

inspiring

ANNUAL REVIEW

improvement

The Health Quality Council of Alberta (HQCA) is a provincial agency that pursues opportunities to improve patient safety and health service quality for Albertans.

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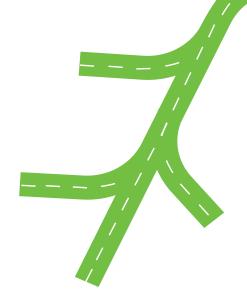
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who we are

The HQCA's mandate spans the spectrum of publicly funded healthcare in Alberta, as well as the geography of the entire province. We achieve our mandate by:

- measuring, monitoring and assessing the quality and safety of Alberta's healthcare system
- identifying effective practices and assisting in their implementation
- surveying Albertans about their experiences and satisfaction with the health system

Our success is dependent on effective collaboration with health system stakeholders such as patients and their families, Alberta Health, health service delivery organizations including Alberta Health Services (AHS), health professionals, and academia.



vision

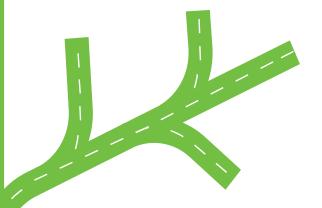
Excellence in health system quality and patient safety for Albertans

mission

With our patient and health system partners, continue to improve the quality of Alberta's health system through innovative approaches to measuring and monitoring of performance, identifying opportunities for improvement and supporting implementation of improvement initiatives.

values

- Hold patients and the population at the forefront
- Be informed by evidence
- Apply an ethical lens
- Analyze objectively
- Inform transparently
- Engage collaboratively





ceo message

Andrew Neuner, CEO

The HQCA is in a unique position in our province. We have the authority and ability to view the healthcare system objectively and transparently to improve health service quality and patient safety for all Albertans.

We realize the road to improvement can take more than one path. Healthcare is delivered by a complex and interconnected set of organizations, services, providers, and most importantly, patients. We engage collaboratively with our stakeholders and we have the relentless vision to work with them to navigate possibilities for improvement.

In 2017-18, the HQCA's work informed, prompted, and celebrated many improvement activities. This year:

- We made significant progress in our measurement mandate as we continued to expand and improve the primary healthcare panel reports program so physicians and primary care networks have relevant, useful data to inform practice improvement.
- We refined the success of *FOCUS on Emergency Departments*, our flagship online tool providing information about patient experience and outcomes, and started the next stage of this public reporting tool with the development of *FOCUS on Primary Healthcare*.
- We continued our patient-focused measurement in supportive living, long-term care, and primary care this year to bring the voice of those who interact with our healthcare system to those who deliver care to drive actionable improvement that enhances the quality of healthcare for Albertans.

- We continued to build capacity across the province to support healthcare teams to work more effectively, by preparing for the launch of an inaugural regional training centre in Canada, the TeamSTEPPS Canada™ Master Trainer program.
- We celebrated amazing work underway in the province making a positive impact on the patient experience, with our second Patient Experience Awards.

More and more, the HQCA is working to establish itself in Alberta's healthcare system as a trusted resource for reliable, timely, objective information to help our stakeholders identify areas of success, and focus on where there are opportunities for improvement. The HQCA is continually finding ways to assist our health system partners to improve patient safety and health service quality.

The high-performing team at the HQCA makes it possible to present this comprehensive report documenting the past year's activities. This team, with the support of our Board of Directors and our Patient and Family Advisory Committee, shares a collective passion for healthcare improvement. We are proud to make a meaningful contribution to our healthcare system for the benefit of each Albertan.

[Original signed by Andrew Neuner]

Andrew Neuner, BHSA, MBA, MA, CHE Chief Executive Officer



year in review: timeline

A year of accomplishments – furthering our legislated mandate: To promote and improve patient safety and health service quality across the province.

 AWARDS: 2017 PATIENT EXPERIENCE Recipients announced RELEASE: PATIENT CONCERNS MANAGEMENT – A Framework for Albertans

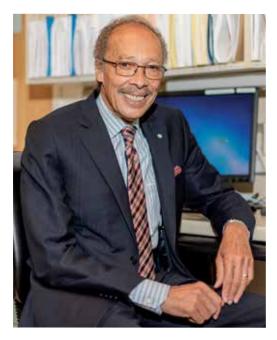
◆ MAY 24, 2017

27 applications from across the province in a variety of care settings; **4** winners announced.

4 IUNE 6 2017

Information reflecting leading practices for a consistent approach to patient concerns management and the resolution process gets a refresh **10** years after its release.

message from the board chair



A.L.A. (Tony) Fields, HQCA Board Chair 2012 - 2018

In my six years as Chair of the Board of the HQCA, I have consistently been impressed with what this organization, with just 35 people and a budget under \$7 million, can achieve.

The staff are engaged, energetic, and amazingly creative in what they achieve to support the organization's objectives as defined by the *Health Quality Council of Alberta Act:* "... to promote and improve patient safety and health service quality on a province-wide basis."

