

2026

PRHC
Peterborough Regional
Health Centre



PRHC-TRENT UNIVERSITY COLLIDER EVENT

REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The inaugural Trent University–Peterborough Regional Health Centre (PRHC) Collider Event brought together more than 110 participants, including clinicians, researchers, and faculty, to explore opportunities for enhanced collaboration in healthcare research and innovation. The event demonstrated a strong collective commitment to deepening the partnership between the two institutions and to developing practical, scalable approaches to addressing complex health challenges in the region and beyond.

Discussions across fourteen mixed working groups revealed three central areas of

opportunity: the integration of student expertise into applied research, the translation of existing data into actionable insights, and the expansion of community-based research initiatives. While participants identified significant strengths across these domains, they also emphasized the need for improved coordination, greater institutional support, and more structured mechanisms to sustain collaboration.

The findings indicate that the Trent–PRHC partnership is well positioned to advance a more integrated and impactful research ecosystem, provided that key barriers related to capacity, access, and infrastructure are addressed.

EVENT OVERVIEW

The Collider Event was designed as a collaborative forum to foster dialogue between Trent University researchers and PRHC staff. Participants were organized into fourteen interdisciplinary tables and encouraged to engage in open discussions regarding the current state of collaboration and future opportunities. The format enabled participants to draw on both academic and clinical perspectives, generating insights grounded in practical experience as well as research expertise.

The event built on a history of collaboration between the two institutions while emphasizing the need to transition from informal and provisional partnerships toward more structured and sustainable models. Conversations reflected a shared recognition that closer integration between academic research and clinical practice has the potential to significantly enhance both knowledge generation and healthcare delivery.



KEY THEMES

Integrating Student Expertise into Research

A consistent theme across discussions was the significant, yet underutilized, potential of both undergraduate and graduate students to contribute to healthcare research and innovation. Participants highlighted the strong interest among researchers and clinicians to engage students in applied projects and emphasized the value of providing students with meaningful opportunities to work on real-world healthcare challenges.

Students are seen as valuable contributors who can support clinicians in addressing pressing issues while simultaneously gaining practical experience. Examples were provided demonstrating how student involvement can directly inform clinical practice, including projects such as equipment audits that contribute to operational improvements and patient safety outcomes.

Despite this enthusiasm, participants noted that existing mechanisms to connect students with research opportunities are fragmented and could benefit from improved coordination. There is a clear need for structured pathways that facilitate student engagement, including centralized platforms for project matching and the development of longer-term research initiatives that allow for continuity through rotating student involvement. Additionally, participants emphasized the importance of ensuring appropriate training, supervision, and institutional support to maximize the effectiveness and sustainability of student contributions.

Overall, the integration of student expertise represents a major opportunity to strengthen the partnership while contributing to workforce development and fostering the next generation of health researchers.

Potential Actions:

- 1 Establish a centralized student–research matching platform to connect clinicians and researchers with undergraduate and graduate students, including a curated list of priority healthcare projects and clear role expectations.
- 2 Develop structured student research pathways and program streams, such as multi-term placements or ongoing project models, to ensure continuity, skill development, and sustained contributions across rotating cohorts.
- 3 Implement standardized training and support frameworks that include onboarding, mentorship, and supervision guidelines to ensure students are well-prepared and their contributions are impactful, safe, and aligned with institutional priorities.

From Data to Insight

Participants identified data as one of PRHC’s most significant assets, noting the breadth and depth of available information, including clinical data, patient experience metrics, staff surveys, and operational data. The presence of centralized and secure data systems, along with established quality improvement processes, provides a strong foundation for evidence-informed decision-making.

However, it was widely acknowledged that the full potential of these data resources is not currently being realized. One of the primary challenges is the complexity and scale of available data, which can be difficult for researchers to navigate without adequate guidance and support. Participants also noted that hospital-based data alone offers an incomplete picture of healthcare delivery, particularly given the significant proportion of care that occurs in outpatient and community settings.

To address these challenges, participants emphasized the need for improved collaboration between PRHC staff and academic researchers to better align data analysis with clinical priorities.

There is also a need for clearer orientation processes to help researchers understand what data are available and how they can be accessed and used effectively. Strengthening partnerships with external data providers was identified as another important opportunity, particularly for addressing broader population health issues and regional trends.

The discussions underscored that while data availability is a key strength, its impact depends on the ability to translate information into actionable insights that inform policy, clinical practice, and system-level improvements.

