

Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

Narrative for Health Care Organizations in Ontario

March 20, 2023



OVERVIEW

Unity Health Toronto, comprised of St. Joseph's Health Centre, St. Michael's Hospital and Providence Healthcare, works to advance the health of everyone in our urban communities and beyond. Our health network serves patients and residents across the full spectrum of care, spanning primary care, secondary community care, tertiary and quaternary care services to post-acute through rehabilitation, palliative care and long-term care. Our academic mission is demonstrated in our world-class research and education programs.

Our vision — The best care experiences. Created together —crosses all of our clinical and residential settings. We are committed to realizing this vision by creating a health system that is safe, effective, timely, efficient, patient-partnered, equitable and integrated. We recognize that improving care for our patients is only possible with engaged and healthy staff, physicians, learners and volunteers which is why we also strive to ensure that our people experience joy in work.

Over the past year we have maintained a focus on providing an excellent care experience despite continued challenges, including the pandemic, capacity pressures, increasing patient acuity and critical staff shortages. Unity Health Toronto completed its first ever Accreditation Survey as a network in October 2022 and was accredited with Exemplary Standing. Achieving Exemplary Standing is a testament to our people's outstanding care, collaboration and commitment to excellence.

Our Quality Improvement Plan for 2023-24 reflects key priorities aligned with Unity Health Toronto's overall strategic goals, and was

shaped by the experiences and wisdom of patients, residents, families, staff and our community. Additionally, our priorities have been informed by data such as our safety event reviews, patient relations and patient experience data, as well as key performance data including emergency department wait times and ALC rates.

In this narrative, which is meant to be read alongside our Workplan, we are highlighting some of the foundational elements of our multisector quality improvement plan for 2023-24, which includes indicators for both our hospital and the Houses of Providence, our long-term care facility. The indicators and targets we will focus on as an organization this year are included in the associated Workplan. We have also aligned these indicators to our Ontario Health Teams collaborative Quality Improvement Plan (cQIP) and our Family Health Team QIPs that will both be submitted separately.

To support improvements in each priority area, we will continue to focus on organizational capacity and capability to drive continuous improvement and implement structures and processes required at the program and local level. A key enabler will be the continued implementation of our Quality Management System (QMS) to streamline, integrate and sustain improvement across all levels of the organization.

The QMS is an assembly of components such as structures, responsibilities, processes and resources explicitly designed to monitor, assess and improve the care experience. Built on a foundation of purposeful patient and family partner engagement, the QMS consists of four domains addressing:

- What do we want to achieve as an organization?
- How are we doing?

- What are we doing about it?
- How are we sustaining improvements?

Implementing the QMS will support improvements in all dimensions of quality and will facilitate a systematic, data informed and evidence-based approach to improvement. It will allow for continuous testing, evaluation and the engagement of staff, provider, learner and patient and family partnership in improvements.

PATIENT/CLIENT/RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERING

At Unity Health Toronto, our commitment to patient and family partnered care is anchored in our vision – The best care experiences. Created together. As an organization, we work with our Patient and Family Partners (PFP) in the co-design of our annual quality priorities. This is accomplished through a variety of mechanisms, including the involvement of a PFP on our Board of Directors' Quality Committee, which approves quality priorities, the involvement of two PFPs on the Executive Quality Committee, which recommends quality priorities to the Board's Quality Committee, regular discussion with all 3 site-specific Patient and Family Councils, and engagement of PFPs on a variety of initiatives related to improving the quality of care.

Results from our care experience surveys are also analyzed and reviewed by PFPs, senior leaders and executives to inform the identification of our annual quality priorities. Currently, most care experience surveys are completed by phone, typically within 48 hours post discharge or clinic visit. Our average response rate of 49% is significantly higher than the provincial average for discharge

surveys, and we use these results to select priorities focused on creating the best care experiences. For example, the data from these surveys was a key reason that we included shared decision-making as a priority in our 2022-23 QIP. We are pleased to report that the proportion of patients who indicate that they “always” felt involved as much as they wanted in decisions about their care improved by over 2% in 2022-23 as compared to 2021-22. We also increased the number of unique activities in which Patient and Family Partners were involved.