Facing a relentlessly increasing burden of chronic illness due to our growing and aging population, and dealing with constrained resources, all health organizations recognize that the most effective strategy to achieve and maintain a sustainable health system is to improve the quality of health services, best described and assessed through the multifaceted lens of the *Alberta Quality Matrix for Health*. Improve quality and costs will fall into line. Collaborating, networking, and having fruitful interactions with our health system partners is key to building momentum toward this goal.

- RELEASE: Designated Supportive Living Family and Resident Experience Survey Reports
- RELEASE: HEALTHCARE QUALITY AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT: A Framework for Alberta

↓ JULY 12, 2017

The voice of **7,400** Albertans relying on care from designated supportive living facilities. **4,600** family members + **2,800** residents.

■ AUGUST 1, 2017

Outlines the **3** components, **2** models, and a set of enablers needed to effectively manage quality and safety in the healthcare system.

Reflecting on these past years, diverse accomplishments of the HQCA stand out for me, of which I will name just a few. Surveys of patient experiences were completed for emergency departments and in all aspects of continuing care. Reviews and associated recommendations were developed to improve emergency medical services, air ambulance deployment, and organization of provincial laboratory medicine services; also for improving continuity of patient care. The HQCA designed and launched the FOCUS tool that captures and displays, on an interactive public website, regularly refreshed data on patient experience and outcomes. The HQCA successfully launched annual awards, open to healthcare teams from all sectors, for initiatives that achieve improvement in patient experience.

The HQCA has developed a strong and productive relationship with Alberta's primary care sector. Its patient panel reports harvest administrative data to provide meaningful information to individual physicians, clinics, and primary care networks. This feedback, for comparison to best practice recommendations and to peers, has powerful promise for quality improvement in primary care and strongly supports the Minister of Health's vision of shifting from a focus on hospitals and facilities to more community-based care closer to home.

As I leave the organization, I am confident the HQCA will continue to demonstrate its value as an objective partner that monitors, measures, and advises on health system quality and patient safety, helping the complex melange of organizations, institutions, and providers that collectively deliver health services to Albertans find and track the high road to continuous improvement.

[Original signed by A.L.A. Fields]

A.L.A. (Tony) Fields, CM, MA, MD, FRCPC, FACP Board Chair

◆ UPDATE: 2016-17 FOCUS on Emergency Departments – updated Q2 data RELEASE: PRIMARY HEALTHCARE PANEL REPORTS

◆ NOVEMBER 24, 2017

Online tool showing what patients experience in Alberta's **16** business emergency departments. We update the data quarterly.

◆ DECEMBER 11, 2017

Individualized reports for primary care physicians, clinics, and networks to inform and support quality improvements.

governance

The Lieutenant Governor in Council appoints the Board of Directors, who represent a diverse group that includes health professionals, business leaders, academic representatives, and members of the public.

chair Dr. (A.L.A.) Tony Fields, Edmonton

board of directors 2017-18

Deborah Apps, Calgary

Dr. Robin Cox, Calgary

Douglas Gilpin, Edmonton

Bruce Harries, Edmonton

Marie Owen, Edmonton

Irene Pfeiffer, Calgary

Mary-Anne Robinson, Edmonton

Chief Executive Officer Andrew Neuner is an ex-officio member of the Board. The HQCA is also supported by Executive Director Charlene McBrien-Morrison.

Our deepest thanks go to outgoing board members Robin Cox, Douglas Gilpin, and Irene Pfeiffer for their commitment, leadership, and service.

The work of the Board is accomplished through the following committees:

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

This committee facilitates effective communication between the Board and administration. The committee liaises with the chief executive officer and provides direction and support for carrying out the objects of the HQCA as set out in the *Health Quality Council of Alberta Act*.

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

This committee carries out quality assurance activities under Section 9 of the *Alberta Evidence Act*.

 AWARDED: One of Alberta's 2018 TOP EMPLOYERS RELEASE: I'm Still Me: The Lived Experiences of Residents in Supportive Living

◆ FEBRUARY 22, 2018

Selected as one of only **70** top employers in Alberta, offering an exceptional place to work.

◆ MARCH 6. 2018

Gathered first-hand views from residents in **10** designated supportive living facilities in Alberta to identify what is working well and what could be done to improve residents' experiences.

AUDIT & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Monitoring the HQCA's financial matters and risk management, this committee presents the HQCA budget and audited financial statements to the Board for approval and submission to the Ministry of Health.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

In support of the effort to realize the HQCA's vision, this committee strives to continually enhance Board member knowledge and skills articulated in the HQCA's Board competency matrix.

PATIENT AND FAMILY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

This advisory committee represents the experiences and perspectives of patients and their families to improve and promote patient safety and health service quality in Alberta's health system. The Patient and Family Advisory Committee (PFAC) identifies, studies, reviews, advocates, and advises the HQCA from their unique perspective.

Members:

Geralyn L'Heureux, Magrath Chair to November 2017 D'Arcy Duquette, Calgary Chair, December 2017 Alta Magee, Bow Island Greg Powell, Millarville Joan Embry, Calgary Karla Wyld, Lacombe Krista Schuett, Grande Prairie Leona Ferguson, Brooks Leslie Ayre-Jaschke, Peace River Michelle Hill, Medicine Hat Neil McMillan, Edmonton Sue Peters, St. Albert

 PRESENTATION: Getting to High Reliability in Healthcare TRAINING: TeamSTEPPS with the Canadian Patient Safety Institute

◆ MARCH 9, 2018

Keynote speaker: Gordon Smith CAPT, USN Ret. **19** graduates from the certificate course in Patient Safety and Quality Mangement.

