

Let's Make Healthy
Change Happen.



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

SickKids[®]

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

ontario.ca/excellentcare

Overview

The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) is Canada's leading centre dedicated to improving children's health and one of the world's preeminent academic health sciences centres. SickKids is known for its outstanding staff, who live our corporate values of excellence, integrity, inclusivity, innovation, collaboration, and compassionate and family-centred care. Staff at SickKids are united in their focus on improving health outcomes and committed to providing high-quality and safe care to our patients and families, reinforced through our vision: *Healthier Children. A Better World.*



The COVID-19 pandemic tested us in new and profound ways since its declaration in March 2020. As the pandemic has persisted, so have we. We rose to new heights of resilience, innovation, adaptability, and commitment in the pursuit of our mission while keeping everyone – patients, families and staff – safe. Despite shifting priorities due to the pandemic, we remained focused on developing and refining strategies to ensure “quality and accountability in everything we do,” which is one of the six tenets of the [SickKids 2025 Strategic Plan](#).



Quality improvement and accountability is at the core of SickKids 2025 as we continue our journey towards a high-reliability organization, the ultimate goal being patients do not experience any preventable harm while under our care. Technological progress and data-driven approaches are balanced by a focus on the human elements of healing, bringing our patients and families closer in the co-design of research, education, and care, and ensuring compassionate communication during every encounter.

This strategic plan was launched just days before the declaration of the pandemic. Through multiple waves of COVID-19, our management efforts for the virus have remained steadfast, but like the community at large, SickKids too had to “learn to live with COVID.” We never hit pause on our important strategic work. Indeed, we accelerated initiatives such as virtual care, which “transcends geography” to provide specialized outpatient visits, virtual urgent care, and remote patient monitoring. Through virtual care we are expanding equitable access to care and increasing convenience for children and families, as well as optimizing value for all.

Likewise, the Connected Care program helps provide SickKids care beyond our hospital walls through programming to support home and community providers. Through partnerships across the continuum of care, Connected Care helps coordinate services, improve health and safety, and spread standards of paediatric practice. As a result, we deliver greater value across the health system to improve effective care transitions from hospital to home for caregivers of children with medical complexity and technology dependence.

We are deeply proud of the work we have done – together with our hospital and system partners – to plan, collaborate and function as “one system” during times of crisis. We have summarized the leadership role SickKids played throughout the pandemic and the impact our efforts have had across multiple areas and in multiple communities (public education, guidance for government, testing, vaccination, caring for patients) in this detailed report ([Answering the Call](#)). Most notably, SickKids worked with regional hospital colleagues and systems partners to prepare for and accept patient transfers to ensure the delivery of timely, high-quality care. SickKids not only accepted paediatric patients from other hospitals when capacity was tight, but also opened an eight-bed adult unit within its ICU – a first in the history of the organization.

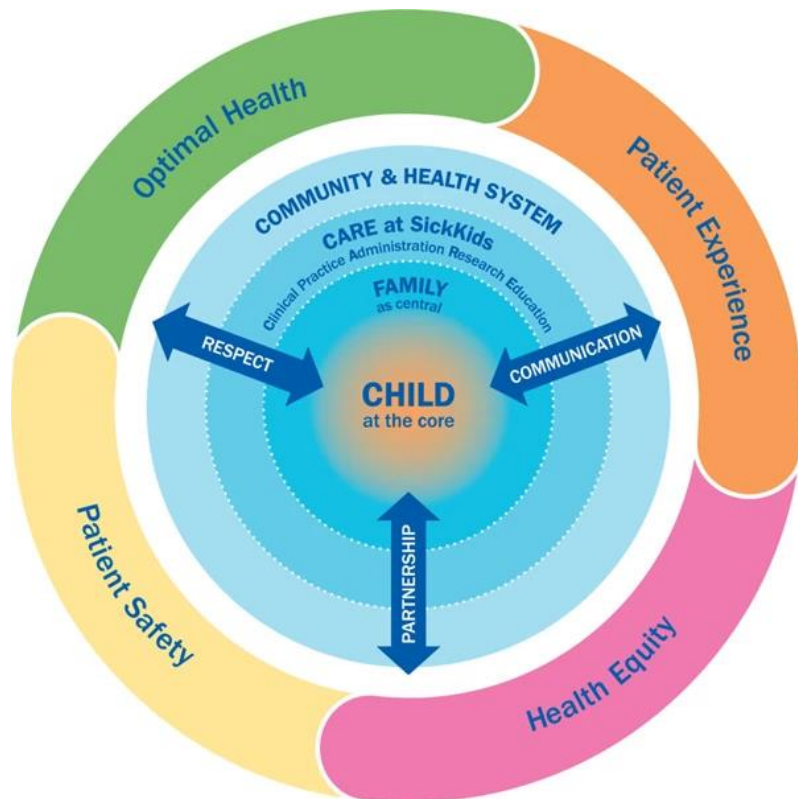


At the end of 2022, adult hospital partners responded when a viral wave of RSV and flu overwhelmed the paediatric health-care system. The added paediatric capacity opened in adult hospitals in the community helped ease the strain at SickKids, allowing us to focus on the patients who needed the specialized care that only SickKids provides. This level of cooperation is good news for all Ontarians and a promising sign for the future of health care in this province.

