

Let's Make Healthy  
Change Happen.



## Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) Narrative for Health Care Organizations in Ontario



3/31/2016

This document is intended to provide health care organizations in Ontario with guidance as to how they can develop a Quality Improvement Plan. While much effort and care has gone into preparing this document, this document should not be relied on as legal advice and organizations should consult with their legal, governance and other relevant advisors as appropriate in preparing their quality improvement plans. Furthermore, organizations are free to design their own public quality improvement plans using alternative formats and contents, provided that they submit a version of their quality improvement plan to Health Quality Ontario (if required) in the format described herein.

[ontario.ca/excellentcare](http://ontario.ca/excellentcare)

## **Click here to enter text.Overview**

Quest Community Health Centre is committed to providing quality primary health care to residents of the Niagara Region who traditionally encounter barriers to accessing services. These include vulnerable populations such as people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless; individuals with mental health, addictions and concurrent disorders; isolated seniors, members of the LGBTQ community; children, youth and adults living in poverty; migrant agricultural workers and newcomers to Canada. We are governed by a Board of Directors consisting of a diverse group of leaders, professionals and community representatives. We have Advisory Committees in place to guide overall program development as well as development specific to certain programs (e.g. Points of Service, Volunteer Dental and Volunteer Chiropractor Programs). This includes our Client Advisory Committee that provides feedback on overall client needs as well as service delivery. Quest's Mission is to provide health services to individuals experiencing social economic and cultural barriers while promoting wellness, community and social justice. Through our Vision we see a healthy and engaged community that participates, collaborates, celebrates and grows. Our Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) continues to help us achieve our Mission and realize our Vision as we focus on supporting the province's Quality Agenda including improved access through measuring supply and demand, improving our clients experience with respect to getting an appointment the same day or next day; as well as obtaining client feedback on access. With respect to integrated service delivery we will continue to focus on the collaborative development of and participation in innovative service delivery models and the establishment of community based points of service along with communication protocols with other health service providers, including participation in Health Links for appropriate clients across Niagara Region. Client experience continues to guide our service delivery and program development; client experience and service responsiveness will be monitored and reviewed using client feedback and Advisory Committee input. Organizational culture will continue to be measured as well given that a positive quality minded culture is essential to providing excellent care for all. Lastly, monitored by our Quality Committee and Board of Directors, and using our Balanced Scorecard as a reference point, Quest continues to work towards the successful achievement of outcomes while focusing on the optimum use of resources.

## **QI Achievements From the Past Year**

This past year Quest CHC had continued to work rigorously on Quality Improvement from many perspectives.

Quest staff were actively engaged in our QIP through our Quality Team, consisting of an interdisciplinary group of staff members who met regularly during the past 12 months to identify additional quality focused activities and monitor existing and new quality initiatives. Quality was also an ongoing agenda item for Quest's Programs and Services Team meetings.

Cancer screening rates continue to improve as Quest has introduced several innovative strategies focused on changing client behaviours and increasing the likelihood clients will participate in screening. One of these included the "Breast/Chest Fest at Quest," where clients came for breakfast and participated in group mammograms with transportation included. Our performance indicators for Client Centred Services continue to be very high and we will work towards maintaining those levels of satisfaction among our clients.

Working collaboratively with the community, Quest's Urgent Service Access Team (USAT) has played a significant role in reducing ER visits and hospital admissions among individuals experiencing mental health, addictions and concurrent disorders, with a particular focus on individuals experiencing Opioid addiction. USAT is a unique Niagara based initiative that works with a full spectrum of community based agencies and Opioid treatment programs to ensure smooth transitions, continuity of care and firm client engagement together with faster access to interdisciplinary holistic services and reduced overall health care costs. Evidence has shown a reduction in ER visits that is directly linked to the coordinated development of an identification and referral process on the part of several participating organizations working with these individuals.

Migrant Agricultural Workers employed in Niagara play a significant role in our economy. They experience many issues related to chronic and infectious disease, sexual and reproductive health, mental health, and occupational and environmental health. Quest worked collaboratively with the Niagara Migrant Workers Interest Group a coalition of agencies across Niagara that included Quest and McMaster University's Family Medicine Program Residents and Medical Students to launch a Migrant Agricultural Program in Virgil (North East Niagara) in 2011. Funding to support the program was received in 2014. With funding from the LHIN to inform a service delivery model for the 2015 growing season, a pilot was launched in Vineland for Western Niagara. This was another collaborative initiative undertaken with support from community volunteers and Southridge Community Church. The Vineland program has proven very successful and will continue in 2016, with the additional funding from the HNHB LHIN. To demonstrate commitment to quality and value, a program evaluation was also launched in partnership with Wilfred Laurier University. Baseline data was collected in 2015 and the evaluation will continue in 2016.

