

Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

# Narrative for Health Care Organizations in Ontario

February 20, 2025

## OVERVIEW

The vision for West Haldimand General Hospital's (WHGH) Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) was developed through comprehensive consultation with patients, families, staff, physicians, and Board members. It articulates a broad and aspirational outlook for the future, guided by the hospital's vision: "To foster healthier communities through exceptional rural healthcare, close to home."

Aligned with this vision, WHGH remains committed to its mission: "To deliver high-quality, integrated, and innovative care, together with our partners." The hospital is a dedicated community of professionals striving to enhance the patient and family experience through innovative and collaborative approaches to care, knowledge, and leadership.

Grounded in the core values of being compassionate, inclusive, respectful, collaborative, person-centered, and accountable, WHGH integrates these principles into daily practice. The QIP is developed annually as part of the hospital's ongoing commitment to delivering safe, high-quality, patient- and family-centered care.

WHGH is committed to an unwavering focus on our strategic directions, built upon five strategic pillars:

- o Excellent Patient Care – Providing personalized, compassionate, and high-quality care that promotes healing, well-being, and patient satisfaction.
- o Outstanding Team – Fostering a skilled, engaged, and empowered workforce dedicated to collaboration, professional growth, and excellence.
- o Operational Excellence – Driving efficiency, effectiveness, and safety across all aspects of operations.

- o Community Partnerships & Connection – Strengthening relationships with community stakeholders to address local health needs, promote wellness, and improve access to care.
- o Innovation & Digital Enablement – Embracing technology and data-driven solutions to enhance healthcare accessibility, efficiency, and quality.

This QIP will be focusing on the following dimensions:

#### Access and Flow

-Ambulance Offload Time – Measures the time elapsed between an ambulance’s arrival at the emergency department and the completion of the transfer of care.

-Emergency Department Wait Time to Initial Physician Assessment-Tracks the time from patient triage or registration (whichever occurs first) to the initial assessment by a physician.

-Emergency Department Wait Time for Inpatient Bed – Captures the number of admitted patients still waiting for an inpatient bed at 8 a.m. despite waiting at least two hours since disposition.

#### Equity

-Equitable Care – Measures staff completion rates for training on equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism.

#### Experience

-Patient Information & Discharge Communication – Percentage of patients who responded “Completely” to the question: “Did you receive enough information from hospital staff about what to do if you were worried about your condition or treatment after leaving the hospital?”

#### Safety

-Workplace Violence Prevention – Tracks the rate of reported workplace violence incidents resulting in an injury of severity level 3 or higher.

The development of the organization's 2025-26 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) was guided by key provincial frameworks, including the Ontario Action Plan for Healthcare, the Ontario Hospital Association Strategic Plan, Health Quality Ontario priorities, and broader provincial healthcare priorities. Core themes—such as safe and effective care, equitable access, and enhanced patient experience—are integral to the QIP, ensuring alignment with system-wide improvement initiatives.

### ACCESS AND FLOW

West Haldimand General Hospital (WHGH) remains at the forefront of enhancing healthcare accessibility by ensuring the right care, in the right place, at the right time. Through strategic improvements, WHGH is dedicated to optimizing hospital capacity, improving patient flow, and enhancing experiences for patients, families, and staff.

A key focus for the 2025-2026 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) is reducing delays in access to care and ensuring efficient transitions between hospital and community settings. WHGH is actively collaborating with regional health service organizations, including interprofessional primary care teams, long-term care facilities, home care providers, and other hospitals, to develop innovative models of care that prevent unnecessary hospitalizations, address discharge barriers, and expedite bed availability.

To support timely emergency department (ED) access and patient flow, WHGH is implementing the following priority initiatives:

Reducing Ambulance Offload Times – Enhancing coordination between emergency medical services and ED staff to minimize delays in transferring care.

Improving Initial Physician Assessment Wait Times – Streamlining ED processes to reduce the time from patient arrival to physician assessment.

Addressing Inpatient Volume in ED at 11 AM – Implementing proactive discharge planning strategies to optimize bed availability and reduce ED overcrowding.

By fostering seamless coordination across care sectors, WHGH is advancing system efficiency, reducing ED wait times, and improving overall patient outcomes. The hospital's focus on preventative care and early intervention helps reduce strain on emergency services while enhancing the overall healthcare experience for patients and families.

These efforts align with WHGH's commitment to patient-centered care, operational excellence, and collaborative healthcare partnerships, ensuring that high-quality, timely care remains a cornerstone of service delivery for the community.