Waiting for surgery or diagnostic imaging is yet another way children have been significantly affected by the pandemic. The waitlist for time-sensitive surgeries at SickKids was far too long prior to the pandemic and, due to ramp down measures put in place to prepare for possible surges of COVID-19 patients, became even longer after. This situation is unacceptable to SickKids and for patients and families in Ontario. Access to diagnostic imaging and surgery in children has a major impact on their development, and it is critical that cases are completed in an acceptable timeframe to optimize a child's outcome. Over 60% of the 6500 patients currently on the waitlist are waiting longer than is what is recognized as clinically acceptable. That's why our organization has been strongly advocating for increased government funding to treat more patients. We continue to explore innovative ways to provide timely treatment to children to reduce these waitlists as quickly as possible for patients and families.

Patient/client/resident engagement and partnering

The [Centre for Innovation and Excellence in Child and Family-Centered Care](#) works with patients, families and staff to test innovative approaches and implement best practices for the advancement of child and family-centered care. At SickKids, child and family-centred care is an approach to care and service delivery that recognizes that the child (patient) is at the core of all that we do, and that the family is central in the child's life and therefore central to our care processes. It is embedded in all SickKids processes of CARE (Clinical practice, Administration, Research, and Education) and extends beyond the hospital, into the community and health system where SickKids interacts locally, nationally, and internationally to shape and support health-care service delivery.



At SickKids, we believe that child and family-centred care is achieved through the following: respect, whereby patients and families receive personalized and compassionate care; communication, which promotes mutual understanding; and partnership, whereby children and families are engaged in their care in an authentic and collaborative way. We believe that this approach results in optimal health, patient safety, health equity, and a positive patient and family experience. At SickKids, partnership is about engaging children and families, according to their preference, in an authentic way.

This means working hand-in-hand with patients and their families to bring their voices to the table, to learn from their experiences navigating care, and to seek their input in the design of our services and spaces, and in priority-setting and policymaking.

The [Family Advisory Network \(FAN\)](#) is a group of patients, family members and caregivers who volunteer their time in person and from home to make SickKids a better place. Advisors provide a unique perspective and make a difference at all levels of the hospital. For example, they can impact the way staff care for patients at the bedside, advise on the design of our spaces, and lead discussions in development of hospital policies and procedures. The FAN has two main components:

- The Children’s Council is a group of patients and siblings, ages nine to 17, who work together to make SickKids a better place. Their goal is to incorporate the child and youth voice and perspective in all SickKids programs and projects. They provide feedback on hospital initiatives, and even lead select projects that make the patient and family experience better.
- The Family-Centred Care Advisory Council (FCCAC) is a council comprised of Patient and Family Advisors and staff who are committed to enhancing child and family-centred care at SickKids. The FCCAC meet regularly to advise on various hospital policies, initiatives, and plans.

One example of a co-design initiative from the past year is “What Matters to Me,” launched in April 2022 during Patient and Family-Centred Care Week. This youth and patient engagement initiative supported by the Children’s Council aims to help staff get to know important information about their patients before entering patient rooms.

Inpatient rooms on all units have a sign on the door or at their bed spot for patients to provide information about themselves, including their preferred name and pronouns, as well as check aspects of their care that are important to them. Additionally, there is the option to add anything else they want staff to know about them. At a glance, staff will gain a solid understanding of their patients’ likes and dislikes when it comes to receiving care, resulting in an elevated Child and Family-Centred Care experience.

The goal is to empower families to share what matters to them to build better communication between families and staff. During the year-long pilot phase, the initiative created a natural increase in Trauma Informed Care, with families feeling listened to and more respected, and patients feeling more included when they want to be, with increased feelings of safety in their environment. The Quality Improvement study showed 100 per cent of families surveyed reported a positive difference in their stay. For example, providing certain information in advance reduced interruptions during sacred prayer times for some families, lowered stress levels when staff knew not to talk about medical care in front of the patient at the patient’s request, and cues on interacting with patients that meet their individual developmental and learning needs. To sum up, having this information before a staff member enters the room or bed spot allows for more holistic, individualized, patient-centred care.

What Matters to Me

My preferred name: _____ Pronouns: _____

Knock before entering

Let me know who you are and why you have come into my room

Explain to me what you need to do before you touch me

Tell me before you move my bed or touch my medical equipment

Wait until my family caregiver is with me before doing medical care when possible

Include me in medical conversations: Yes No

Do not talk about medical things in front of me

Remember that I'm listening to everything that you are saying

Other things I would like to share:

We're currently exploring a new platform to conduct patient and family experience surveys, which collect important feedback from patients and families about their hospital experience to identify quality improvement opportunities. In the interim, we will continue to listen to requests, compliments and concerns we receive through the [Office of Patient and Family Experience](#). This feedback also drives improvement initiatives and helps us support patients, families and staff to build positive relationships across SickKids.

Provider experience

The health-care sector has endured unprecedented challenges over the last few years. We've asked more of health-care workers than ever before, resulting in widespread burnout and staffing challenges, and SickKids is not immune.