◆ MARCH 14, 2018

1st regional training centre in Canada offering a course to improve healthcare team collaboration and communication to optimize care delivery.

strategic

build capacity

Develop knowledge and skills, and inform beliefs, internally and externally to support health system improvement.

- Frameworks and related resources
- High-performance and collaborative culture
- Stakeholder engagement
- Quality and safety education



framework

monitor the health system

Monitor and report on health system performance over time and enable comparison where appropriate to inform improvement.

- System-level indicator development
- Population level surveys
- Clinical standards monitoring and reporting
- Health system performance reporting



strategies



measure to improve

Measure, analyze, and report on healthcare delivery to drive actionable improvement that enhances the quality of healthcare for Albertans.

- Patient-focused measurement
- Assessments and studies
- Sector or service-focused measurement



engage the public

Bring the voice of Albertans to the HQCA's work.

- Patient and Family Advisory Committee
- A spectrum of public participation and awareness activities

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build capacity

DEVELOP KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS, AND INFORM BELIEFS, INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY TO SUPPORT HEALTH SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT.

frameworks and related resources

The HQCA's frameworks provide guiding principles that help promote and improve patient safety and health service quality in specific topic areas.



world-recognized approach to improved healthcare environmental design

Simulation-Based Mock-up Evaluation Framework is a world-recognized approach to improve healthcare environment design. The framework outlines an approach to using data from mock-up environments for improved environment design that in turn improves patient safety, staff efficiency, and user experience.

The framework is referenced in provincial hospital design standards/guidelines developed by Alberta Health, Alberta Infrastructure, and Alberta Health Services.



updating the provincial framework for patient concerns



release of a quality and safety management framework Completed the refresh of the 2007 Patient Concerns/Complaints Resolution – Provincial Framework prompted promotion of the new Patient Concerns Management: A Framework for Alberta in 2017:

- Framework shared with more than 850 stakeholders and accessed by more than 475 Albertans
- hosted 2 webinars with 39 participants

Release of Healthcare Quality & Safety Management – A Framework for Alberta shared with healthcare providers:

- e-version sent to more than 850 stakeholders
- hosted 2 webinars with 51 participants

The document outlines what healthcare providers, managers, and executives need to do to effectively manage quality and safety in the healthcare system. A companion document was also released, Healthcare Quality and Safety Management: Sample Scenarios, which provides practical examples of how to apply the framework in various healthcare settings.

build capacity: frameworks and related resources - continued



working for a just culture in healthcare



developing tools to standardize care processes The Just Culture online toolkit is set to launch in 2018. The online toolkit of resources supports the development and spread of a just culture across Alberta's healthcare system. A just culture is an atmosphere of trust characterized by transparency, fairness, and accountability; it is the foundational building block of a reporting, learning, and patient safety culture.

The HQCA is part of Patients Collaborating with Teams (PaCT), a collaborative initiative working to develop tools to support standardized care processes. In 2018, the model care planning process was completed, and testing of the care planning process was started. PaCT includes Towards Optimized Practice, Alberta Health Services, and primary care physicians, focusing on improving chronic disease management care planning in primary care.

build capacity:

high-performing and collaborative culture

The HQCA strives to be a place that brings together and nurtures talented people who are committed to patient safety and quality improvement.



ensuring the HQCA is a great place to work

At the HQCA, we've developed a strategy of investing in each other through a social contract. We've embedded into our way of being processes to resolve differences in a timely and respectful manner, to credit other's accomplishments and contributions, and to respect each other's time by improving meeting processes.

build capacity: stakeholder engagement

We collaborate and/or partner with a number of quality and safety organizations at both the provincial and national levels. This includes assisting with curriculum development, participating in various educational initiatives, providing support and expertise specific to healthcare quality and patient safety, and providing health ethics advice and counsel.



collaboration with quality and safety committees across Canada



knowledge sharing for best practice



healthcare 101 – a resource for Albertans The HQCA collaborates with more than 20 provincial and national quality and safety committees.

The Health Quality Network (HQN) was formed in 2004 to facilitate knowledge sharing and capability transfer related to leading or best practices throughout Alberta. Chaired by the HQCA, current member organizations include: Alberta College of Pharmacists, Alberta Health, Alberta Health Services, Alberta Medical Association, College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta, College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta, Covenant Health, Office of Alberta Health Advocates, HQCA's Patient and Family Advisory Committee, University of Alberta Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, and University of Calgary Cumming School of Medicine.

The HQCA has provided expertise on Medical Assistance in Dying.

Led by IMAGINE Citizens, the HQCA helped develop Healthcare 101, the first in a four-part series of online education modules, to help Albertans understand our complex healthcare system.

Healthcare 101 aims to help Albertans experience healthcare in a more positive way.

