

## Background

The Pacific AIDS Network (PAN) provides a range of skills-building and other professional development opportunities for its member organizations and affiliates across British Columbia (BC). This evaluation assessed a series of web-based trainings called, "**KnowledgeConnect**". The main objectives of *KnowledgeConnect* are to:

- ☀ increase participants' knowledge and competency with regards to ongoing and emergent issues pertaining to HIV/AIDS, HIV/HCV Co-infection and/or hepatitis C
- ☀ improve participants' confidence and abilities to work more effectively in the sector generally, and in their own specific disciplines
- ☀ enhance the quality of programs and services provided for persons who are living with HIV/AIDS, HIV/HCV Co-infection, or who are "at risk"

*KnowledgeConnect* webinars address a variety of topics in relation to HIV/AIDS, hepatitis C and HIV/HCV Co-infection, ranging from the **resurgence of syphilis in BC** to **social media strategies**. PAN records each of the webinars and posts these recording to their website for later viewing.

While *KnowledgeConnect* continues to deliver webinars, this evaluation focused on a sample of webinars that were delivered between October 2012 and March 2013. During this time period, a total of 13 webinars were delivered to 131 participants. **To assess the delivery, outcomes, value and areas for improvement for *KnowledgeConnect*, PAN contracted Catalyst Research Group to conduct this evaluation.**



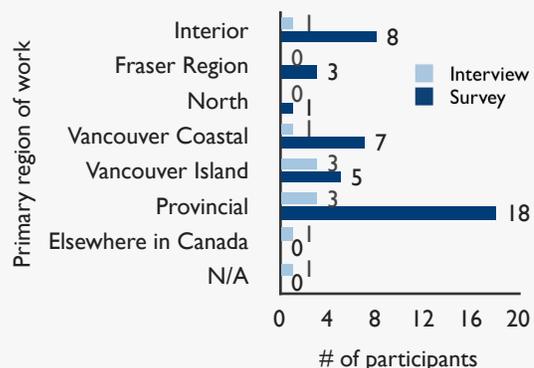
## Who did we talk to?

We talked with a total of **53 *KnowledgeConnect* webinar participants** who primarily work for non-profit or governmental agencies in a variety of positions, ranging from volunteers to senior level leaders. Additionally, a small number of the evaluation participants were self-employed or retired. The following methods were used to collect data from these participants:

- ☀ **Online surveys** were completed by 43 webinar participants 1 - 3 days following their participation in the session. The survey explored participants' satisfaction with the design and delivery of the webinar they attended, and recommendations for improvement.
- ☀ **Telephone interviews** were conducted with a random sample of 10 webinar participants 1 - 2 months after their participation in a *KnowledgeConnect* webinar. The purpose of these interviews was to explore shifts in participants' in knowledge, attitudes and behaviours resulting from their participation in *KnowledgeConnect*.

While the evaluation respondents represented each of the BC Health Authorities, the majority reported that they primarily work at the provincial level in BC (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Number of evaluation respondents by region (n = 52)**



# How effective was the delivery of KnowledgeConnect?

This evaluation explored the effectiveness of how the KnowledgeConnect webinars were delivered. Responses to these questions have been grouped into the themes of: *overall satisfaction, interactivity, presenters, and information shared.*

## Overall Satisfaction

Overall, evaluation respondents were satisfied with the delivery of KnowledgeConnect. When describing their satisfaction, they explained that the webinars were:

- ✓ a cost-effective way to share information (*n* = 7)
- ✓ well facilitated by PAN and the presenters (*n* = 3)
- ✓ free of technical issues (*n* = 3)

The majority of the survey respondents (>75%) also found the **registration process, day and time of the sessions** and the **organization of the webinars** to be *very good or excellent*.

Some evaluation respondents described challenges with KnowledgeConnect's delivery, including:

- ☀ technological challenges (i.e. unclear audio) (*n* = 6)
- ☀ limited interactivity of the webinar platform (*n* = 6)

## Interactivity

In comparison to other aspects of KnowledgeConnect's delivery, **survey respondents gave lower ratings to the interactivity of the webinars.** Respondents ranked the interactivity of the webinars as *fair* (*n* = 5; 12%), *good* (*n* = 3; 7%), *very good* (*n* = 17; 40%), or *excellent* (*n* = 9; 21%). After answering this question, some respondents (*n* = 2) explained interactivity will always be a challenge when using webinar technology.

