

# Quality Improvement Plan 2022-2023



Health Sciences North  
Horizon Santé-Nord



Health Sciences North  
Research Institute

Institut de recherches  
d'Horizon Santé-Nord

## Overview

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Health Sciences North is the largest academic teaching hospital in Northern Ontario, affiliated with Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM). An integrated network of 14 sites in Greater Sudbury and with staff in 17 other locations across the North East, we provide a broad range of programs and specialized services. We are regional leaders for programs specializing in cardiac care, oncology, mental health, trauma and rehabilitation and continue to deliver the highest quality patient care. We pride ourselves on innovation and our continued investment in research, teaching and learning opportunities has resulted in HSN being ranked one of Canada's Top 40 research hospitals for the eighth consecutive year. Each and every member of our organization shapes who we are and contributes to our success. The purpose, values and key goals that drive our organization are established through feedback from our patients and families, frontline staff and in consultation with internal and external stakeholders and anchor our yearly Quality Improvement Plan development.

Over the past year, healthcare has continued to face unexpected pandemic-related challenges requiring an incredible amount of resilience and adaptation. The provision of quality patient care has remained our top priority in a rapidly changing and complex environment. Despite these challenges, 2021-22 proved successful for Health Sciences North. As part of ongoing pandemic response, the COVID-19 Assessment Centre and laboratory teams helped keep our communities safe by administering over 400,000 COVID-19 tests since the beginning of the pandemic.



*Staff at HSN's COVID-19 Assessment Centre.*

Partnership with Public Health Sudbury & Districts Sudbury resulted in the implementation of on-site COVID-19 vaccination clinics ensuring all eligible staff, volunteers, as well as many of our at-risk community members, were fully vaccinated. Furthermore, the reintroduction of a 24-bed Convalescent Care Program within our community addressed unique COVID related pressures by creating more capacity for our patients.

Looking ahead, Health Sciences North's 2022-23 Quality Improvement Plan continues to reflect our organizational purpose to provide quality health services, support learning and generate research that improves health outcomes for the people of Northern Ontario.

Our five key goals include:

- Be Patient and Family Focused
- Be Digitally Enabled
- Be Socially Accountable
- Support and Develop our People
- Strengthen our Academic and Research Impact

The planning and development of HSN's 2022-23 Quality Improvement Plan was supported by Leaders from across the organization through multiple stakeholder consultations, inclusive of our Patient and Family Advisory Council. Annual achievements, organizational priorities, previous Quality Improvement Plan performance and Ontario Health regulatory requirements were considered during consultation sessions. As a result of this engagement, the following indicators have been selected for the 2022-23 Quality Improvement Plan:

- **Contain Time to Inpatient Bed**
- **Workplace Violence Prevention**
- **Increased Surgical Activity**

In alignment with our **Strategic Goal to Be Patient and Family Focused** and to **Be Socially Accountable**, we remain committed to providing services that are safe, reliable, accessible (timely), efficient, effective and equitable. As such, Health Sciences North's 2022-23 Quality Improvement Plan will continue to focus efforts on the time it takes for a patient to be moved to an inpatient bed after admission through the Emergency Department. **The organizational target for this year will be to contain the Time to Inpatient Bed in the Emergency Department below 26 hours at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile.** The key strategy that will drive achievement of this target will be:

- Adoption and implementation of Alternative Level of Care Leading practices

In alignment with our **Strategic Goal to Support and Develop Our People**, we remain committed to providing a physically, psychologically and culturally safe environment. As such, Health Sciences North's 2022-23 Quality Improvement Plan will continue to actively address workplace violence incidents through prevention and response measures. **The organizational target for this year will be to pursue zero harm through prevention of workplace violence involving physical force and we will measure progress by the number of months where the number of workplace violence events involving physical force was fewer than the prior year.** The key strategy that will drive achievement of this target is:

- Utilization of an assessment tool to determine a patient's level of risk for violence and implementation of controls and supports based on the level of risk identified

