



2024/25

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Narrative



Being a patient partner has been an incredibly rewarding experience. I've had the privilege of collaborating with various working groups, where my voice as a patient is heard. I engage in planning sessions for hospital-wide projects, provide feedback on organizational communications, and review departmental processes that impact patient experience. I am part of Oak Valley Health's team, collectively working towards enhancing patient care. I believe this PEP integration is what sets Oak Valley Health apart as an innovator and leader in quality patient-centered care.

A highlight from 2023 is my work on the Halo Telemonitoring project, to mitigate fall risk for inpatients. I provided feedback on the patient consent protocol to help ensure all patients feel empowered to make informed decisions about their course of care. I am proud to be part of Oak Valley Health achieving accreditation with exemplary standing, and I am excited to continue working alongside this organization.

-Bryn Evans
Patient Experience Participant Program



OVERVIEW

Oak Valley Health is happy to share its Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) narrative. This narrative gives a high-level overview of our organization's reflections of the past year, and outlines the key priorities in quality improvement for the upcoming fiscal year 2024/25.

At Oak Valley Health, we are proud to be one of Ontario's leading community health organizations. Across our two hospitals, Markham Stouffville Hospital (MSH) and Uxbridge Hospital (UXB), as well as our Reactivation Care Centre (RCC), we provide, patient-centred, high-quality care to over than 468,000 patients each year. We offer diagnostic and emergency services and deliver clinical programs in acute care medicine and surgery, childbirth and children's services and addictions and mental health. We are proud to be part of the Eastern York Region North Durham Ontario Health Team (EYRND OHT).

Through collaborative efforts, we will encourage a safer patient-led health care service, making it easier for patients and families to navigate the health care system. Our 586 professional staff (including physicians, midwives and dentists), over 3,000 staff and over 930 volunteers are proud to serve patients and families, leading with an honoured to care mindset and a focus on delivering an extraordinary patient experience to the residents of Markham, Whitchurch-Stouffville, Uxbridge, and beyond.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview **4**

Reflections from Past Year **5**

Patient & Family Partnering and Relations **6**

Provider Experience **8**

Patient Safety **9**

Equity and Indigenous Health **10**

Access & Flow **11**

Population Health Approach **12**

Our 2024/25 QIP Indicators **13**

Our Focus and Initiatives **14**

Executive Compensation **15**

REFLECTIONS FROM THE PAST YEAR

As we embark on our 2024/25 QIP, dedicated to enhancing the quality of care for our community, we are also celebrating several accomplishments from the previous year. These achievements include:

Partnerships with renowned programs:

- In November 2023, the Oak Valley Health Cancer Centre joined the Princess Margaret Cancer Care Network, enabling us to provide expertise and access to a range of cancer services, clinical trials, and research to the Markham, Stouffville, and neighboring communities.
- Oak Valley Health established a new Paediatric Complex Care Clinic for Kids in collaboration with The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) and Complex Care for Kids Ontario, offering care closer to home for children with complex needs and their families.
- Partnered with the University Health Network to implement Halo, a patient tele-monitoring program on various units to augment fall prevention strategies by providing continuous observation for patients at risk of falls and ensuring their safety during hospital stays.

Local, national, and international award recognition:

- Forbes Canada's Best Employers for Diversity 2023
- Designation as a partner in the American College of Surgeons National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (ACS NSQIP®)
- The International Society for Pediatric and Adolescent Diabetes QI award for a project focusing on physical activity education for patients with type 1 diabetes
- Received a leading practice designation from the Health Standards Organization, acknowledging our Accreditation process.
- Recognized for high performance on the Central Regional Cancer Performance Scorecard in 2022/23, achieving excellence in meeting various provincial targets.

PATIENT & FAMILY PARTNERING AND RELATIONS

At Oak Valley Health, we take great pride in our commitment to providing safe, high-quality, and patient-centered care. Our goal is to deliver an extraordinary patient experience by respecting the unique needs, preferences, and values of our patients and their families. We understand the significance of positive patient experiences and their impact on better health outcomes, increased job satisfaction, and reduced burnout among healthcare providers. Therefore, we prioritize people-centered care, focusing on the human aspect of healthcare services involving both care recipients and providers.