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"While the presentation was good, I expected more interactivity. It was limited."  
.....

In relation to the interactivity, survey respondents were also asked to rate their level of engagement during the sessions. **Most respondents reported that they were actively engaged** (*n* = 26; 60%). Others indicated that they were only **moderately engaged** (*n* = 16, 37%), as they found themselves multi-tasking during the sessions. One respondent reported that they were **not engaged** in the webinar.

## Presenters

The majority of survey respondents (>75%) found that the webinar presenters did a *very good or excellent* job of:

- ✓ answering questions clearly and completely
- ✓ keeping the audience interested and engaged
- ✓ explaining webinar concepts and/or content

## Information Shared

In terms of the pace at which information was shared during the webinars, most survey respondents reported that it was delivered at a **very good** (*n* = 15; 35%) or **excellent** (*n* = 18; 42%) pace. Some respondents found the pace of the webinars was only **good** (*n* = 9; 21%) or **fair** (*n* = 1; 2%).

The majority of participants found that the **difficulty of the information presented was just right** (*n* = 33; 77%), whereas others reported that the information **could have been more advanced** (*n* = 10; 23%).

# How valuable was the content of the webinars?

This evaluation also assessed the value of information shared in the KnowledgeConnect webinars. Most survey respondents found that the **value of information shared was very good** (*n* = 11; 26%) or **excellent** (*n* = 27; 63%). Similarly, the majority found the information presented to be **very useful** (*n* = 34; 79%). A smaller number of survey respondents reported that the webinars were only **somewhat useful** (*n* = 9; 21%).

The content of the webinars was also found to be relevant for participants. Most survey respondents **agreed** (*n* = 22; 51%) or **strongly agreed** (*n* = 17; 40%) that the webinars had **practical relevance to their work.** Some provided neutral responses to this question (*n* = 4; 9%).

**79%**  
of survey respondents found that the webinars provided very useful information.

## How effective was the design of the webinars?

To explore whether the design of the *KnowledgeConnect* webinars was effective, survey respondents were asked to indicate how well their professional development needs were met through their participation.

The large majority of survey respondents reported that the webinars successfully met some of their professional development needs ( $n = 40$ ; 95%), whereas a small number indicated that their development needs were not met ( $n = 2$ ; 5%).

When asked to describe how the webinars could have better met their professionals development

needs, survey participants provided the following suggestions:

- ☀ discuss more advanced topics ( $n = 2$ )
- ☀ having access to tools that can enhance interactivity during the webinars (i.e. headset or microphone) ( $n = 2$ )
- ☀ offering a variety of ways to interact during the webinars (i.e. voice communication, typing, participation in polls, etc.) ( $n = 1$ )
- ☀ provide participants with a set of resources at the end of each webinar for further learning ( $n = 1$ )

“I have difficulty typing and sometimes feel limited in my capacity to respond.”

## What is the reach of KnowledgeConnect?

This evaluation also assessed the reach of *KnowledgeConnect* by examining three main areas: (i) webinar participation numbers by region; (ii) sharing of information learned; and (iii) the number of times recorded webinars were viewed on the PAN website.

### Webinar Participation by Region

*KnowledgeConnect* reached a total of **131 webinar participants** from October 2012 to March 2013 (note that some of these participants were repeat attendees).

Of these webinar participants, the majority primarily work at the provincial level in BC ( $n = 52$ ; 40%) (see Figure 2). Given that only 6 of 43 PAN member organizations operate at the provincial level, this number seems somewhat high. However, it is important to

remember that participation in *KnowledgeConnect* is open to the general public, including PAN member organizations. In addition, participation from individuals primarily working within the Fraser ( $n = 4$ ; 3%) and Northern ( $n = 4$ ; 3%) regions was somewhat low.

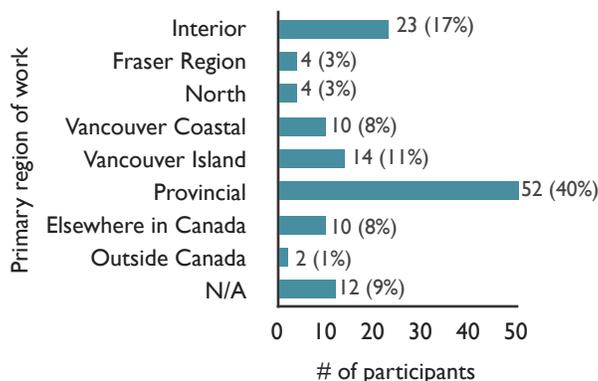
### Sharing Information Learned

The majority of survey respondents ( $n = 27$ ; 63%) reported that they **shared some of the information they learned** during the webinars with others, including colleagues ( $n = 15$ ), friends and family ( $n = 6$ ), and clients ( $n = 1$ ). Other respondents described how they plan to share the information they learned in the future ( $n = 2$ ).