## **EQUITY AND INDIGENOUS HEALTH**

West Haldimand General Hospital (WHGH) is deeply committed to fostering an inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive healthcare environment, ensuring that all individuals receive high-quality, person-centered care. Grounded in our core

values—Compassionate, Inclusive, Respectful, Collaborative, Person-Centered, and Accountable—WHGH actively works to eliminate health disparities and improve access, experiences, and outcomes for diverse and marginalized communities.

To strengthen diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in healthcare, WHGH continues to engage in strategic partnerships with key organizations, including:

The Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, leveraging its expertise to enhance equitable healthcare practices.

Queer Positive Power, collaborating to create a supportive and inclusive environment tailored to the unique needs of the LGBTQ+ community.

The Brantford Brant Norfolk Ontario Health Team and the Greater Hamilton Health Network, participating in a community of practice to advance regional health equity initiatives and improve access to care. WHGH recognizes the importance of culturally safe care for Indigenous communities and is committed to meaningful reconciliation through education, training, and action-oriented strategies. This includes:

A range of specialized cultural safety training courses offered through Ontario Health, providing staff with essential tools and knowledge to deliver respectful, culturally competent care for Indigenous patients.

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Anti-Racism (IDEA) education, ensuring that staff understand and uphold principles of equity and anti-racism in everyday practice.

WHGH continues to build and nurture strategic and key partnerships with Indigenous leaders, community organizations, and healthcare providers to advance culturally appropriate care and strengthen reconciliation efforts.

By embedding equity, inclusion, and cultural safety into all aspects

of care delivery, WHGH is actively working to dismantle systemic barriers, promote diverse perspectives, and create a healthcare system where every individual—regardless of background—receives equitable, respectful, and person-centered care.

## **PATIENT/CLIENT/RESIDENT EXPERIENCE**

At West Haldimand General Hospital (WHGH), we are dedicated to patient-centered care as part of our broader commitment to delivering high-quality, integrated, and innovative healthcare. Guided by our mission to foster healthier communities through exceptional rural healthcare, close to home, and supported by our core values—Compassionate, Inclusive, Respectful, Collaborative, Person-Centered, and Accountable—WHGH continuously strives to enhance the patient experience by actively engaging patients, families, and the community in their care journey.

Our Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) plays a pivotal role in addressing health inequities and promoting diversity and inclusion through strategic initiatives. PFAC members engage directly with patients through patient rounding, providing valuable insights into their experiences and fostering transparency and mutual understanding. This hands-on approach helps identify opportunities to improve the quality of care and ensure patients feel heard and supported.

To further enhance access and equity, WHGH integrates patient voices into its Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) by collaborating closely with PFAC members, community representatives, and key stakeholders. This collaborative approach drives efforts to reduce health disparities and ensure care delivery is responsive to the

diverse needs of the community. One key initiative is improving access to health information, ensuring patients receive the necessary education about their condition, treatment plans, and what to monitor after discharge.

Leadership rounding with patients remains a cornerstone of our approach, creating opportunities for open communication and addressing concerns in real time. These interactions ensure that hospital leadership remains attuned to patient experiences and can swiftly respond to emerging needs. Additionally, WHGH has established robust patient feedback mechanisms, actively seeking and responding to concerns to drive continuous quality improvement.

Regular patient experience surveys provide data-driven insights that inform ongoing efforts to improve care delivery. By embedding patient feedback into daily practices and collaborating with patients, families, and the broader community, WHGH ensures a sustained commitment to meeting the evolving needs of those we serve.

In all aspects of our operations, WHGH remains focused on delivering exceptional care, improving accessibility, and promoting a seamless, patient-centered experience. Through continuous engagement, feedback, and partnership, we are committed to fostering a healthcare environment where every individual feels heard, respected, and empowered to take an active role in their care.

## **PROVIDER EXPERIENCE**

West Haldimand General Hospital (WHGH) is committed to

fostering a positive, inclusive, and empowering work environment where every employee, physician, and volunteer feels valued and supported. Rooted in our core values—Compassionate, Inclusive, Respectful, Collaborative, Person-Centered, and Accountable—we recognize that exceptional patient care begins with a thriving and engaged healthcare team.

#### Recognition & Engagement

WHGH actively celebrates the dedication, resilience, and contributions of its staff through comprehensive recognition initiatives, including:

Personalized appreciation efforts, such as thank-you cards, staff spotlights, and social media acknowledgments.

Team celebrations, including catered appreciation events, milestone recognitions, and staff recognition awards.

Leadership-led engagement, such as "Coffee with the CEO" sessions and leadership rounding, fostering direct and meaningful connections with staff.