This year, we strengthened our commitment to patient experience by defining what makes an extraordinary patient experience for our patients, families, and community. We engaged with key stakeholders and conducted iterative co-design sessions with our patient advisors in our Patient Experience Participant (PEP) Program, to better understand and evaluate the essential functional and relational components of care that matter most to our patients and families. Our patient partners emphasized that interpersonal interactions, such as feeling supported, heard, well-informed, treated with dignity and respect, and experiencing kindness and empathy, had the most profound impact during care encounters. In October 2023, Oak Valley Health defined our north star vision for patient experience.

“At Oak Valley Health, an extraordinary patient experience means that what matters to patients, families and caregivers is truly valued. There is a commitment to consistent, safe, and high-quality care. Everyone provides collaborative care, delivered with empathy, compassion, mutual respect, and clear communication.”

As an organization, we actively seek continuous feedback by engaging with patients and families to enhance our understanding and improve patients' care. This involves collecting and analyzing data from standardized Patient-Reported Experience Measures (PREMs) through our discharge call-back program and Patient Relations process. We share emerging themes and trends, across all levels of the organization to recognize achievements and drive meaningful change. In 2024, we will introduce a new real-time experience platform using Qualtrics XM, which we hope will enabling us to connect with more patients and has access to more real-time feedback.

Additionally, our commitment to improving the patient experience was reinforced this year by setting the stage for the establishment of a formal Office of Patient Experience (OPE), set to launch in FY 2024/25.



Pictured above: CEO Jo-anne Marr, Office of Patient Experience staff and Patient Experience Participant (PEP) members celebrate a year of growth together in November 2023.

PROVIDER EXPERIENCE

All hospitals in the country are facing a health care human resource crisis. Like most hospitals, Oak Valley Health has a high vacancy rate, many of which are nurse positions. As part of Oak Valley Health's People Plan 2023-2026, we pledged to put a focus on our people prioritizing the recruitment, retention, and well-being of our health care workers. To support the recruitment of hard to fill positions, such as RNs, we launched a marketing campaign to raise awareness to encourage potential candidates to apply to Oak Valley Health as well as raise awareness of our organization. The Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDI&B) Plan Extension 2022-2024 is highlighted in the People Plan and is an important piece in the recruitment, development and retention of diverse talent.

In May of this year, we launched our staff engagement survey: Because You Matter 2023. Our staff are our greatest asset and we are committed to listening and acting on their feedback. Overall, the survey showed some great results and our top scores are consistent with the feedback we received in 2020. Staff are proud to work here and they have a sense of purpose and belonging. While we have much more work to do to create a truly inclusive environment, the majority of our staff feel that they can bring their whole selves to work, and feel supported by their colleagues. This speaks directly to the work of our Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, & Belonging Plan, as well as to our honoured to care culture.

We look forward to continuing to move forward with our People Plan Initiatives to put in place the right tactics, programs, investments, and supports to ensure that Oak Valley Health is an employer of choice



PATIENT SAFETY

Oak Valley Health began its journey toward high reliability in 2020. Our previous Quality and Safety plan (2020-2023) set the direction for achieving continuous improvement to ensure the delivery of safe, clinically effective care, and an extraordinary patient experience. Since the development of the plan (2020-23), the organization was awarded Exemplary Standing by Accreditation in September 2022 and experienced the pressures of a global pandemic. Building on those strengths and successes we are committed to reducing preventable harm by establishing a culture of high reliability (HRO). This will be accomplished by implementing HRO safety science principles and practices that foster a safe, reliable, continuous improvement, and learning environment, supported by committed leadership.

Our new Quality & Safety Plan (2024-2027) describes a vision for the delivery of safe and high-quality care and is an essential component of Oak Valley Health's (2024-2029) Strategic Plan. The plan represents a key step in our ongoing journey to become a preeminent health system known for healthcare delivery, education, research, and innovation. The plan elaborates on crucial aspects of the organization's strategic directions and emphasizes specific quality goals that are vital for achieving healthcare excellence. The plan establishes three priorities for quality: ensuring safe care delivery, effective treatment outcomes, and patient-centered care. These priorities reflect Oak Valley Health's commitment to ensuring the utmost safety for patients and our workforce, providing evidence-based, outcome-driven care and placing patients at the center of their healthcare experience. This plan will act as a framework for reviewing investments and research in safety and quality.