The project was nominated for the AHS President's Excellence Awards. Topic 1: Healthcare Basics for Albertans was released in spring 2018.

build capacity: quality and safety education

The HQCA works to develop education resources and tools to support learning. Our Centre for Collaborative Learning & Education (CCLE) offers quality and safety education and capacity-building opportunities for our stakeholders to develop skills in system improvement.





In 2017-18, 19 healthcare professionals completed the **Certificate in Patient Safety and Quality Management** course, with final project papers presented in March. This is the 8th year the HQCA has offered this course. The HQCA partners with the University of Calgary's Cumming School of Medicine's Ward of the 21st Century (W21C) to provide this certificate course. To date, we've had 165 graduates from the course since it began in 2010.

In partnership with the University of Calgary and W21C, the HQCA continues to offer introductory and advanced courses in conducting patient safety reviews and managing patient safety events.

The University of Calgary's Department of Anesthesiology, with the HQCA, is continuing to integrate quality and safety education learning topics within a postgraduate medical education training program.

- We're helping to determine how to build capacity for faculty members to teach quality and safety concepts.
- A detailed curriculum for years one and two has been created and training sessions with first- and second-year residents have been held.
- We're identifying individuals to partner with the HQCA for the training.



TeamSTEPPS Canada™ Master Trainer

The HQCA is proud to partner with the Canadian Patient Safety Institute (CPSI) to offer a foundational course that improves patient safety and transforms culture through better teamwork, communication, leadership, situational awareness, and mutual support: TeamSTEPPS CanadaTM Master Trainer. The train-the-trainer format allows participants to learn how to adopt teamwork strategies, tools and skills within their own teams to build capacity and momentum. Participants will become part of a community of TeamSTEPPS CanadaTM practitioners to ensure ongoing support and resource sharing.

To build capacity across the province for effective teamwork skills, the HQCA finalized the first TeamSTEPPS workshop to run in spring 2018. TeamSTEPPS is an acronym for Team Strategies and Tools to Enhance Performance and Patient Safety.



Tricia Swartz, patient safety improvement lead, Canadian Patient Safety Institute. The HQCA is proud to partner with the Canadian Patient Safety Institute (CPSI) to offer a foundational course that improves patient safety and transforms culture through better teamwork, communication, leadership, situational awareness, and mutual support: the TeamSTEPPS Canada™ Master Trainer program.

build capacity

TeamSTEPPS CANADA™ MASTER TRAINER PROGRAM – RAISING THE BAR FOR PATIENT SAFETY

It's been said that teamwork makes the dream work – and the HQCA is partnering with the Canadian Patient Safety Institute (CPSI) to offer a foundational program for developing high-functioning teams. Together the two organizations are working toward making the dream of patient safety a reality.

Tricia Swartz, a patient safety improvement lead at the CPSI, says, "For more than a decade, provincial and national organizations have been trying to raise the bar for patient safety. Hospitals in Canada are generally safe but sometimes harmful events happen that affect patients – and many of these are preventable." Research indicates that patient safety incidents rank only behind cancer and heart disease as causes of death in Canada.

An innovative teamwork-based program called TeamSTEPPS CanadaTM has been proven to help reduce these risks. "By changing the way we approach teamwork and communications, we can help change the patient safety culture – but just telling people what they 'should' do doesn't work. However, with the right tools and resources, every team can improve," Tricia says.

TeamSTEPPS Canada™ was offered as a pilot in winter 2018. "CPSI has the expertise to deliver the curriculum," Tricia says. "The HQCA is able to contextualize it, to say 'What's burning for Alberta right now and how do we customize the training to address those needs?' It's an excellent partnership."

The original program was developed by two American federal agencies. It's based on more than 30 years of research and evidence showing that team training programs improve attitude, knowledge, and behavioural skills. The Canadian program offers participants the knowledge, skills, and tools they need to build and promote sustainable teamwork strategies.

This course is of value to participants from any organization with a focus on healthcare. The curriculum is low cost, open access, and adaptable for participants from clinical and non-clinical backgrounds.



measure to improve

MEASURE, ANALYZE AND REPORT ON HEALTHCARE DELIVERY TO DRIVE ACTIONABLE IMPROVEMENT THAT ENHANCES THE QUALITY OF HEALTHCARE FOR ALBERTANS.

patient-focused measurement

The HQCA surveys Albertans about their experience and satisfaction with the quality of the health services they receive. Surveys provide us with vital insight into Albertans' experiences with the healthcare system. The input we gather is a key measure of quality and a source of information to improve care and services



new survey launched january 2018



From April to September 2017, the HQCA initiated the fourth Long Term Care Family Experience Survey, asking family members throughout Alberta about their experience having a loved one in long-term care.

In January 2018, we launched the Primary Care Patient Experience Survey. Our Primary Care Patient Experience survey was developed specifically for Alberta's primary care physicians and their teams. We had 120 physicians participate in the pilot. Family physicians, clinics or PCNs can sign up to participate in the survey. Since launch, we've had more than 1,100 patients respond to the survey.

The HQCA continues its **Emergency Department Survey** and randomly samples patients who have recently visited an Alberta emergency department. In 2017-18, we asked more than 10,000 patients about their experience with care during their visit. Results for the 16 largest and busiest urban and regional emergency departments are reported quarterly through the HQCA's online tool, FOCUS on Emergency Departments.