### Viewing of Webinars on PAN Website

All *KnowledgeConnect* webinars are recorded and then posted on the PAN website for public viewing. Google Analytics data demonstrated that these **recorded webinars were played a total of 115 times between October 2012 and March 2013.**

Figure 2. *KnowledgeConnect* webinar participants by primary region of work ( $n = 131$ )



“This presentation will help me present to our board for future social media ideas and why they would be helpful.”

# What were the outcomes of participation?

This section of the report explores outcomes of participation in the *KnowledgeConnect* webinars, including *changes in participants' knowledge, skills and attitudes, and impacts on their work and practice.*

## Knowledge Change

Results from the survey demonstrate **improvements in respondents' knowledge of the webinar topics.** The majority of survey respondents either **agreed** ( $n = 29$ ; 67%) or **strongly agreed** ( $n = 11$ ; 26%) that the webinar increased their knowledge of the session's topic area. A small number of respondents provided a neutral response to this question ( $n = 3$ ; 7%).

Such shifts in knowledge were not found to be as strong among the interview respondents. When asked if the webinars impacted their knowledge of HIV/AIDS and related issues, half of the respondents reported a positive change ( $n = 5$ ; 50%). Other respondents reported that the webinars only supported their current knowledge ( $n = 3$ ; 30%) or did not impact their knowledge in any way ( $n = 2$ ; 20%).

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"I don't know if the webinar improved my knowledge...it certainly supports a lot of things that I have come to know over the years."  
.....  
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.....  
"If I was an absolute beginner, the information would have been useful for me. But as a person with experience, it wasn't..."  
.....  
.....

## Skills Development

Survey respondents were also asked to consider whether the **webinars helped them develop new skills.** Less than half of the respondents **agreed** ( $n = 14$ ; 33%) or **strongly agreed** ( $n = 6$ ; 14%) that the webinar provided them with new skills. More than half of the respondents ( $n = 22$ ; 51%) provided a neutral response to this question, whereas one respondent **disagreed** with the statement, "the webinar provided me with new skills". It is important to note that some *KnowledgeConnect* webinars did not aim to develop the skills of participants, but rather focused on sharing knowledge about a particular topic.

## Attitude Change

Interview respondents were also asked to consider whether their attitudes related to HIV/AIDS, hepatitis C, and/or HIV/HCV Co-infection changed in any way as a result of the webinars. **Almost all of the interview respondents ( $n = 9$ ; 90%) did not report changes in their attitudes.** One interview respondent did notice a shift in their attitude, noting that they developed an enhanced level of sensitivity when working with HIV positive clients as a result of the webinar.

To further explore changes in attitude, interview respondents were also asked to consider if their confidence to work in the sector shifted as a result of the webinars. The majority of interview respondents ( $n = 9$ ; 90%) did not notice any changes in their confidence. However, one respondent reported that they are more confident in speaking about a specific topic, as they developed a vocabulary around this issue by participating in the webinar.

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"I gained a vocabulary about a particular issue, so I have more confidence in speaking out about this."  
.....  
.....

## Impacts on Work and Practice

The majority of survey respondents either **agreed** ( $n = 23$ ; 53%) or **strongly agreed** ( $n = 12$ ; 28%) that they **plan to use some of the information they learned during the webinars in their practice.** However, most interviewees did not have any changes in their practice to report ( $n = 6$ ; 60%). Some interviewees ( $n = 4$ ; 40%) described shifts in their practice, including:

- increased use of social media ( $n = 2$ )
- improved interactions with patients ( $n = 1$ )
- increased use of evaluation strategies ( $n = 1$ )

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"It helped me to appreciate the role of social media, so I have introduced that into my courses."  
.....

"I now have a better sensitivity towards my HIV positive patients involved in trauma informed care."