Despite ongoing challenges in healthcare workforce sustainability, WHGH remains focused on enhancing workplace culture, engagement, and well-being through strategic initiatives that support staff resilience and professional growth.

#### Well-Being & Workforce Sustainability

Recognizing the impact of increasing work demands, WHGH has evolved traditional wellness initiatives into a continuous, proactive approach that promotes physical, mental, and emotional well-being. This includes:

Ongoing wellness programs that offer educational opportunities on healthy lifestyle choices, mental health resilience, and stress management strategies.

A strengthened focus on work-life balance, integrating flexible support systems and initiatives that prioritize staff well-being.

Active leadership participation in staff well-being initiatives, with senior leaders engaging in department immersions and rounding to listen, learn, and take action on frontline concerns.

#### Listening & Continuous Improvement

WHGH is committed to continuous workforce engagement and improvement, using real-time feedback mechanisms to strengthen communication and collaboration. Key initiatives include:

Enhanced staff feedback systems, including regular engagement and satisfaction surveys that provide actionable insights into workforce needs. A dynamic approach to staff support, integrating employee feedback into policy improvements, workflow optimizations, and well-being strategies. Cross-departmental collaboration to identify and implement innovative solutions that promote efficiency, safety, and job satisfaction. By embedding recognition, well-being, and continuous improvement into every aspect of the organization, WHGH remains committed to fostering a resilient and engaged healthcare team, ensuring the highest quality of care for the community.

#### SAFETY

West Haldimand General Hospital (WHGH) is steadfast in its commitment to patient and provider safety, embedding a culture of continuous improvement, learning, and accountability across all

levels of the organization. Aligned with our core values—Compassionate, Inclusive, Respectful, Collaborative, Person-Centered, and Accountable—WHGH integrates proactive safety measures, evidence-based best practices, and a Just Culture approach to foster a safe, high-quality healthcare environment.

#### Integrated Quality & Patient Safety Framework

At the core of our safety commitment is WHGH's Integrated Quality and Patient Safety Framework, which provides a structured approach to:

Monitoring and enhancing care quality within defined timeframes. Using chart reviews as learning tools through the Medical Quality Committee, identifying opportunities for standardization and improvement.

Embedding patient feedback mechanisms to drive data-informed decisions that enhance patient safety and care outcomes.

These insights inform quality and safety discussions across all Medical Advisory Committee (MAC) subcommittees, ensuring a hospital-wide commitment to continuous improvement and high-reliability care.

#### Advancing Evidence-Based Practices

WHGH has embarked on the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) Best Practice Guideline (BPG) journey, reinforcing our dedication to evidence-based, high-quality, and safe patient care.

By implementing RNAO-endorsed best practices, we aim to:

Standardize clinical excellence across all departments.

Enhance staff knowledge and competency in key areas of patient safety.

Ensure continuous alignment with the latest research and industry-leading practices.

Incident Management & Just Culture Approach WHGH employs a multidimensional, transparent approach to incident management, ensuring swift identification, response, and learning from safety events:

Real-time electronic reporting tools facilitate timely tracking and escalation of safety incidents.

Just Culture principles and root cause analysis guide investigations, fostering a blame-free, solution-focused environment that encourages learning and system improvement.

Patient safety and incident management toolkits provide structured processes for mitigating risks and driving proactive solutions.

#### Embedding Safety in Daily Practice

WHGH integrates safety-focused learning and collaboration into daily workflows to cultivate a resilient, safety-driven culture:

Daily unit-level safety huddles promote shared learning and proactive risk identification.

Interdisciplinary safety rounds enhance cross-team communication and education, with recorded sessions available for continuous access. Patient stories and safety occurrences are central to Medical Advisory Subcommittee and Board discussions, ensuring leadership oversight and action-driven change.

Accessible patient and staff feedback channels, including online reporting platforms and unit-based feedback forums, support

inclusive and transparent issue resolution.

#### Transparent Metrics & Continuous Improvement

To reinforce accountability and drive continuous quality enhancement, WHGH prioritizes transparent data-sharing on key safety indicators:

Trending safety data, response times, and resolution outcomes are regularly reviewed and communicated across teams.

Proactive safety interventions and performance improvement plans are integrated into the hospital's broader Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

#### A Future Focused on Excellence

As part of our strategic direction to drive Operational Excellence and Outstanding Patient Care, WHGH remains deeply committed to safety, quality, and innovation. By embracing a learning-focused, interdisciplinary, and patient-centered approach to safety, we are continuously enhancing healthcare delivery, reducing risks, and fostering a culture where every patient, staff member, and visitor feels protected and empowered.