The HQCA continues to support the use of EQ-5D, a patient-reported outcome measure (PROM) that captures five dimensions of health-related quality of life: mobility, self-care, usual activities, pain/discomfort, and anxiety/depression. We collaborated with the EuroQuol Foundation, the University of Alberta, Alberta Health Services and Alberta Health, to establish a research and support unit (APERSU) at the University of Alberta. Through this work, we also support the education and training of graduate-level students at the University of Alberta.



2 surveys capture the voice of albertans



30% increase in facility participation: FAMILY survey

39% increase in facility particiption: RESIDENT survey



new report documents the resident experience

Designated Supportive Living Family and Resident Surveys

In July 2017, the HQCA released the findings of its second designated supportive living (DSL) family and resident surveys. The results assist DSL facilities to identify areas of success and opportunities for improvement. The survey results demonstrated that across DSL facilities in Alberta, not all residents and family members experience the same quality of care.

The reports capture the voice of 7,400 Albertans who rely on care from designated supportive living (4,600 family members; 2,800 residents).

Family survey: 168/175 facilities (96 per cent) participated in the 2016 survey (39 more facilities than in the 2013-14 survey). 63 per cent of eligible families responded to the survey.

Resident survey: 156/175 facilities (89 per cent) participated in the 2016 survey (44 more facilities than in the 2013-14 survey). 59 per cent of eligible residents responded to the survey.

In March 2018, the HQCA released I'm Still Me: The Lived Experiences of Residents in Designated Supportive Living report.

- A first of its kind for the HQCA, involving interviews with a small sample of residents in designated supportive living.
- Insight from the report; the most positive experiences in designated supportive living were created when residents felt their personal interests, lifestyles, and expectations were preserved.

measure to improve SUPPORTIVE LIVING SURVEY PROMPTING IMPROVEMENT

The numbers are important, but they only tell part of the story. This, says Cathy Lockhart, is what makes the HQCA's Supportive Living Family and Resident Experience surveys so valuable for administrators of senior living facilities. Cathy is the director of health and wellness at Revera – McKenzie Towne Retirement.

"I really like the comments in the survey report," she says. "It's difficult to action a percentage point. The HQCA reports are valuable because of the comments: I can action them." For example, she says, the numbers might indicate a certain dissatisfaction with the temperature of the food. It's tough to know how to improve. But if a resident comments that the coffee isn't hot enough, "I can turn up the coffee maker. It's a simple thing but one that improves their experience."

Surveys give guidance and insight to those tasked with providing an enjoyable lifestyle for residents, Cathy says. "People don't always want to tell you their opinions personally – they've told me that – but with the HQCA people coming in and talking to them in person, our residents speak more freely. This interaction prompts improvement in our service to them."

While Revera McKenzie Towne had the top score in the HQCA supportive living survey, Cathy says, "We have made a conscious choice to not be complacent with the results. The results also tell me if I'm doing my job. It tells me what we should not change; what people like."

The Supportive Living Report gives administrators like Cathy information that benchmarks against other care facilities. This is where the I'm Still Me: The Lived Experiences of Residents in Designated Supportive Living Report also comes in. "We are involved with each and every resident, and are very personalized with our care plans. This report gives a voice to the individuals who live in care and depend on our healthcare system each day."



Cathy Lockhart, director of health and wellness at Revera – McKenzie Town Retirement. In 2017, the HQCA released the findings of its second designated supportive living (DSL) family and resident surveys. In March 2018, for the first time, the HQCA released I'm Still Me: The Lived Experiences of Residents in Designated Supportive Living report, providing insight into the resident experience.





best practice –
ensuring we use
culturally sensitive
data collection
methods
evaluating the
CII initiative

Starting in 2017, the HQCA began the search for a process for innovative and culturally sensitive data collection methods for reporting on the experiences of Indigenous communities in the health system and patients using mental health services. This work will continue in the following year with further conversations with Alberta Health about mental health, and after the HQCA completes organization-wide Indigenous cultural safety training.

Through a grant from Alberta Health, the HQCA is overseeing the evaluation of the Community Information Integration (CII) initiative, a province-wide project that supports the presentation of data from primary care through Alberta Netcare. The CII project goal is to improve Albertans' continuity of care across the health system through better access to primary care information.

measure to improve:

sector or service-focused measurement

The HQCA continues to collaborate with primary care stakeholders across the province in various ongoing measurement initiatives. We have developed a collaborative, scalable, and sustainable measurement program that primary care stakeholders can use to inform proactive improvements to positively affect patient care.



measures for primary care stakeholders to positively affect patient care



1,090 reports/year distributed
1,699% return on investment
40 presentations promoting panel report use

Primary Healthcare Panel Reports

Since 2011, the HQCA has been providing primary healthcare panel reports to family physicians, clinics, and primary care networks (PCN) across the province. Each year, the reports are becoming more widely used throughout primary care.

Panel reports are standardized reports that use administrative health data to provide information about the physician, clinic, or PCN patient panel. These confidential reports include measures related to patient demographics, health conditions, selected aspects of patient management, and health service utilization. The reports can be used to support and inform program planning, panel management, quality improvement, and policy development.