For 2023-2024, we will continue building on these successes. The three site Patient and Family Councils are informed about the progress of these indicators and encouraged to provide regular input on initiatives to improve shared decision making.

As well, knowing that access to care is of utmost importance to patients and families, we continue to focus on wait times in our Emergency Departments with a view to improve access and flow throughout the organization. The Unity Health Toronto Access and Flow Task Force includes two PFPs. This task force meets bi-weekly to develop, implement, continually revise and monitor a plan to improve access to care for our patients, with a particular focus on acute care given the current pressures within the organization. The Houses of Providence is also committed to partnering with residents and families as this is fundamental to the overall care residents receive and their experience at the Houses. The Houses have processes in place to ensure residents and families are involved, heard and partnered with in care decisions. Annual satisfaction surveys are collected from residents and caregivers that are used to direct quality improvement initiatives. There is also a Resident and a Family Council to further ensure the voice and input from residents and families is regularly gathered and used to inform various strategies including identifying annual quality priorities.

Additional examples where the Houses are engaging and co-designing quality improvement initiatives with residents and families are listed below.

- Regular and ongoing updates are shared through various communication channels about what’s happening in the Houses with families so they feel connected.
- There is a process in place whereby families and residents can report concerns, complements and suggestions.
- A food committee meets monthly with representation from residents, family members and staff.
- The activation department has an on-line portal system called Activity Pro to monitor resident attendance and participation in programs. This helps to determine the level of social engagement of each resident and to connect with families. Reports are pulled from these systems to assist in determining resident needs and trends.

PROVIDER EXPERIENCE

Unity Health Toronto, like other hospitals in Ontario, is experiencing significant health human resource pressures as demonstrated through historically high vacancy rates and high levels of turnover. These vacancies are also increasingly difficult to fill due to a significant reduction in supply of skilled clinical talent in the labour market. Although Unity Health Toronto’s turnover and vacancy rates are slightly better than the Ontario hospital average, these pressures are significant, especially within our clinical areas where the shortage of Registered Nurses is being felt most acutely.

Operating with high vacancies is placing a significant strain on our workforce. Therefore, it is critical to our people that we do everything possible to attract new staff to join their teams. As an organization, we have attempted to achieve this through a number

of initiatives including; expanding our recruitment function, launching new brand and social media campaigns, routinely participating in specialized hiring events and launching incentives for referrals and new recruits. We are working to expand all of our pipelines for talent focused on students, developing internal staff, new graduates and internationally trained healthcare workers.

Even more important than our efforts to attract new talent, has been how we have worked to engage, retain and support the health and well-being of our current staff. We use a comprehensive listening strategy to support the identification of initiatives, programs and policies that are responsive to the needs of our people. This relies on continuous information gathering from engagement surveys, exit interviews, and through special programs to engage staff such as a quality workplace electronic suggestion box and rounding with employee advisory committees (e.g. professional practice committees). This rounding has supported the development of an array of programs that range from special compensation considerations to promote safe staffing, to recognition events for our people and employee mental health programming and benefits.

Engagement with leadership has also proven to be beneficial to identify challenges and opportunities from the management perspective. Our organization has utilized a variety of mediums including monthly CEO leadership lunches, which has led to specialized learning and supportive mechanisms targeted towards the betterment of our leaders. With the supportive input from our people, which we gather and analyze continuously, Unity Health Toronto has a comprehensive suite of strategies to support the attraction, retention and sustainment of talent that we need to

deliver quality patient care.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Workplace violence continues to be Unity Health Toronto's number one workplace safety priority. The reporting of workplace violence incidents occurs at least bi-annually with the Board of Directors through our human capital scorecard and also through our organization's Risk Registry. At the Board and Executive Team level, we report on workplace violence incidents, lost time incidents, lost time frequency and severity. Reporting to the Board also includes progress against a defined strategy to promote workplace violence prevention. This Workplace Violence Prevention Strategy is intended to reduce incidents of workplace violence, ensure strong education practices, minimize the severity of incidents when they occur and provide transparency through robust reporting and measurement. Unity Health Toronto relies on a strong workplace safety Internal Responsibility System to ensure that prevention and incident response related to workplace violence occurs effectively. Through this Internal Responsibility System, the overarching accountability of the Executive Team is distributed through the leadership hierarchy and is reinforced by high-functioning Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees at each of the hospital sites.