Quest's interdisciplinary teams continue to work with LGBTQ clients across Niagara Region to address their primary care needs and other social determinants of health. Due to what are often complex and unique needs experienced by LGBTQ clients, support for navigation across a variety of service systems is critical. Clients are regularly linked to other agencies and schools, and vice versa. Quest facilitated four information sessions to support parents in becoming better advocates for LGBTQ youth this past year. Further to Quest's work with youth we have visited over 20 schools and made over 90 trips, resulting in over 130 visits with clients. With client responsiveness at our goal, Quest has also launched an LGBTQ survey and an LGBTQ Seniors Needs Assessment, in conjunction with other community agencies working with LGBTQ. The results are now being used to inform future planning and programming. The potential for a more fulsome LGTBQ Seniors Needs Assessment is also being explored

Also, as the third largest Trans health care provider in Canada, Quest has contributed significantly to setting the standard for care with respect to serving transgender individuals. Quest employs gender diverse staff including Dr. Carys Massarella, a Trans woman who works specifically with our transgender clients and advocates for trans-positive health care inside and outside Niagara. This has included appearances in documentaries such as Transforming Gender and Health Care 911, as well as participating in Ted Talks and CBC Radio's Metro Morning. Quest has been highlighted as a key player in working with Transgender people in each of these media appearances.

As a member of the Road to Empowerment Program, Quest continued working collaboratively with Bridges (Fort Erie and Port Colborne) and Niagara Falls CHCs to support our respective clients in developing a range of skills including

communication, problem solving, decision making and others to help ensure they can advocate for the services they require to holistically address their needs. This initiative was further developed and expanded in 2015/16.

Community Health and Well Being Week expanded its range of programming, community engagement, and outcomes achieved in 2015/16. A Health and Wellness booth at the neighbourhood Queenston Harvest Festival, Diabetes Foot Care Classes and Foot Exams, a Workshop on Managing White Coat Syndrome, a Healthy Cooking Class and a Community Lunch were among the activities that Quest provided during Community Health and Well Being Week, engaging over 125 participants in groups throughout the week.

Quest's annual BBQ for our clients and neighbourhood is an important contributor to community capacity building and engagement, each of which are essential in achieving health and well being. Over 600 attendees enjoyed the good food, good music and camaraderie this past summer, reinforcing their relationship with Quest as well as Quest's role in the community as a whole.

Quest has participated at a variety of planning and program development tables in 2015/16 to ensure that the clients we work with are well represented in the discussions as well as the outcomes. These have included participation on the Age Friendly Leadership Council and the subsequent development of the Niagara Aging Strategy and Action Plan; Quest is now a member of the Implementation Committee for that Plan. Quest also contributed to Niagara Connects third "Living in Niagara" Report, which provides an analysis of Niagara's progress in key areas linked to the social determinants of health and strategies for improvement. Quest has also been a participant on the Niagara Health Trust; launched and chaired by Niagara's Medical Officer of Health the Health Trust helps to generate a shared understanding of and response to health related issues/papers/initiatives, most recently the MOHLTC's "Patients First" Discussion Paper. To ensure that Quest CHC Client needs were taken into account, Quest's Board of Directors also prepared a response to "Patient's First," articulating the importance of service quality and service equity for marginalized populations together with the significant role played by CHCs in ensuring that quality and equity continue into the future for disadvantaged members of our community.

In order to examine "Value for Investment" in a health care landscape that is focused on effectiveness as well as efficiencies, CHCs across the HNHB LHIN embarked on an analysis of their top users of Primary Care and examined the Emergency Department (E.D.) Usage/Conditions "Best Managed Elsewhere"(BME). The Basic question was "would CHC Primary Care frequent users use the emergency department more appropriately due to wrap around services received at the CHCs?" Utilization data confirmed that the population was complex and experienced social challenges. Findings showed that the study population visited the E.D. 3.3 times over the course of one year. Findings also confirmed that 2.4% E.D. visits were for conditions "Best Managed Elsewhere" (BME) compared to 6.3% across the HNHB LHIN. The information generated through the study is regularly being used to further illustrate and reinforce that the CHC client population, despite their highly complex medical situations and socio-economic challenges, receive comprehensive and integrated services at the CHC, resulting in an appropriate use of the emergency department. Quest's Standardized ADG Morbidity Index (SAMI) Score of 2.02 (i.e. need for health care among Quest's clients is 102% higher than in the general Ontario population) contributes further to the significance of the "Value for Investment" findings.