Working with other healthcare partners, (including Alberta Health, AHS, primary care networks, primary care providers, and patients) the HQCA has revised the reports to increase their usability and uptake. Then, throughout the year, the HQCA continued to promote the reports to family physicians in Alberta through presentations and webinars.



Mike Gormley, executive director of the Alberta Medical Association (AMA). Since 2011, the HQCA has been providing primary healthcare panel reports to family physicians, clinics, and primary care networks across the province. Working with other healthcare partners, including the AMA, the HQCA has revised the reports to increase their usability and uptake.

measure to improve

PRIMARY HEALTHCARE PANEL REPORTING INITIATIVE – CONNECTING PATIENTS AND RESOURCES

One of the major directions in healthcare is to build a strong primary care base – what we call the 'medical home', says Mike Gormley, executive director of the Alberta Medical Association (AMA). "It connects the primary care resources to an identifiable group of patients, and is fundamental to understanding the requirements of that population."

The HQCA's Primary Healthcare Panel Reports play an important role in connecting those patients and resources. Finding practical solutions to help build the understanding of a physician's patient population gives insights into their practices that they might not otherwise have.

"We value the HQCA; they've done an excellent job on these reports. They strive to understand what's meaningful at the physician level," Mike says. "The HQCA builds understanding, helping people on the journey of using data in new, broad-focused ways. The HQCA-AMA partnership is extremely helpful and there's no end to how it could add value: the AMA provides a window into the profession and the HQCA provides the data, and information on what the data can be used for."

Mike says the panel reports provide three main values. First, he says, there is immediate clinical value at the practising physician level. Second, there is translation of the data into useful information to those providing care to patients. Finally, the reports are a "great example of how organizations need to work together toward common goals."

Panel reports help physicians move into a new world, he continues. "This information encourages conversations between physicians – they want to do well, and serve their patients well."

Through the reports, they understand their patient populations and gain comparative information, seeing how their practice compares with others at a primary care network level.

"Participants like it, if more than 1,000 physicians are any indication," says Mike. "That's a telling number – it's not a requirement to participate, but something physicians choose."



monitor the health system

MONITOR AND REPORT ON HEALTH SYSTEM PERFORMANCE OVER TIME AND ENABLE COMPARISON WHERE APPROPRIATE TO INFORM IMPROVEMENT.

system level indicator development

The HQCA believes that reporting about what's happening in our healthcare system can lead to quality improvement and a better healthcare system in Alberta. Providing reliable, user-friendly, and transparent data as a straightforward source of information about Alberta's health system paves the way for important conversations.

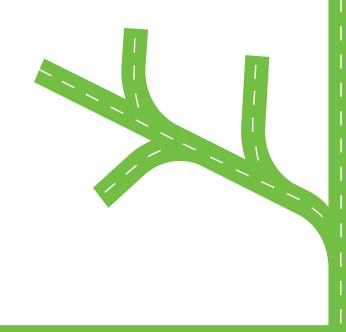


FOCUS online tool and interactive charts provide information for improved healthcare

FOCUS on Healthcare online reporting initiative

Together with health system stakeholders, the HQCA identifies, develops, and reports publicly on key patient experience, economic (cost-effectiveness), and clinical indicators that support its mandate to monitor and report on health service quality and patient safety.

FOCUS on Emergency Departments was the HQCA's first foray into this online reporting tool initiative. FOCUS is an acronym for Fostering Open Conversations that Unleash Solutions. The HQCA launched FOCUS on Emergency Departments in January 2017 to provide public information about the 16 largest and busiest emergency departments in Alberta. The interactive charts provide users with insight into what's happening over time and allows the user to compare similar emergency departments. FOCUS on Emergency Departments is designed to give healthcare providers, decision-makers and the public the information they need to have important conversations about emergency department care and services. These conversations can lead to quality improvement and a better healthcare system for Alberta.



- More than 61,000 website page views since launch
- In an evaluation survey, 70 per cent found the tool very easy or easy to use
- Emergency department (ED) staff are the most frequent online tool visitors
- ED staff mainly use the tool to inform their quality improvement practices
- Includes information from 28,000 respondents from the Emergency Department Patient Experience Survey

The next sector to be added to the FOCUS on Healthcare online reporting tool will be FOCUS on Primary Healthcare, set to launch in 2018. The FOCUS on Healthcare initiative is one of Alberta's go-to resources for reliable information about what patients experience in Alberta's healthcare system. This project commenced in March 2017 with a Patient Consultation Day and the establishment of a Stakeholder Advisory Committee.



Doug Craig, executive director of the Edmonton Southside Primary Care Network, is part of the team developing the FOCUS on Primary Healthcare online reporting tool.

monitor the health system

FOCUS ON HEALTHCARE ONLINE REPORTING INITIATIVE – HOW PRIMARY CARE IS WORKING FOR PATIENTS

Doug Craig cares deeply about primary care. The executive director of the Edmonton Southside Primary Care Network was absolutely one of the right people to have at the table when the HQCA started developing its FOCUS on Primary Healthcare online reporting tool, slated for launch in 2018.