Workplace violence prevention is one of the key strategies aligned to the third pillar of our organization's People Strategy, which is called Protect Each Other. This People Strategy exists to ensure that strategies intended to attract, retain and support our talent are aligned, supportive and incorporated within the overall organizational strategic plan.

There are some key foundational projects underway this year as a part of the Workplace Violence Strategy. The first is an Alert for Behavioural Care project that will establish a common system for assessing and identifying patients at high risk of responsive behaviours; our most common source of workplace violence incidents. The second is a re-examination of how we provide training to our providers on de-escalation, responding to violent incidents and trauma-informed care practices. This review and redesign includes the engagement of point-of-care providers in the process of promoting their own safety from workplace violence incidents.

Policies and procedures are in place to ensure reporting, investigation and follow up exists for providers who experience a workplace violence incident. Providers can access support from their manager, the Workplace Health Safety and Wellness (WHSW) department and through Unity Health Toronto's Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) program, which offers 24/7 support. Additionally, mental health resources are available through our wellness teams, including wellness resources available on our organization's internal website. Enhanced mental health benefits are available through our benefit provider as well. In the event an incident causes a provider to lose time from work, the provider is paired with an Occupational Health Nurse and an Abilities Specialist from the WHSW department who work in partnership with the WSIB and provider to ensure an early and safe transition back into the workplace.

PATIENT SAFETY

At Unity Health Toronto our approach to patient safety involves four pillars:

1. Building and sustaining a culture of safety;
2. Reporting and reviewing;
3. Learning; and
4. Monitoring and prevention

All staff, physicians and learners are encouraged and supported in reporting patient safety incidents through our electronic incident reporting system. Leaders of clinical areas and the organization's patient safety team review all reported patient safety incidents. Any incidents considered to be potential critical incidents are reviewed on at a weekly meeting of the interprofessional Event Review Committee (ERC). The ERC determines the most appropriate level of review and reviews draft reports and action items post review.

Our critical incident review process is led by the patient safety team in collaboration with the clinical team. Input from the involved patient or substitute decision maker is sought by the patient relations team and this feedback informs the critical incident review. Post critical incident review, the findings and any action items are shared with patient or their substitute decision maker.

Further sharing of learnings from critical incident reviews occurs through a monthly Patient Safety Learnings publication. This publication highlight learnings and action items from incidents that have a broad application across the organization. On a monthly basis we also recognize a Good Catch Champion. The good catch champion is a staff member, physician or learner who identified a potential safety hazard and took action to prevent the hazard from reaching the patient. Learnings from these good catches and

recognizing the involved staff member are published across the organization. Additionally, all critical incident review findings and action items are shared with the Medical Advisory Council, site-level Medical Leader Councils and the Board Quality Committee.

To further enhance a safe and just culture, Unity Health Toronto has a Patient Safety Council with representation from a variety of disciplines and its three sites including the Houses of Providence. There are two Patient and Family Partners on this council to ensure the voice of patients and families informs our decision making. The mandate of the council is to oversee the annual patient safety strategy that supports a proactive and standardized approach to patient safety in order to reduce preventable patient harm across Unity Health Toronto. The council is responsible for reviewing findings and action items from patient safety system reviews for the purpose of identifying opportunities for shared learnings across programs and sites with a goal of improving the quality and safety of care at Unity Health Toronto. Actions to support this mandate include the approval of the monthly Patient Safety Learnings publication, review of critical incident findings and action items and monitoring of patient safety indicators.

The Accreditation Canada surveyors who visited Unity Health in October 2022 commended the organization on its overall approach to safety, noting the strength of the organization's patient safety team, a sophisticated approach, and an enthusiastic and committed Board. The surveyors also noted some opportunities for improvement, particularly with respect to ensuring a consistent approach across the organization in terms of how different clinical teams approach quality and safety. Advancing the implementation of the Quality Management System in 2023-24 is intended to help

achieve a higher level of consistency.

HEALTH EQUITY

At Unity Health Toronto, all three of our sites share the Sisters of St. Joseph's legacy of caring for people and communities who have been marginalized or disadvantaged. More than a century after each site was founded, this shared commitment to serving the underserved is one of the network's strengths and continues to be the focus of our mission and values, and now our strategy.