## How valuable is KnowledgeConnect?

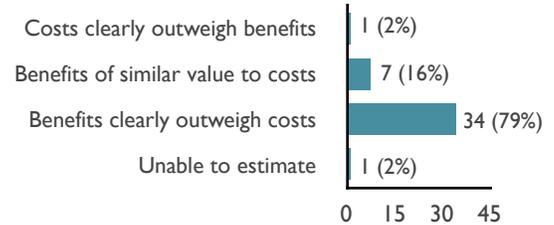
To explore the perceived value of participating in the KnowledgeConnect webinars, survey respondents were asked to weigh the costs versus benefits of their attendance. **The majority of survey respondents reported that the benefits outweighed the financial, time and opportunity costs of their participation in the webinars.** As seen in Figure 3, the majority of survey respondents ( $n = 34$ ; 79%) indicated that from their *personal perspectives*, the benefits of their participation clearly outweighed the costs. Most respondents ( $n = 32$ ; 74%) similarly weighed the costs versus benefits of participating in the webinars from their *organization's perspectives* (Figure 4).

When describing the benefits of participating in the KnowledgeConnect webinars, survey and interview respondents commonly noted the following:

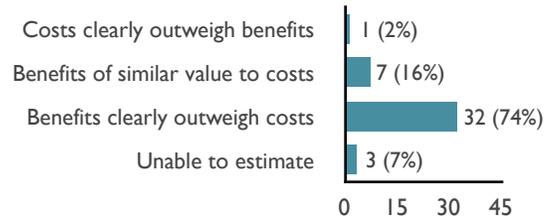
- ✓ money and time saved given that travel is not needed to attend the sessions ( $n = 9$ )
- ✓ the opportunity to remain up-to-date on new information, ideas and approaches ( $n = 5$ )
- ✓ minimal time commitment given the reasonable length of the webinars ( $n = 5$ )
- ✓ increased opportunity for people living in rural and remote areas to access information ( $n = 5$ )
- ✓ increased opportunity for people working in the sector to connect, engage and collaborate ( $n = 2$ )
- ✓ more convenient than in-person events ( $n = 2$ )

**“Huge value in receiving this information without time and expense of travel.”**

**Figure 3. Costs vs. benefits of webinar participation, from the perspective of individual participants ( $n = 43$ )**



**Figure 4. Costs vs. benefits of webinar participation, from the perspective of participants' organizations ( $n = 43$ )**



**“I live rurally and remotely...traveling to conferences in the mid-winter in the Cariboo is a real challenge. So it's great to be able to learn something new that i can apply to my work...”**

**“...there is a community of people in this area, and often times we maybe meet once a year, face-to-face. These webinars give us a chance to be around each other to collaborate and discuss issues.”**

## Would participants recommend KnowledgeConnect?

Survey respondents were asked to indicate how likely they are to recommend PAN's KnowledgeConnect webinars to a friend or colleague. **The large majority of respondents reported that they were likely to make this recommendation** ( $n = 40$ ; 93%), whereas a small number were only *somewhat likely* ( $n = 3$ ; 7%).

**93%**  
of survey respondents would likely recommend KnowledgeConnect to a friend or colleague

# How can PAN improve future webinars?

When asked how PAN can **improve future KnowledgeConnect webinars**, evaluation respondents provided the following suggestions for the design and delivery of the sessions:

- ☀ increase the interactivity of the webinars by offering audio and video communication options for the participants ( $n = 11$ )
- ☀ provide PowerPoint slides in advance of the webinars themselves ( $n = 3$ )
- ☀ cater webinars to specific groups of participants, such as practitioners versus academics, beginners versus intermediates, etc. ( $n = 3$ )
- ☀ work towards reducing technological issues ( $n = 3$ )
- ☀ provide links to additional learning materials at the end of each webinar ( $n = 2$ )
- ☀ prior to the webinar taking place, explain to participants what equipment they will require to participate fully (i.e. microphone, headset, etc.) ( $n = 2$ )
- ☀ send a reminder email with a link for the webinar the day before it takes place ( $n = 1$ )
- ☀ encourage presenters to use examples to illustrate concepts ( $n = 1$ )
- ☀ offer webinars on specific topics, as an hour is too short to cover broad issues ( $n = 1$ )
- ☀ for topics that are broad, consider offering a series of sequential webinars on that topic, along with homework or activities to conduct between the sessions ( $n = 1$ )
- ☀ work with other agencies who are presenting similar webinars (i.e. CATIE) to advertise in one common place ( $n = 1$ )

“More opportunities for input and exchange among the participants.”

“...highly academic material and really not of much interest to those in the trenches.”