"The HQCA assembled a diverse group: family doctors, patients, primary care administrators, Alberta Health, and Alberta Health Services, to gather their input and advice on what kind of content the website should offer," says Doug. "Patients absolutely had to be there, and they were. They had a perspective that nobody else could provide."

When the website project started, he says, "I was concerned because primary care is difficult to measure. The current measurements aren't very robust. The HQCA was really good at advancing the project's agenda, keeping everyone on track and moving things forward, providing structure to a very nebulous concept. As the project went on I became confident that they were the right group to tackle the difficult challenge of determining the measures."

The challenge of measuring primary care is the use of "surrogate markers" – those indirect measurements that, while they indicate success, don't show up in the system. For example, if you have good access to a family physician, it is not tracked. "We're trying to measure access and continuity – when a patient sees the same family doctor – because that improves results," Doug explains.

In Doug's view, access and continuity of care are measures of how the primary care system is working. "It's also worthwhile to add patient experience as a measure – to assess the patients' interactions with the system," he says.

"The HQCA is in a position to take this work on as an important piece of additional system information – information that can be used to better understand and enhance the delivery of primary care."

engage the public

HQCA PATIENT AND FAMILY ADVISORY COMMITTEE –
WORKING FOR THE GOOD OF EVERY ALBERTAN

Everything happens for a reason, says D'Arcy Duquette. In D'Arcy's case, after an adverse medical experience, he was ready to give his time and thoughts to help improve the healthcare system. So he applied to join the HQCA Patient Family Advisory Committee (PFAC). "I say to people, don't get frustrated with the system; work with the system to get improvements made. The system isn't broken – it just needs a little guidance."

By taking on the PFAC chair role in early 2018 after almost three years as a committee member, D'Arcy is exactly where he wants to be – guiding and influencing improvements in our healthcare system – for the good of every Albertan. "I believe there's lots of room for improvement. There was and still is a safety issue in the medical world. The journey I'm on is, "how do we work to improve the safety of the system?"

D'Arcy believes the healthcare system is there to serve the patient — and that the patient's voice is critical to any changes to the system. Speaking on behalf of patients and their families, committee members share their time and their insights on how to best promote patient safety in the healthcare system.

"The HQCA has some very intelligent, motivated, strong individuals on staff who are looking for change in the system. The PFAC supports them from the patient and family side," he says. "On the committee, we all have the opportunity to give our perspectives on HQCA initiatives. One recent example is when we gave input into the questions the HQCA asked in its home care survey."

"With the PFAC as part of the HQCA and with our life experiences with quality and safety, we work together to make our system much more attractive to patients so we can work together to make sick people better," D'Arcy sums up.



D'Arcy Duquette, Chair, HQCA Patient Family Advisory Committee (PFAC), is one of 12 committee members representing the patient voice from 10 different locations across Alberta. In 2017-18, the HQCA's PFAC was engaged in 28 health system improvement activities.



engage the public

BRING THE VOICE OF ALBERTANS TO THE HQCA'S WORK.

hqca patient and family advisory committee

Since 2010, the HQCA has leveraged the experiences and perspectives of patients and their families to improve and promote patient safety and health service quality in Alberta's health system.



since 2010, the HQCA has leveraged the perspective of patients and families In 2017-18, the Patient/Family Safety Advisory Panel changed its name to the HQCA Patient and Family Advisory Committee (PFAC). This name better reflects the Committee's status as a standing committee of the Board of Directors and their breadth of work. PFAC advises the HQCA and other healthcare groups on quality issues, of which safety is a dimension. Committee members provide the patient/family lens to numerous initiatives.

a spectrum of public participation and awareness activities

Wherever possible, the HQCA participates and collaborates in safety and quality initiatives across the province to prompt improvement in healthcare. We support and enable effective citizen participation in their healthcare system.



Patient and health system stakeholder engagement in projects through formal committees/working groups:

- Primary Healthcare Panel Reports initiative 33 stakeholders participating on the Reference Committee; subject area, report design and education working groups.
- FOCUS on Primary Healthcare 28 stakeholders participating on the Stakeholder Advisory Committee and measurement working group.



participation in an initiative to prompt system improvement







The Change Day initiative follows the premise that one act can lead to improvement in care for patients, clients, residents, families, and the system. Change Day 2017 was a co-ordinated effort between B.C., Alberta and Ontario. Each province drives their own campaign toward a day of mutual celebration.

- More than 6,000 pledges in Alberta
- More than 18,000 pledges across Canada
- More than one million impressions on Twitter for the campaign

2017 Patient Experience Awards

In its second year, the 2017 Patient Experience Awards highlighted the amazing work underway in the province to make positive impacts on the patient experience. In partnership with our Patient and Family Advisory Committee, the HQCA held our annual awards program to recognize and celebrate initiatives that improve the patient experience.

The selected initiatives receive funding (to a maximum of \$2,500) to attend or host a patient experience, quality, or education event. Additionally, they share details about their initiative through a webcast event.

This year, there were:

- 27 applicants from across the province and from a variety of care settings
- Four awards granted
- Webcast June 16, 2017, live streamed to 86 sites across the province
- Nearly 200 views of the webcast recording

engage the public:

PATIENT EXPERIENCE AWARDS - COMMITMENT TO COMFORT

"Children are known to experience significant short- and long-term consequences to pain, and effective treatment of pain is a high priority of families visiting emergency," says Jennifer Thull-Freedman, MD, MSc, Physician Lead for Quality and Safety, Alberta Children's Hospital (ACH) emergency department. "This initiative was developed at the hospital to engage families as partners in improving pain outcomes for children."