A key strategic goal for Unity Health is to provide the best care experience for people who are members of communities that are often marginalized. We are working towards being able to use sociodemographic data to accurately identify potential differences in care, and health outcomes, between ethno-racial groups and ultimately to be able to confirm that we are providing equitable care.

We continue to collect patients' health equity data as part of a region-wide endeavor. This data helps us to better understand the populations we serve, and identify gaps in our service to better meet our vision to provide high quality care for all. As an example, patient sociodemographic data collection has helped us to identify a gap in the use of our COVID-19 rehabilitation services by Black and Indigenous communities. We are now working with community partners to address this gap through engagement with key community partners. We also recognize the opportunity to improve health equity data quality and continue to work towards implementing equitable data governance principles that support self-determination and equitable access and use.

One of our goals for 2023-24 is to improve the breadth of sociodemographic data collection, response rates and the quality of the data. Given that we are in the process of shifting to a new method of data collection (i.e., combined collection of information about the cares experience and sociodemographics collection using Qualtrics), we anticipate that these goals will be achieved and that response rates will be substantially higher in 2023-24 than they have been in previous years. As such, we are not setting a specific completion target for 2023-24, but we will use in-year completion rates on a monthly or quarterly basis to assess progress and implement change strategies as needed.

While it is important we stratify care experiences and clinical measurement by relevant social categories, it's important to recognize that we don't need data to start improving health equity. Health equity can also be achieved by ensuring equitable experiences for patients in every setting and through special programs for patients who are members of marginalized communities that have unique needs.

An example of the former approach that we are pursuing is to improve access to interpretation services through the implementation of on demand, 24/7 services through multiple modalities to provide more timely and equitable access and to reduce patient safety risks resulting from language discordance. Example of the latter approach include clinics we have at both of our sites to provide support through pregnancy to reduce potential harms associated with substance use. We also plan to assess and revise our critical incident review process to explicitly include equity considerations in 2023-24.

To help address health equity at Unity Health Toronto, we provide

education and tools in support of our strategic focus around anti-racism, equity and social accountability. For the last three years we have delivered focused education on anti-racism and equity for leaders, and continue this year with a focus on inclusive leadership. During this time period we have also supported approximately 400 clinical and administrative staff to complete San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety training to improve individual knowledge and self-awareness, and enhance Indigenous cultural safety in our organization. More recently, we have hired a part-time Strategic Advisor for Indigenous Health, Wellness and Reconciliation, and in 2023-24 we will be hiring a full-time Director for Indigenous Health, Wellness and Reconciliation, and begin to build out a team of staff focused on Indigenous health, wellbeing and reconciliation.

We also aim to drive equity in quality improvement by implementing equity-specific training in our Quality Management System (QMS), education offerings and embedding equity directly within QI tools and improvement methods.

Changing the organizational culture will also entail changing the conversation through the creation and support of brave, respectful places for solution-driven engagement. The organization has created the Council for Anti-Racism, Equity and Social Accountability to achieve this purpose across our three sites and several departments have launched initiatives to create these spaces as well, with a focus on amplifying voices, experiences and opportunities from those with lived experience of marginalization.

Finally, we recognize that equitable care and health outcomes for our patients goes hand in hand with equity for our people. We have begun collecting sociodemographic data from staff and physicians,

and have identified key representation gaps among leaders and physicians, which we are aiming to address through the adoption of more equitable hiring practices, pipeline cultivation, and other strategies.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

In accordance with the requirements of the Excellent Care for All Act 2010, executive accountability for the overall performance of Unity Health Toronto is embedded in our management philosophy and practice. Our executives' compensation for 2023-24 is linked to performance in a graduated manner based on selected performance indicators (including QIP indicators).

CONTACT INFORMATION

For QIP inquiries, please contact:

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SIGN-OFF

It is recommended that the following individuals review and sign-off on your organization's Quality Improvement Plan (where applicable):

I have reviewed and approved our organization's Quality Improvement Plan on
March 7, 2023



Board Chair



Board Quality Committee Chair



Chief Executive Officer

Other leadership as appropriate