Evaluation respondents also recommended **specific topics PAN should focus on in future KnowledgeConnect webinars**, including:

- ☀ topics that are trendy/being talked about in the media ( $n = 1$ )
- ☀ challenges and opportunities for small, community-based HIV/HCV organizations ( $n = 1$ )
- ☀ strategies for needle exchange in rural, remote communities ( $n = 1$ )
- ☀ the role of peer navigators ( $n = 1$ )
- ☀ examination of the successes, failures and opportunities in addressing HIV/AIDS in BC ( $n = 1$ )
- ☀ strategies for how AIDS Service Organizations can facilitate meaningful client involvement

.....

“I’m very interested in how ASOs can address the involvement of our clients. Given the fact that we’re social service agencies, and we’re not member driven organizations.”

.....

After describing how *KnowledgeConnect* can improve moving forward, some evaluation respondents provided **positive feedback about the initiative**:

- ☀ technological issues have lessened with each of the subsequent *KnowledgeConnect* webinars ( $n = 4$ )
- ☀ PAN has great opportunity to reach a large number of people at a low cost through the *KnowledgeConnect* webinars ( $n = 3$ )
- ☀ webinars provide opportunities for organizations and individuals to engage in something meaningful ( $n = 2$ )

.....

“I think PAN has great potential to reach a lot more people at a very low cost, which is great when we have less and less funds to be brought together.”

.....

.....

“Having opportunities to engage and participate is really important to us...these webinars make us feel like we are part of something.”

.....

# What are suggestions for next steps?

Overall this evaluation has demonstrated that **KnowledgeConnect is on track to achieving its goals and objectives.** The webinars' design and delivery were effective in improving the knowledge of participants on issues related to HIV/AIDS, hepatitis C, and HIV/HCV Co-infection. Small impacts were also observed on participants' attitudes and practices at work. Evaluation respondents found the webinars to be of high value, as they are a convenient way to learn new information and connect with colleagues in the sector. Based on the findings from this evaluation, considerations for next steps are listed below:

## 1) Continue offering KnowledgeConnect webinars

Results from this evaluation have demonstrated that *KnowledgeConnect* has been well received by past participants. PAN should continue to employ this cost-effective method for relaying new and useful information across the province.

## 2) Alter the design & delivery of the webinars

To improve the design and delivery of the webinars, PAN should consider the following suggestions:

- ☀ Improve the **interactivity** of the webinars so that participants have an opportunity to provide input, and are more engaged in the learning process. Suggestions for how to improve interaction include: (i) providing participants with audio and/or video communication; (ii) conducting activities during the webinars, such as case studies; and (iii) increasing the use of the webinar platforms' interactivity tools, such as polls, white board, etc.
- ☀ Aim to reduce technological challenges experienced during the webinars.
- ☀ Focus the target audience of the webinars so that information is more relevant to participants (i.e. webinars for beginners versus intermediates, frontline workers versus mid-level leaders, etc.)
- ☀ Continue to explore strategies for developing webinars that impact the attitudes and behaviours of participants.

## 3) Develop marketing strategies

It is suggested that PAN should develop some **marketing strategies to extend the reach of the KnowledgeConnect webinars.** For instance, the following strategies could be considered:

- ☑ know your target audience for each webinar and tailor your marketing strategies to reach that group
- ☑ consider using social media platforms such as Twitter to advertise upcoming and previously recorded webinars
- ☑ restructure webinar advertisements to focus on the benefits of participation for the attendees

Through *KnowledgeConnect*, PAN has an opportunity to reach individuals and organizations in rural and remote areas of BC who face geographic barriers in attending face-to-face training events. Given the low numbers of webinar participants from the North ( $n = 4$ ) and Fraser ( $n = 4$ ) regions noted in this evaluation, specific marketing strategies should be developed to better reach these areas. Such strategies could include leveraging other marketing resources already in place in these regions, such as Positive Living North's events page on their website. In addition, consider offering webinars on topics that will draw in individuals and organizations working in these regions.

## 4) Continue to assess needs

When designing future webinars, it is recommended that PAN **continues to assess the information and capacity building needs of its member organizations.** This information will ensure that future webinars are relevant and are responsive to participants' needs.

## 5) Continue to evaluate efforts

It is recommended that PAN should **continue to evaluate KnowledgeConnect's activities and outcomes moving forward.** As new ideas and strategies are implemented, their effectiveness should be assessed to inform strategic decisions in the future.