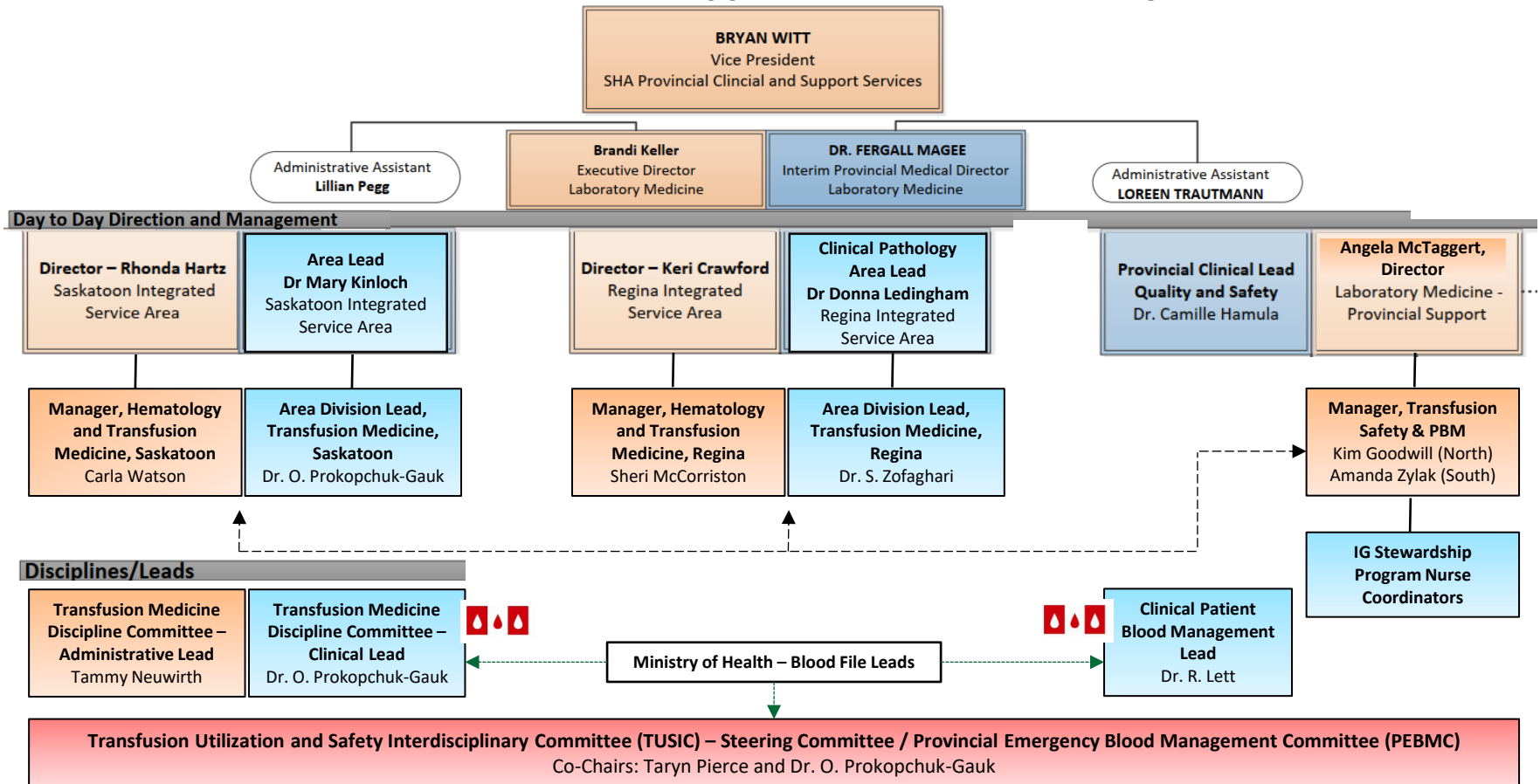
May 2025 – SHA Organisational Change

- **Restructuring within the SHA** as an organization led to significant changes impacting the Transfusion Safety portfolio:
 - **Revision** of the Clinical Standards Portfolio structure and name
 - Now renamed Interprofessional Practice; work includes provincial clinical document standardization
 - Clinical Excellence arm no longer exists
 - **Return** of the Transfusion Safety Manager roles back to Lab Medicine
 - **New** individuals in TSM Roles due to retirements

Provincial Transfusion Medicine Structure

September 2025

SHA Provincial Clinical and Support Services – Laboratory Medicine



SK TM Operational and Safety Team

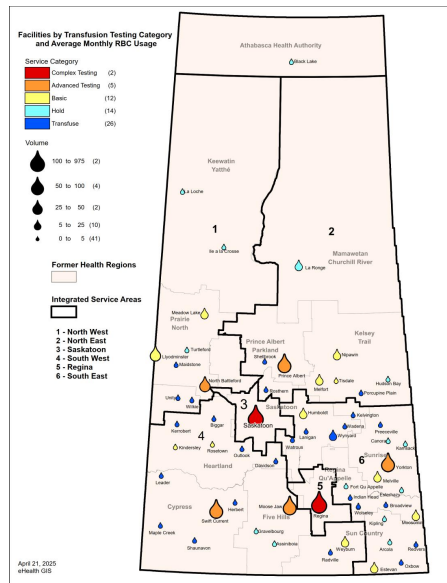
As of Sept 3, 2025



Executive Director, Lab Medicine
Brandi Keller



Director, Provincial Programs, Lab
Angela McTaggart



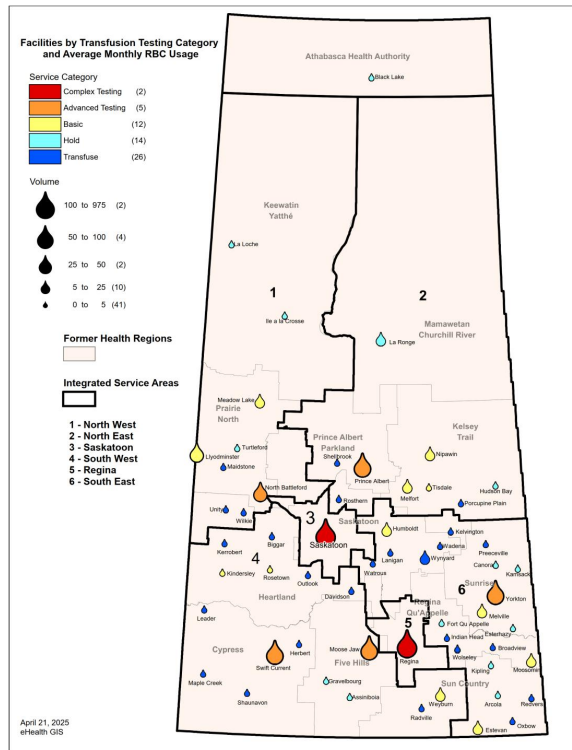
Transfusion Safety Manager, North
Kim Goodwill



Transfusion Safety Manager, South
Amanda Zylak

Transfusion Medicine Physician Support

Available 24/7



- **Northern Saskatchewan – Saskatoon, NE and NW ISA; Urgent SK IVIG Orders**
 - Saskatoon on-call TM Physician Consultant
 - RUH Switchboard: 306-655-1000
- **South Saskatchewan – Regina, SE and SW ISA**
 - Regina on-call TM Physician
 - RGH Switchboard: 306-766-4444



Thank you
Questions?