### PALLIATIVE CARE

At West Haldimand General Hospital (WHGH), we recognize that palliative care is more than just medical treatment—it is a commitment to dignity, compassion, and honoring the unique needs of patients and their support networks. Rooted in our core values of Compassionate, Inclusive, Respectful, Collaborative, Person-Centered, and Accountable care, WHGH is enhancing its palliative care services to ensure that individuals facing life-limiting illnesses receive the

support they need in a setting that prioritizes their physical, emotional, spiritual, and psychosocial well-being.

#### A Patient-Centered, Dignified Approach

Palliative care at WHGH is designed to honor the wishes and goals of each patient, ensuring that comfort, symptom management, and quality of life are prioritized. This approach includes:

Interdisciplinary care teams—bringing together physicians, nurses, social workers, and spiritual care providers to offer holistic, compassionate support tailored to individual needs.

Enhanced communication and shared decision-making—ensuring patients and their loved ones are engaged in care planning, including advance care directives, symptom management, and end-of-life preferences.

A focus on dignity and respect—creating an environment that fosters peace, comfort, and autonomy for patients while providing compassionate guidance for families and caregivers.

#### Strengthening Palliative Care Access & Capacity

Aligned with WHGH's strategic direction to enhance accessibility and system capacity, efforts are underway to:

Expand access to specialized palliative care services, ensuring patients receive timely and appropriate support. Foster partnerships with local hospice, home care, and long-term care providers to enhance continuity of care and support transitions across settings.

Provide palliative education and training for staff and physicians, equipping them with the skills to deliver empathetic, patient centered care at this critical stage.

### Supporting Families & Caregivers

Recognizing the profound emotional and physical toll on caregivers, WHGH is committed to providing:

Emotional and bereavement support services for families navigating the complexities of end-of-life care.

Flexible visiting policies and family accommodations, fostering a supportive environment where loved ones can remain present and engaged in care.

Community resources and partnerships to ensure ongoing support beyond the hospital setting, helping families access grief counseling, respite care, and other essential services.

**A Culture of Empathy and Excellence** WHGH's dedication to palliative care is part of our broader commitment to exceptional, compassionate healthcare. By embedding empathy, dignity, and patient-centered values into every aspect of care delivery, we are ensuring that patients and their families feel supported, valued, and respected—at every stage of their healthcare journey.

Through ongoing enhancements, collaborative partnerships, and a commitment to quality improvement, WHGH is shaping a future where palliative care is not just about end-of-life support, but about honoring life itself—with compassion, dignity, and unwavering care.

## POPULATION HEALTH MANAGEMENT

West Haldimand General Hospital (WHGH) is committed to advancing population health strategies that extend beyond traditional healthcare models. Recognizing that health is shaped by more than just medical care, WHGH takes a proactive approach that emphasizes prevention, equity, and strong system partnerships to

improve overall well-being.

By actively collaborating with other healthcare providers and serving as a key member of an Ontario Health Team (OHT), WHGH works to address the diverse social, economic, and environmental determinants of health that impact individuals and families. This holistic, community-centered approach ensures that care is accessible, equitable, and tailored to meet the unique needs of the population.

### Guided by Community Needs

Understanding and addressing the evolving healthcare needs of our region is at the heart of our strategy. Through comprehensive community assessments, WHGH continually evaluates how best to align its services with both current and future health priorities. These assessments inform our strategic plan, guiding investments in:

New programs that expand access to care and promote early intervention.

Workforce development to ensure we have the expertise to meet emerging healthcare demands.

Infrastructure enhancements that improve service delivery and accessibility.

### Proactive, Preventative Care for Long-Term Health

WHGH is expanding its role beyond traditional hospital services, focusing on early intervention and chronic disease prevention to keep individuals healthier and reduce the need for acute care. Key initiatives include:

Strengthening preventative care – promoting early detection,

health screenings, and chronic disease management to support better long-term health outcomes.

Integrating social determinants of health – addressing factors such as housing, income, food security, and mental health to ensure patients receive comprehensive, person-centered care.

Enhancing healthcare accessibility – tailoring services to meet the needs of vulnerable populations, including seniors and underserved groups, while removing barriers to care.

Collaborative Partnerships for System-Wide Impact

As an active participant in the Ontario Health Team, WHGH works alongside primary care providers, long-term care homes, mental health services, and community organizations to:

Improve care transitions – seamlessly coordinating services across hospital, home, and community settings to prevent avoidable hospital admissions.