## Integration & Continuity of Care

Quest CHC objectives related to integration and continuity of care for fiscal year 2016/17 include building on the work that we have accomplished to date to help maximize coordinated and responsive services for members of the community, including our Quest CHC clients.

Through Quest's service delivery model clients will be assigned to a primary health care team of interdisciplinary care providers who will meet twice weekly to discuss client care, and collaborate daily on shared care treatment plans. The intent is to maximize staff skill sets and increase access to primary care by ensuring maximization of scope of practice by all providers.

Quest will continue our work with the Niagara Health System (NHS), Canadian Mental Health Association of Niagara (CMHA-Niagara), and Community Addiction Services of Niagara (CASON) to facilitate the ongoing development and integration of our Urgent Service Access Team (USAT). We will continue to staff and monitor existing points of service within the Hospital System, Withdrawal Management and Methadone Clinics; provide services to other parts of the Niagara Region including Port Colborne and Welland; and monitor/creatively respond to requests for services beyond these communities. Facilitated through the USAT Project Management Committee, Quest is also assuming a lead role in a Working Group that is developing an Integrated Community Care Plan template that can be used by USAT as well as other community service providers and potentially incorporated into processes supportive of the transitioned Health Links in Niagara.

Linked to our goal of creating a full continuum of care we will continue to nurture partnerships with the Dental and Chiropractic sectors through the further development and implementation of our volunteer programs and linking with the Niagara Peninsula Dental Association as well as the Ontario Chiropractic Association. The results of an evaluation of Quest's Volunteer Chiropractor Program, developed and implemented jointly by the Ontario Chiropractic Association, the Niagara Chiropractic Association and Quest CHC, will be used to strengthen that program and recruit more volunteers, as well as pursue funding to maximize service delivery and quality of services.

Quest will continue to build on and learn from collaborative planning and service delivery that has taken place in 2015/16, regarding Migrant Agricultural Workers (MAW) in Niagara Region. Quest's initial work with Grand River CHC and Wilfred Laurier University to collect baseline data to support program evaluation will continue in 2016. Service expansion to Vineland has been confirmed as a result of last year's pilot and that program will be expanded this year to include farm visits with the workers and additional health promotion and community capacity building activities, as well as to further explore how best to maximize service access in Beamsville.

Quest CHC has been participating in activities related to the development and implementation of Health Links across Niagara Region, one of which was previously referenced. Quest will continue to meet with the HNHB LHIN along with the current Health Link Lead Organizations (the NHS, CCAC Niagara and Centre de Santé) to plan for the transition that will be taking place with respect to the Health Links Program and identify how Quest can best contribute to that transition in light of Quest's interdisciplinary model, the complex needs of the majority of clients with whom we work, and the clients experiencing mental health, addictions and concurrent disorders who are served by Quest and/or USAT.

Quest was also an active participant in the Working Group that developed a Mental Health and Addictions Charter for Niagara Region. We are now a member of a Working Group that is exploring strategies linked to accountability with respect to the implementation of that Charter and how monitoring can best take place.

As noted earlier, Quest provides services to a particularly complex set of clients. We have a SAMI score of 2.02. This is the highest score in our HNHB LHIN and one of the top three with respect to Ontario CHCs. The Institute for Clinical Evaluative Studies (ICES) has indicated their interest in working with the five or six CHCs who have similar scores, including Quest, to discuss the implications of working with clients with this level of complexity and best practices related to doing so.

## **Engagement of Leadership, Clinicians and Staff**

Quest CHCs Leadership and staff are engaged in Quest's Quality Improvement in a variety of ways.

Quality Improvement and best practices are/will be linked to the Terms of Reference for Committees of the Board as well as Working Groups. Also, our QIP is reviewed by the Board of Directors, prior to approval.

Quest's Strategic Plan(SP)/Balanced Scorecard has been updated. It now contains key result areas/targets that are linked to Quality; the Board will be informed re progress on these items as part of SP Reporting and the Executive Director's Performance Evaluation. Quest front line staff are also regularly engaged in operationalizing Quest's Strategic Plan, meeting to develop, monitor and update goals and objectives linked to key result areas/targets, including quality improvement.

Information and Data relevant/linked to the QIP will be presented in Monthly Executive Director Reports to the Board. Staff will also make regular presentations to the Board that will take into account directions contained in our QIP.