Children who experience pain and fear during emergency treatment are more likely, as adu to avoid doctors and medical help. Effective treatment of pain is important to staff and is high priority of families visiting emergency departments, says Dr. Jennifer Thull-Freedman

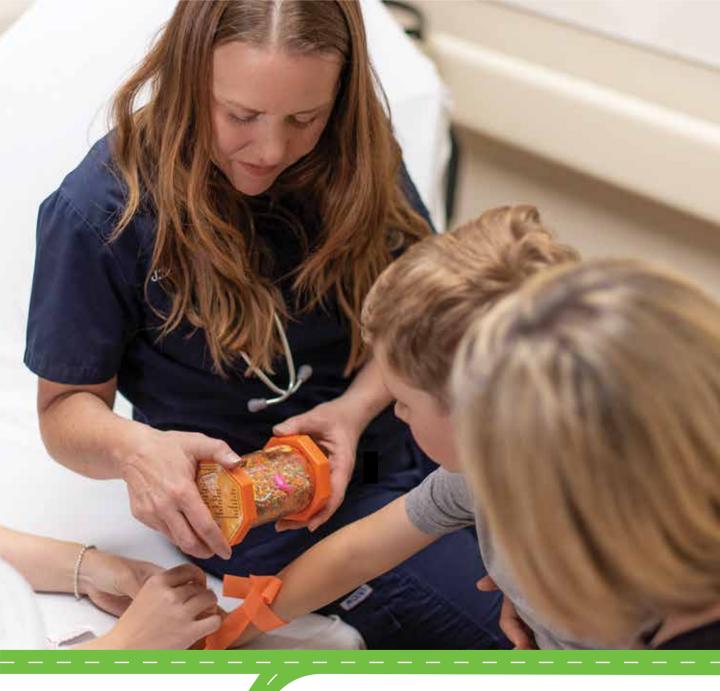
So she assembled a team of five ACH colleagues to take on the work of learning how the could improve children's emergency department visits by effectively managing their pair "We needed patients and families to help us develop new strategies so we could do bette

Beginning with a patient population of children with limb injuries, the team collected patie reported information and proved that when patients and families were engaged as partn in treating pain, outcomes improved. The team's philosophy, "We'll do our best to prome comfort by helping to lessen pain and distress," provides the foundation of the Commitme to Comfort program.

The Commitment to Comfort team worked with families, patients, and former patients, as well as staff, to create and provide tools to help families advocate for patients' comfort ne and help staff identify and treat children's pain. Those tools include comfort kits and other materials including posters of pain scales and comfort positions, and treatment options sucl as numbing cream before needles. The team used quality improvement methods to plan changes, measure progress, and spread to new sites.

"We want to make sure kids don't leave the emergency department feeling traumatized by a painful experience," Dr. Thull-Freedman says, "and the Commitment to Comfort program allows them to better meet their patients' needs."

The \$2,500 award covered part of the costs to send the team to the American Academy of Pediatrics conference last year, where Dr. Thull-Freedman presented the results of their work. The program is now used in 51 rural, regional, and urban emergency departments across Alberta.



Jennifer Thull-Freedman, MD, MSc, Physician Lead for Quality and Safety, Alberta Children's Hospital emergency department and the Commitment to Comfort team demonstrate their pain experience program, where they strive to improve the pain experience of children in Alberta's emergency departments.

health quality council of alberta

statement of operations

year ended March 31

	2018		2017
	budget	actual	actual
		(in thousands)	
revenues			
government transfers			
Alberta Health - operating grant	\$ 7,151	\$ 7,145	\$ 6,946
investment income	6	10	6
other revenue	39	50	43
	7,196	7,205	6,995
expenses			
administration	1,946	1,841	2,122
survey, measure and monitor initiatives	2,612	2,127	2,572
patient safety initiatives	1,221	959	1,297
quality initiatives	862	624	816
communication	494	634	481
ministerial assessment/study	560	452	239
	7,695	6,637	7,527
annual operating surplus (deficit)	(499)	568	(532)
accumulated operating surplus, beginning of year	1,296	1,358	1,890
accumulated operating surplus, end of year	\$ 797	\$ 1,926	\$ 1,358

For our complete financial statements, including all accompanying notes and schedules, see the **HQCA's 2017-18 Annual Report** on our website **www.hqca.ca**.

road to improvement

The road to improvement can take more than one path – here's what you can do:

- follow us on social media @HOCA
- get our quarterly newsletter subscribe at hqca.ca
- follow and share our new electronic communication: HQCAMatters, where we post HQCA perspectives on topics or issues relevant to healthcare in Alberta
- register for our courses: hgca.ca/education/
- if you are a primary care physician, sign up to receive a panel report: http://hqca.ca/panelreports
- say yes if asked to participate in our latest survey: hqca.ca/surveys/surveys-underway/
- advocate for your health you're the most important partner when it comes to your health





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