In alignment with our **Strategic Goal to Be Patient and Family Focused**, we are committed to increasing surgical activity in an effort to provide patients with timely access to surgery. This is an issue of heightened importance due to the impacts of the pandemic on surgical wait lists. As such, Health Sciences North's 2022-23 Quality Improvement Plan will highlight organizational strategy aimed at increasing surgical activity above baseline. **The organizational target for this year will be to achieve 16, 500 cases, resulting an 8.5% improvement over the 3-yr average (2018-19 to 2020-21).** The key strategy that will drive achievement of this target is:

- Securing the necessary resources to support increased surgical activity

The indicators selected for 2022-23 represent priorities for our organization and focus on them will continue to support pandemic recovery efforts in alignment with HSN's continued commitment to improving the quality of care for our patients and community while supporting of our people. These priorities will be achieved through continuous engagement of staff, stakeholders, patients and families, by monitoring and sustaining our improvement work and by ensuring that our achievements continue to build a culture of continuous quality improvement.

# Reflections from HSN's 2021-2022 QIP

## Time to Inpatient Bed

One of the major achievements over the past year was collaborating with patients and families to create additional capacity to assist with bed pressures. The opening of a 20-bed Reactivation Care Unit has positively impacted our ability to serve older adults admitted with various geriatric syndromes. Providing staff with specialized geriatric training and developing processes to smoothly transfer patients from the Emergency Department has helped support early identification of functional decline when admitted.



*HSN celebrating the one year anniversary of our new Reactivation Care and Addictions Medicine Units.*

In early 2023, we plan to relocate these beds to the Reactivation Care Center, a new 52-bed unit at Health Sciences North that will service our older or geriatric patients. Similar success was seen with the opening of the 20-bed Addictions Medicine Unit focused on providing timely consultation and treatment support for individuals with addictions. Some of the early benefits observed within this unit include improved pathways for community follow-up after discharge along with facilitation of admissions directly from the Emergency Department and community which helps decrease the number of repeat visits. Additionally, when not fully used by our older adult patients and those needing addictions medicine support, these additional beds are

used to admit appropriate patients from elsewhere in the hospital helping to reduce overall time to an inpatient bed for our admitted patients.

Health Sciences North also took the opportunity to create standardized rounds, which see interdisciplinary healthcare professionals focus discussion on the individual needs of our patients. The adoption of an electronic visual tool to support discussions on estimated date of discharge and lengths of stay have also contributed to improved time to inpatient bed.

Finally, gaining an understanding of how older adults receive care that meets their needs was a focus this past year. Conducting the *Hospital Alternative Level of Care Leading Practices Self-Assessment* allowed for the identification of several process and practice gaps. We also examined internal processes to ensure patients received discharge information 48 hours prior to discharge and found opportunities to improve this practice. As this prioritized work continues into 2022-23, we will continue to improve collaboration with our physicians, staff and home and community partners and we work towards achieving our 2022-23 time to inpatient bed target.



## Workplace Violence Prevention

The prevalence of workplace violence is an ongoing issue facing all Ontario hospitals and is reported to have increased throughout the pandemic. Health Sciences North is committed to achieving zero harm in the workplace through the prevention of workplace violence.

The Workplace Violence Prevention Committee launched a robust communications plan to support the 2021-22 quality indicator target to reduce workplace violent incidents involving physical force to fewer than ten per month. Key messaging identified that it would take incremental steps each year to achieve HSN's ultimate goal of zero harm and that one incident of workplace violence is too many.

The highest impact action of the Workplace Violence Prevention Committee (the Committee) was the launch of the Behavioural Escalation Support Team (BEST). The introduction of BEST was made possible through a significant budget investment of \$400,000. The Committee established an improvement team with BEST members and key stakeholders, including patient and family advisors, to look at ways to incorporate BEST into the prevention, intervention and postvention of workplace violence incidents.