Potential Actions:

- 1 Develop and mature researcher data navigation and access framework, including clear onboarding materials, data catalogs, and support services to help users understand available datasets and how to use them effectively.
- 2 Strengthen collaborative data partnerships between PRHC staff and academic researchers by establishing joint priority-setting processes and embedded analytics support aligned with clinical and operational needs.
- 3 Expand integration with external data sources, including community and regional datasets, to enable more comprehensive analyses and support population health insights beyond hospital-based care.

Community-Based Research

Community-based research emerged as another critical area of strength within the Trent–PRHC partnership. Participants highlighted the region’s well-established relationships with community organizations and emphasized the importance of these connections in addressing local health needs. The partnership’s ability to engage with diverse populations and to collaborate with organizations that have direct ties to communities was seen as a distinct advantage compared to larger, more centralized academic settings.

At the same time, there was strong agreement that greater efforts are needed to expand and formalize community engagement. Participants emphasized the importance of co-design approaches that actively involve patients and community members in identifying research priorities and shaping research processes. This includes not only consulting communities but also building their capacity to participate meaningfully in research initiatives.

Challenges in this area include limited coordination capacity, insufficient support for relationship-building, and the need for increased awareness of research opportunities within the community. Participants also noted the importance of integrating clinical and community perspectives to ensure that research findings are relevant, accessible, and impactful.

Overall, strengthening community-based research will be essential for ensuring that collaborative efforts are grounded in real-world needs and produce tangible benefits for the populations served.

Potential Actions:

- 1 Develop a formal community engagement strategy that establishes clear processes for partnering with community organizations, including dedicated coordination roles and resources to support relationship-building.
- 2 Implement structured co-design frameworks that actively involve patients and community members in setting research priorities, designing studies, and interpreting findings, alongside initiatives to build community research capacity.
- 3 Increase visibility and accessibility of research opportunities through targeted outreach, communication channels, and community-facing platforms to ensure broader awareness and participation across diverse populations.

PATHWAYS TO MATURITY AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The discussions at the Collider Event highlighted a shared vision for a more mature and integrated research partnership between Trent University and PRHC. Achieving this vision will require deliberate efforts to enhance transparency, improve access to resources, and build sustainable infrastructure for collaboration.

Participants identified the need for greater visibility into available data, expertise, and ongoing projects, as well as enhanced support for grant development and research coordination. The possibility of establishing a more formalized joint research structure was also raised as a means of embedding collaboration within institutional frameworks and ensuring long-term sustainability.

In addition, there is a clear opportunity to strengthen the integration of research within clinical environments, enabling continuous learning and improvement. By aligning academic and clinical priorities, the partnership can create

a more cohesive and responsive research ecosystem that addresses both immediate and long-term healthcare challenges.

The Trent–PRHC Collider Event demonstrated the considerable potential of an expanded and more structured partnership between the two institutions. The enthusiasm and engagement of participants reflect a strong foundation on which to build a collaborative research environment that integrates academic insight, clinical expertise, and community perspectives.

Realizing this potential will require targeted investments in coordination, capacity, and infrastructure, as well as a continued commitment to collaboration at all levels. With these elements in place, the Trent–PRHC partnership is well positioned to serve as a model for community-engaged, data-informed, and impact-driven healthcare research.



OUTCOMES

To build on the feedback from Trent University and PRHC’s first Collider event, a number of coordinated initiatives are being advanced to strengthen collaboration, improve visibility of opportunities, and support sustained engagement across the partnership.

First, establishing a formal community of practice that will bring together researchers, clinicians, and students to support ongoing knowledge exchange, collaboration, and shared learning.

This community is intended to serve as a foundation for sustained engagement and will be expanded over time to include community organizations and external partners, strengthening relationships and fostering a more connected and collaborative research environment.

In parallel, a shared and regularly updated listing of research opportunities is being developed to improve visibility and access across the partnership. This centralized resource will highlight ongoing and emerging projects, enabling students, researchers, and clinicians to easily identify opportunities for involvement and collaboration.

To further support collaboration, clear and formal pathways for researcher connection are being created beyond ad hoc networking opportunities. These pathways will include structured mechanisms for initiating partnerships, accessing expertise, and engaging across institutions, ensuring that collaboration becomes more consistent, accessible, and aligned with strategic priorities.





PRHC
Peterborough Regional
Health Centre

RESEARCH
OFFICE