Utilize data-driven insights – leveraging analytics to identify population health trends and implement targeted interventions.

Advance health equity – partnering with equity-focused organizations to ensure culturally responsive, inclusive care for all community members.

Empowering Patients & Families

WHGH is committed to ensuring that individuals have the tools, knowledge, and resources to take an active role in their well-being. This includes:

Expanding digital health solutions – offering virtual care, remote patient monitoring, and online health records to improve accessibility and engagement.

Strengthening community outreach and education – engaging individuals in preventative health and wellness initiatives to

promote long-term health.

Enhancing mental health and addiction services – integrating mental health supports into primary and acute care pathways for a more seamless patient experience.

Shaping the Future of Healthcare

By bridging gaps between healthcare services, addressing social determinants of health, and embracing innovation, WHGH is driving a population health approach that extends beyond hospital walls.

Our ongoing community assessments and partnerships ensure that our strategic direction remains relevant, adaptable, and forward-thinking.

This commitment to collaboration, prevention, and patient-centered care will strengthen healthcare for the entire community—both now and for generations to come.

## **EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT RETURN VISIT QUALITY PROGRAM (EDRVQP)**

As part of West Haldimand General Hospital's (WHGH) commitment to excellence in patient care and continuous quality improvement, the Emergency Department Return Visit Quality Program (EDRVQP) plays a pivotal role in advancing our Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and supporting our strategic vision. This program reinforces our dedication to safe, effective, and timely emergency care by identifying opportunities to enhance services and reduce avoidable return visits.

Enhancing Patient Safety & Emergency Care

The EDRVQP focuses on analyzing unplanned return visits to the Emergency Department (ED) within 72 hours, particularly for patients with serious diagnoses or those requiring hospital

admission. Through systematic case reviews and root cause analysis, WHGH identifies key areas for improvement, driving:

**Enhanced Patient Safety** – Identifying patterns and potential gaps in care to reduce preventable return visits and improve patient outcomes.

**Clinical Process Improvement** – Strengthening clinical decision-making, optimizing care pathways, and standardizing best practices to enhance emergency care delivery.

**Timely and Effective Care** – Using return visit data to identify system inefficiencies, enhance care transitions, and ensure patients receive the right care at the right time.

**Integrating EDRVQP into Quality Improvement**

Findings from the EDRVQP are embedded into WHGH's Quality Improvement Plan, ensuring targeted actions in:

**Reducing avoidable return visits** – Implementing evidence-based interventions and optimizing patient follow-up.

**Improving communication and discharge processes** – Ensuring patients receive clear, actionable instructions for ongoing care.

**Enhancing interdisciplinary collaboration** – Strengthening coordination between the Emergency Department, inpatient units, and community partners to ensure a seamless continuum of care.

**A Patient-Centered Approach**

At its core, the EDRVQP fosters patient-centered care by:

**Strengthening communication** – Ensuring patients leave the ED with a clear understanding of their care plan, warning signs to watch for, and follow-up instructions.

**Engaging patients and families** – Incorporating patient feedback into our quality improvement efforts, reinforcing transparency and

trust.

**Addressing health disparities** – Identifying and mitigating barriers such as limited access to primary care or challenges in managing chronic conditions at home.

**Shaping the Future of Emergency Care**

The Emergency Department Return Visit Quality Program is not only enhancing emergency services today but also shaping the future of patient-centered, data-driven care. By embedding return visit data into our Quality Improvement Plan and aligning with WHGH's strategic vision, we ensure that emergency care remains responsive, effective, and deeply connected to the evolving needs of our patients, families, and community.

This program exemplifies WHGH's unwavering commitment to safety, quality, and continuous learning, driving innovation, collaboration, and excellence to build a stronger, healthier future for all.

## **EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION**

Executive compensation is attached to indicators in our Quality Improvement Plan and linked to the roles of President and Chief Executive Officer, Vice President of Finance, Vice President of Clinical, Chief Human Resources Officer and Chief of Staff.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION/DESIGNATED LEAD**

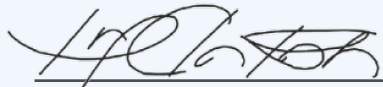
Director of Quality and Clinical Practice

(519) 426-0130 extension 3454

## SIGN-OFF

It is recommended that the following individuals review and sign-off on your organization's Quality Improvement Plan (where applicable):

I have reviewed and approved our organization's Quality Improvement Plan on  
March 24, 2025



Board Chair



Board Quality Committee Chair



Chief Executive Officer

EDRVQP lead, if applicable