**Prevention:** A referral process was established and launched on two pilot units with higher incidents of workplace violence. The BEST was able to respond to staff referrals and provide significant support in de-escalating patient behaviours, performing violence risk assessments and implementing controls to prevent further incidents. BEST recognized that the majority of referrals were occurring when the patient was already in crisis and that violence risk assessments could occur earlier in the patient's healthcare journey in order to implement preventative measures sooner.

**Intervention:** BEST members attended all Code Whites (violent person emergency response) at our main location to provide support and build capability in our staff to understand their roles and responsibilities. The BEST recognized that there was a need to focus on developing healthcare worker de-escalation skills and additional staff training may be required.

**Postvention:** The improvement team designed a debrief tool to help facilitate conversation following a Code White. This tool was designed to ensure that staff have a clear understanding of why the event happened, to eliminate future similar events and to ensure that additional staff and patient support was provided. Although the newly developed tool was launched in the pilot areas, it was difficult to determine who would lead the debrief process and work on this continues.

Another key action of the Workplace Violence Prevention Committee was the implementation of a report out process for critical workplace violence events. Discussions have occurred and the Committee has gained deeper knowledge of system gaps. HSN will continue to grow capability with the reporting out process by supporting Directors with communicating back to staff and physicians, and will continue to consolidate common trends and risks with recommended countermeasures. Although we did not achieve our target this year, the Workplace Violence Prevention Committee has identified gaps in our processes and built a foundation for improvement work into the next fiscal year.

## Patient/Client/Resident Partnering and Relations



*Posters designed in collaboration with Patient and Family Advisors were hung in patient rooms to educate patients and families on what to expect during nursing shift change.*

In alignment with our organizational goal to be **Patient and Family Focused**, Health Sciences North continues to engage patients and families in an effort to increase satisfaction with communication, specifically between patients and their health care team. Involving patients and families in nursing handover at shift change remains one of our focussed areas of improvement work. Patients voiced the importance of ensuring bedside discussions respect privacy and highlight the key elements that support their safety. In response, posters designed in collaboration with Patient and Family Advisors were hung in patient

rooms to educate patients and families on what to expect during nursing shift change and practices such as introducing the incoming nurse and discussing their care at bedside and supporting patients in being a part of the process. Patient feedback included them feeling more secure in their care and better equipped to ask questions in order to obtain clarity, as required.

In alignment with our goal to be **Digitally Enabled**, Patient and Family Advisors continue to act as voting members of the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) Steering Committees, Physician Advisory Council and working groups. In these settings, they are able to share feedback and experiences which inform the design and build of the EMR. In April 2021, we launched a new app called Seamless MD, designed for patients undergoing total hip and knee replacement surgery. This user-friendly information and communication tool allows the surgical program to virtually connect and support patients at home before and after surgery. Patient and Family Advisor involvement was instrumental in the development of the Seamless MD app by providing feedback on a demo app, ensuring patient-friendly language, designing ways to introduce the tool to patients and assisting the committee in understanding the patient's journey.

In alignment with our goal to be **Socially Accountable**, Health Sciences North has proudly partnered with members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and Patient and Family Advisors as part of our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion. In celebration of 2021 Pride Week, Health Sciences North joined *Fierté Sudbury Pride* at the annual flag-raising event where individuals of



*Patient and Family Advisor, Darlyn Hansen along with HSN staff celebrate Pride Week with a flag raising event promoting inclusivity at HSN in July 2021.*

multiple representations shared their experiences. Pride t-shirts, stickers, and an infographic on the use of pronouns were distributed across the organization to remind patients and staff that Health Sciences North is a safe space for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. We also welcomed a guest speaker who provided their expertise on caring for Trans-people.

