Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

Narrative for Health Care Organizations in Ontario

May 11, 2022
OVERVIEW

Our shared purpose at Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) is Exceptional patient care. Every time. This statement reflects the central role and aspiration of NHH. It speaks to why we exist and how we can make an impact in our community. Patients who come to NHH can expect to consistently receive care that is safe, effective, and efficient, with reasonable wait times achieved through a philosophy of person-centered care.

NHH is located approximately 100 kilometres east of Toronto, delivering a broad range of acute, post-acute, outpatient and diagnostic services.

The hospital serves a catchment area known as west Northumberland County. A mixed urban and rural population of approximately 70,000 residents, west Northumberland comprises the Town of Cobourg, the Municipality of Port Hope and the townships of Hamilton, Cramahe and Alnwick/Haldimand.

NHH employs approximately 800 people and relies on the additional support provided by physicians, midwives, and volunteers.

Our core values are integrity, quality, respect, teamwork, and compassion. These core values are embedded throughout our Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) journey. As in past years, our QIP is developed in consideration of past and current performance and is informed by feedback from our patients and families, staff, integrate risk management program, and best practices including Accreditation Canada Standards’ Required Organizational Practices. As such, our previously submitted QIP aligned with the guidelines and feedback provided by Health Quality Ontario, NRC Canada patient satisfaction survey results, and ALC rates; despite the COVID-19 pandemic these have been monitored year-over-year to ensure quality in the provision of care.

We are confident that NHH will achieve the priorities set out in our 2022-23 QIP given the dedication and commitment to excellence of our staff and physicians, the engagement of our Board and leadership and the support and collaboration of community partners. The dimensions of quality including safe, timely, effective and people centred with an underpinning of efficiency and equity remain the focus for NHH.

REFLECTIONS SINCE YOUR LAST QIP SUBMISSION

As we weather the second year of the pandemic, as with other healthcare organizations, NHH managed through multiple waves of COVID-19 resulting increased hospitalizations, ICU admissions, implementing, and ramping up/down various public health requirements and provincial Directives. Moreover, we were affected, like other institutions by COVID-19 outbreaks amongst patients and staff, requiring intense IPAC/OHS measures such as active screening of everyone entering the hospital, antigen/PCR testing, introduction of a mandatory vaccination policy, new circulating variants of concern and supply chain disruptions. A further noteworthy impact NHH experienced was, and continues to be, the pressures on Health Human Resources (HHR).
Reflecting on the last year has emphasized the need for a coordinated approach between institutions. NHH was among seven partner hospital organizations that introduced Epic at the end of 2021, providing patients across the Central East Region of Ontario with a single, unified digital health record. This effort represents the largest number of individual organizations across Ontario joining together to offer this safer and more seamless care experience. Implementation of Epic was a large project with many quality improvement benefits. This has allowed better continuity of care, care transitions and empowers patients by allowing them direct access to their health information. The Epic system enhances clinical quality and safety through evidence-based standardized care and best practices.

The implementation of Epic and NHH still being able to provide exceptional care, every time are two of our greatest achievements in the past year.

**PATIENT/CLIENT/RESIDENT PARTNERING AND RELATIONS**

NHH recognizes that successful patient engagement requires a long-term approach to ensure success as we work to develop and continually partner with patients and families. By enabling organizational level partnership, through a multitude of patient and family voices, NHH will continue to evolve in our engagement efforts. Presently, NHH engages patients/clients/residents in a variety of ways: discussion with our Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC), one-on-one interviews (manager rounding, quality review meetings), meetings with patients and family members (discharge support meetings), direct feedback to the Board Quality and Safety Committee a segment called “Through the Patient’s Eyes”, inclusion in continuous quality improvement initiatives/events (experienced-based co-design) and importantly, through our Quality and Practice Committees (QPCs). At NHH a Patient and Family Advisor is present on each our QPCS, seven in total:

- Emergency,
- Surgical Services,
- Medicine,
- Maternal/Child Care,
- Post-Acute Specialty Services,
- Cancer and Supportive Care
- Mental Health and Addiction Services

A PFAC advisor continues to support the Human Resources department, actively participating on selected interviews with leadership, front-line staff, and volunteers. Patient and Family Advisors also support current the current strategic planning process for 2022/23 and there are plans to have them further support the ongoing development of measures of quality improvement.

It is important to note that while the QIP is our public commitment to continuously improve quality of care and patient safety, it is supported by many operational plans and frameworks. These include the specific quality, practice, and safety initiatives for each NHH patient care program, but also: the NHH Quality and Safety
Framework; and the Professional Practice Framework; our Ethics Framework; the People Plan; the Infection Prevention and Control Framework. This QIP, together with the other plans and frameworks noted above, have been carefully aligned with the overarching NHH Strategic Plan, ensuring consistency of focus and effort.

**PROVIDER EXPERIENCE**

NHH’s staff, physicians, midwives, and volunteers, like other health care professionals across Canada, have experienced unprecedented workloads due to HHR pressures, the learning curve of new processes and procedures with the implementation of Epic, and absenteeism due to COVID exposures, infections, and work restrictions etc. This undoubtedly has contributed to increase in stress and burnout. Hearing the voices of our staff, physicians, and midwives remains a priority for the leadership of NHH. To this end, the NRC Canada Employee Engagement Survey was deployed in 2021. Following on from this, NHH undertook a “sticky note” forum and the results from the survey and the forum highlighted themes on areas where improvements could be made, as well as areas where NHH was exceeding expectations, and the sentiment was that we do not change.

Since then, NHH has implemented a People strategy and under this umbrella “Caring for the Carer” strategy. Under this strategy, there have been dedicated efforts and initiatives to provide more recognition, appreciation and mental health and wellbeing support to staff, physicians, and midwives. These efforts remain ongoing.

Furthermore, workplace violence prevention continues to be a strategic priority as safety remains a core dimension of our strategic plan. As such, workplace violence is reported to the Quality & Safety Committee of the Board, Joint Occupational Health, and Safety Committee, and QPCs. Guided by the Occupational Health and Safety Act, there will be continued efforts and an enhanced focus on ensuring the organization feels safe and secure when faced with workplace violence and harassment. Workplace violence is a growing concern for smaller communities and NHH is committed to taking steps to minimize risk and maximize preparedness.

**EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION**

The performance of each senior leader is measured against leadership competencies, annual goals including those relevant to achievement of corporate objectives, the QIP and a 360-degree component that solicits feedback from several sources.

NHH Board of Directors developed an Executive Compensation Plan to ensure the integrity of the Broader Public Sector Executive Compensation Act 2014, Regulation 187/17 and amended Regulation 304/16. The plan includes the development and implementation of an executive compensation framework and NHH will post the plan pending Ministry approval.
CONTACT INFORMATION
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Exceptional patient care. Every time.

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 June 1, 2022.

Pam Went
Board Chair

Starr Olsen
Board Quality Committee Chair

Susan Walsh
Chief Executive Officer

Other leadership as appropriate