Over the next three years, Oak Valley Health will accelerate its efforts to improve patient safety by setting an explicit goal of reducing preventable harm. We are committed to enhancing safety by aligning the entire organization around a shared safety and reliability agenda. This alignment will drive consistent performance, improve safety for all, and have positive effects on quality, engagement, patient experience, and outcomes.

EQUITY AND INDIGENOUS HEALTH

Oak Valley Health serves some of Ontario's most diverse communities with core principles of fostering a safe and inclusive environment. Our Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (EDI&B) Plan Extension (2022-2024) was created to reduce disparities in staff and patient experiences, leading to improved wellness and health outcomes.

During the past year, specific initiatives included in-person education sessions with local Indigenous artists, storytellers, and educators on significant observant dates. Efforts were made to build and strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities. Collaborative efforts were made with the Indigenous Action Committee of York Region, Bear Paw Originals, and Woodland Culture Centre to support shared initiatives. Oak Valley Health actively participated in the Chippewas of Georgina Island Health Fair 2023, showcasing a strong commitment to community health initiatives through active engagement and support. All staff had the opportunity to participate in the San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety training, which aimed to promote cultural understanding and sensitivity.

To improve EDI&B knowledge and encourage reflection and action, corporate education on EDI&B fundamentals was expanded. Oak Valley Health expanded its speaker series and organized various education events with well-known and local experts, such as Hamlin Grange, recognized for his pioneering work in diversity, inclusion, and social justice with the Order of Canada appointment in 2022. The hospital supports employee resource groups like the Network of Black Employees and 2SLGBTQI+ team members to acknowledge the excellence, resilience, and diverse experiences of our staff.

To promote health equity, Oak Valley Health introduced 24/7 remote video interpretation in over 240 languages to promote patient-centered care. The new service enabled almost 3000 patient encounters in the first year, along with about 2100 encounters supported by on-site Cantonese and Mandarin interpreters, lessening cultural barriers and health inequities in our communities.

ACCESS AND FLOW

The healthcare system in Ontario is experiencing significant pressure, resulting in local surge and capacity challenges at all acute care facilities, including Oak Valley Health. The Emergency Department (ED) at the Markham site has become the ninth largest and the fourth fastest-growing in the province, with an 11% increase in visits over the past year. This surge has increased the demand for inpatient beds and emergency services by 18%, surpassing our current capacity. Also, like many communities across Ontario, we are facing a crisis with patients not having timely access to primary care and as a result this has compounded the surge in patient visits to the ED, leading to longer wait times and increased strain on staff resources.

In 2023/24, Oak Valley Health made process improvements to enhance patient flow by identifying bottlenecks and opportunities to improve efficiencies, effectiveness, and eliminate waste. One example of a process improvement includes the implementation of a triage nurse navigator to ensure timely triage assessments following CTAS guidelines and escalation of care for patients at risk of clinical deterioration. We also identified that 90% of patients who visit our ED are assessed and discharged. Because of this, a main focus this year will be to decrease the ED length of stay for non-admitted acutely ill patients by improving flow within the ED in addition to maintaining and enhancing opportunities in the time to inpatient bed metric where the focus will be to optimize discharge processes across inpatient medicine units. This metric is complex and requires collaboration among various stakeholders, such as, nursing, administration, and providers. It also involves incorporating feedback from patients, families, and system partners to ensure a holistic approach to improving patient care.

POPULATION HEALTH APPROACH

Oak Valley Health collaborates with the Eastern York Region North Durham (EYRND) Ontario Health Team to take a proactive approach in meeting the healthcare needs of its full attributed population. This collaboration involves utilizing population health data for system planning, such as forecasting healthcare needs, managing population health by identifying at-risk groups, and aligning with Ontario Health (OH) priorities like reducing hospital readmissions. The commitment to data-driven decision-making is evident, with the Ontario Health Teams (OHT) investing in a skilled data analyst/systems planner to guide decisions impacting the community's overall health, ensuring evidence-based strategies and efficient resource allocation.