In alignment with our goal to **Support and Develop Our People**, The Workplace Violence Prevention Committee continues to benefit from active participation of dedicated Patient and Family Advisors. Early contribution to development of this year's Quality Improvement Plan resulted in refinement of language used within the plan and the identification of additional sources of potential threats. Feedback obtained from Patient and Family Advisors was instrumental in designing communication tools. Patient and Family Advisors have also been integral in the advancement of our Behavioural Escalation Support Team through sharing personal experiences and reminding us to always keep the patient and family at the forefront of safety planning. When critical safety events occur and are reported at the Workplace Violence Committee, input from Patient and Family Advisors offer a different and patient-centred perspective. Their involvement emphasizes the value of including the patient and families in discussions related to workplace violence prevention.

In alignment with our goal to strengthen our **Academic and Research Impact**, Health Sciences North and Health Sciences North Research Institute are active participants in the Canadian Remote Access Framework for Clinical Trials project designed to investigate and overcome barriers to bringing clinical trials to remote and rural patients. In April 2021, both organizations were selected as one of three locations in Canada to be named a "Proof of Concept" site for this work. Patient and Family Advisors actively participate in monthly committee meetings and have joined other Advisors across Canada in sharing experiences and expertise to help bring research to patients.

## Provider Experience

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*HSN Staff on the 6th floor of our South Tower in the Respiratory Care Unit.*

As noted in the introduction of this document, Health Sciences North continues to provide high-quality care in the midst of unprecedented pandemic-related challenges for our care teams. To do this our healthcare workers including our physicians have been required to demonstrate resiliency and adaptation as they remain focused on providing care to our patients while maintaining a safe and secure environment. In response to the challenges being faced we've recently conducted a Quality of Worklife Survey which will help assess and guide action planning over the coming year to respond to key factors highlighted by our teams. The impacts of COVID over the past two years include gaps in

health human resource availability, which has affected care models and resources and in the last two years, we have seen increased reliance on overtime and significant increases in orientation requirements indicating a shift to an increasingly junior workforce. A second challenge providers have faced has been overall well-being including workplace wellness. HSN has undertaken efforts to focus on these two areas during the pandemic and key strategies can be found below:

To address gaps in the workforce, recruitment and retention strategies have included:

- Commitments to doubling investments for education
- Providing opportunities for flexible hours and a compressed work week for non-union personnel
- Offering a Leadership development program for aspiring and existing leaders (both clinical and non-clinical)
- Offering a diverse number of programs and incentives to support nursing recruitment including Supervised Practice Experiences, a Community Commitment Program and competency validations to recognize internationally trained health professionals
- Nursing graduate guarantees and new graduate initiatives for employment inclusive of science graduates
- A clinical extern program for nursing and other allied health discipline students to support student learning and the development of clinical expertise through their active participation on interprofessional care teams in the provision of quality patient care

To promote wellness and overall provider well-being HSN has:

- Created a “Caring for You” intranet page for all Providers promoting wellness tools and resources
- Communicated information and provided linkages to focused mental health resources
- Provided access to free Psychological support
- Established weekly five minute wellness segments available for viewing by all staff
- Established supplemental support for on-call leaders to assist with pandemic-related response
- Advanced an interprofessional workplace violence prevention team to address and mitigate risks of workplace violence
- Sustained working from home arrangements where requested and appropriate

## Compensation

Annual performance goals will include the following three quality improvement targets for the period of April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023:

Quality Dimension	Indicator and Target
Timely	<b>Time to Inpatient Bed:</b> Contain the Time to Inpatient Bed in the Emergency Department below 26 hours at the 90th percentile each month.
Timely	<b>Increasing Surgical Activity</b> Increase surgical activity to 16,500 cases, achieving an 8.5% improvement over the 3-yr average (2018/19 – 2020/21).
Safety	<b>Workplace Violence:</b> Pursue zero harm through prevention of workplace violence involving physical force. We will measure progress by the number of months where



	the number of workplace violence events involving physical force was fewer than the prior year.
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## Signatures

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**Daniel Giroux**  
*Board Chair*



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**Lyse-Anne Papineau**  
*Quality Committee Chair*



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**Dominic Giroux**  
*President and Chief  
Executive Officer*