All Quest CHC staff play and will continue to play an active role in shaping and developing our QIP. Quest's Quality Team is interdisciplinary; a cross section of staff including a Physician, Nurse Practitioner, Registered Practical Nurse, Outreach Worker, Client Coordinator and Management are members of the Team that will now be meeting monthly to monitor quality initiatives linked to the Quest CHC QIP and introduce changes where/if appropriate.

All staff will also continue to be regularly engaged in tracking and measuring our Quality Improvement. Quest holds monthly meetings for programs and services staff as well as for the full staff team. These meetings will serve as a vehicle to discuss our progress with respect Quality Improvement Initiatives, review service delivery processes, identify, shape and design day to day change ideas, and bring items to the table that merit further attention both at an agency and a program level. Quest's interdisciplinary teams will continue to review their performance on each of the QIP objectives on a regular basis as well.

Organizational Culture is intimately linked to quality. Quest implements an organizational culture survey every two years to measure staff engagement and to inform strategies to continuously improve our culture and staff's satisfaction with their work experience here at Quest. A Staff Advisory Committee directs this

process. We are currently organizing the process and the Advisory Committee for the 2016 survey.

Staff training and development are an important component of an organization's culture and also have a direct relationship to Quality. Quest will continue to offer extensive development and learning opportunities for staff. These will take place both in house and externally, focusing on all facets of the Centre and the services we deliver. Providing staff with the knowledge and skills to do their job as well as opportunities to evolve individually and as teams are core features of Quest CHCs culture. Full external staff training days will be provided 3-4 times a year; staff will also participate in individual and group training throughout the year. Training and development goals together with goals linked to the QIP will continue to be included in performance reviews and individual goal setting. Finally Quest will continue to facilitate increased staff participation in quality focused activities such as Niagara's annual Quality Symposium and courses such as High-Impact Leadership: Achieving Quality and Performance Excellence in Community Health.

## **Patient/Resident/Client Engagement**

The Quest CHC Client Advisory Committee will continue to play an active role in providing feedback and direction with respect to all service delivery and development at Quest. In addition, Quest will research and explore strategies/best practices with respect to how we can maximize Client's experience on the Committee together with Quest's capacity to capitalize on this unique and valuable resource.

Client surveys, program evaluation, and needs assessments will be integrated into Quest's programs and operations over the coming year. Quest will regularly survey clients to obtain feedback on features of service delivery including access to care, continuity of care, and quality of service received, along with additional services from which clients feel they would benefit. Clients will be regularly reminded of Quest's client feedback form, starting at intake and on an ongoing basis after that. The form is an opportunity for clients to draw our attention to what is working well together with identifying processes/services that would merit from some attention/need improvement. Evaluation will continue to be incorporated into Quest CHC programs, new as well as ongoing, and the results will be used to inform program change/ continuation. Quest also conducts needs assessments with our client populations, most recently with LGBTQ Seniors. Discussions are already underway as to how to develop and implement a more comprehensive needs assessment for this growing population in Niagara.

Quest will actively involve clients in shaping quality service delivery through participation in program planning. The Pride Prom is one example where clients will continue to take an active role in planning as well as implementing the event; our Transcending Poverty project is a second example where clients develop and implement a training program that provides LGBTQ individuals with the support and skills to lend their lived experience to local organizations to promote safe and inclusive services.

As in previous years, Quest will continue to lead and participate in a variety of community capacity building initiatives focused on client engagement including Road to Empowerment and the Niagara Prosperity Initiative.

## Other

As Quest moves into 2016-17 we will continue to work collaboratively with our clients and community partners to build on our successes and implement the key result areas identified in our Strategic Plan. These will include working toward accreditation by integrating quality and best practices into all facets of our organization; strengthening client outcomes through increased client inclusion and client centred service delivery; bringing together innovative design and user's perspectives to develop our capital project as a distinctive centre for interdisciplinary service delivery; increasing effectiveness along with efficiencies by implementing an updated Electronic Medical Record system and, in consultation with our Finance Committee and Auditor, introducing additional financial/accounting practices consistent with the Canadian Accounting Standards for Not-for-Profit organizations; building a stronger, sustainable organization by developing a communications/marketing strategy that promotes the public's understanding of Quest as a unique, holistic model of health and wellbeing; and continuing to strengthen our organizational culture by engaging, training and supporting our employees in maximizing their roles and their scope of practice.

## 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

Board Chair Larry Maxwell  
Clinician Lead Jenny Stranges  
Executive Director / Administrative Lead Coletta McGrath

CEO/Executive Director  (signature)

Board Chair  (signature)

Program Director  (signature)