The focus areas include cancer screening, which aims to detect and treat cancer early, Mental Health and Addictions to support individuals with mental health challenges, Alternative Levels of Care to optimize healthcare resources, and chronic disease management pathways for effective long-term care. This partnership supports Oak Valley Health in analyzing, interpreting, and visualizing population health data to derive valuable insights and patterns for informed strategic decisions, ultimately enhancing healthcare services and outcomes for the community. By adapting to evolving demands and community requirements, the data-driven approach ensures that resources are allocated effectively based on needs, facilitates the development of tailored programs, and enables efficient service delivery across Oak Valley Health and OHT boundaries. This method also aids in identifying current healthcare needs and planning for future challenges, guiding proactive decision-making and strategic planning to address emerging healthcare demands. Through continuous monitoring of trends, outcome evaluation, and assessing intervention impact at a population health level, Oak Valley Health and the OHT can proactively tackle emerging health issues and implement tailored strategies to enhance overall population health outcomes.

OUR 2024/25 QIP INDICATORS

**EMERGENCY
DEPARTMENT LENGTH
OF STAY**



**TIME TO INPATIENT
BED**



**WORKPLACE
VIOLENCE**



**FALLS RESULTING
IN HARM**



**EQUITY, DIVERSITY
& INCLUSION
EDUCATION**



**PATIENT
COMMUNICATION**



OUR FOCUS AND INITIATIVES

As outlined in the Excellent Care for All Act (ECFAA), Oak Valley Health develops and publicly posts our QIP to demonstrate our quality commitments to our patients, staff, and community, on an annual basis. In consultation with our staff, professional staff, PEPs, volunteers, students, and community members, we have identified six areas of focus for the 2024/25 QIP:

01

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT LENGTH OF STAY

Reducing the time from triage in the Emergency Department to when a patient departs is crucial for enhancing patient experience and outcomes. Our objective for the next year is to find ways to decrease this time for our patients.

02

TIME TO INPATIENT BED

Our goal for the upcoming year is to streamline discharge processes across our medicine units to ensure that admitted patients who no longer require emergency care are transferred to a nursing unit as soon as possible.

03

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE RESULTING IN LOST TIME

To reduce injury from workplace violence incidents we will implement comprehensive training that supports staff safety and well-being, and establish clear protocols for preventing and addressing incidents of workplace violence and minimizing injury.

04

FALLS RESULTING IN HARM

Falls in hospitals can lead to serious injuries and complications, prolong recovery, and impact patient outcomes. Our focus for the upcoming year is to reduce falls resulting in harm for our patients.

05

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION & ANTIRACISM EDUCATION

To promote an inclusive workplace and minimize disparities in staff and patient experiences, all of our executive and management staff will complete equity, diversity, inclusion, and antiracism education.

06

PATIENT COMMUNICATION

Enhancing the patient experience involves improving communication between patients and providers. This year our focus will be to expand empathy communication training to staff across our hospital sites.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

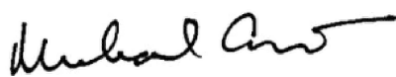
ECFAA requires that the compensation of the CEO and other executives be linked to the achievements of performance improvement targets laid out in the QIP. The purpose of performance-based compensation related to ECFAA is to drive accountability for the delivery of the QIP, enhance transparency, and motivate executives.

The following indicators were selected to be linked to executive compensation as they reflect our commitment to providing safe, high quality, patient-centred care for our patients:

- **Emergency Department length of stay | Target: ≤ 5.8**
- **Time to inpatient bed | Target: ≤ 27.5**
- **Workplace violence resulting in lost time | Target: 1.17**
- **Falls resulting in harm | Target: ≤ 0.63**
- **Equity, diversity, inclusion and antiracism education | Target: 100%**
- **Patient communication - Inpatients | Target: $\geq 90\%$**
- **Patient communication - Emergency Department | Target: $\geq 86\%$**

The executives who will participate in the QIP executive compensation program for 2023/24 are:

President and Chief Executive Officer
Vice President and Chief Operating Officer
Vice President, People & CHRO
Vice President, Clinical Programs and Chief Nursing Executive
Vice President & Chief Financial Officer
Chief Communications, Public Affairs & Patient Experience Officer
Chief Community Engagement Officer & Executive Lead, Corp Strategy
Chief Information & Privacy Officer



Mike Arnew
Board Chair



Nancy Sanders
*Board Quality & Safety
Committee Chair*



Jo-Anne Marr
President and CEO



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