Staff opinions matter, and we have a long tradition of engaging staff in identifying opportunities for improvement through a "you asked, we listened" approach. In 2022, SickKids conducted an Employee Engagement survey that received a high rate of response and individual comments. The Senior Leadership team reviewed the results carefully, which focused on staffing challenges, burnout, compensation, and benefits. Some immediate changes were made based on feedback and leadership has action plans in place to better understand additional changes and prioritize enhancements that are important to staff.



SickKids also holds quarterly Town Hall meetings for all staff, which are currently held virtually to allow everyone an opportunity to attend. Recordings are made available immediately afterwards for staff who couldn't participate live. Questions are taken from staff after the formal presentation, and any questions not answered live are answered in writing at a later date. This information is posted on our staff intranet site (mySickKids) and our COVID-19 information for staff website accessible for everyone working remotely.

Face-to-face meetings through leader rounding, which is also an explicit stream of our Caring Safely program to eliminate preventable harm, happen at multiple levels of the organization, including executive, director and manager. Leaders have scheduled discussions/huddles with staff to hear what is on their minds and identify opportunities for improvement. The idea is that, by leaders visiting the “front lines,” they can spread good practices and, most importantly, listen to what staff have to say. Further, each morning of the week leaders participate in a Daily Safety Brief meeting to discuss safety issues that may impact patients, families, and staff.

The year also saw the launch of a dedicated [Staff Health and Well-being Strategy](#). This strategy has a singular focus on staff because we can't sustainably meet the needs of the children and families we serve without first restoring the physical and mental health and well-being of the SickKids team. Using the strategy as a guide, we are working together to find solutions to reduce overload, model healthy behaviours in our leadership, culture, and daily activities, and create environments where teams and individuals can thrive. The strategy was quickly followed up with a new Staff Health and Well-being website, a one-stop shop for health and well-being housing all the information and resources available for SickKids staff to take better care of their physical and mental health. Divided into five sections – physical, mental, emotional, financial, and occupational – staff can easily find information and resources about the dimension of health that interests them most.

The website also includes information about our pioneering Peer Support and Trauma Support Program, whose mission is to support our colleagues and raise awareness around mental health and well-being. The program has been integral in the last few years, as SickKids staff have sought the support of their peers to help them through challenging times. The Peer Support program also had the distinction of being awarded a Leading Practice by Health Standards Organization, an affiliate of Accreditation Canada.

Workplace Violence Prevention

The hospital can sometimes be a stressful environment and we recognize that patients, families and staff may not always be at their best during these times. We recognize this challenge and want to support everyone coming through our doors experience a safe environment. That's why workplace violence prevention remains a priority at SickKids.

Caregiver escalation and violence in health care has been on the rise worldwide, particularly during COVID, and SickKids has not been spared. As we contend with an increased number of patients coming into the hospital for a variety of reasons, tempers can rise. Even one incident of abusive behaviour, aggression or violence towards a staff member is unacceptable. While the vast majority of patients and families behave respectfully, there is no excuse for abuse.

In synergy with our SickKids 2025 Strategic Plan objectives to eliminate preventable harm and champion civility, the new [Staff Health and Well-being Strategy](#) will help guide us in “creating a safe, inclusive work environment” to identify and eliminate toxic behaviours within our physical and virtual walls. Central to these efforts is an incivility coaching and feedback program and policy enhancements that aim to protect staff from angry, aggressive, or violent actions of individuals in violation of SickKids' Code of Conduct ,and ensure no one ever feels threatened on the SickKids campus.

A new Code White policy and procedure was implemented in September 2020 to help staff anticipate risks and respond appropriately if de-escalation is not successful. Hospital-wide education and mock Code Whites were held in preparation and are still ongoing. Training is provided to new staff and students during orientation. All staff must complete workplace violence prevention related iLearn courses, including

"Preventing Workplace Violence" and "Code of Conduct." Other training available to staff who work in patient care areas include CPI Non-violent Crisis Intervention (NCI), CPI Autism Spectrum Disorder, and Autism e-learning module. The implementation of a new Behavioural Screening Tool is a universal patient assessment system to identify potentially aggressive patients to help with early identification of risky

behaviours that may lead to staff or patient injury. This tool is available to both inpatient and ambulatory settings to assist in providing prompts for interventions to keep staff safe. With these initiatives in place, we are hopeful to see a reduction in workplace violence incidents in the coming year.

Though the majority of pandemic precautions were dropped in community settings, that's not the case at SickKids, where masking, distancing and family presence restrictions remain in effect. As these rules can be confusing and triggering for some caregivers, we created a new role at our main entrance called Hospital Navigation. This team acts to greet patients and families with a warm and friendly face, help answer any questions, share current masking and family presence policies, and provide assistance as needed to help them find their way.



Although we have several initiatives in place to prevent workplace violence, we are doing more, including the creation of a Caregiver Escalation and Violence Steering Committee. The Steering Committee oversees and coordinates all activities related to preventing/addressing caregiver escalation and violence against staff, including multiple task forces designed to address key issues.

Patient safety

Since 2015, SickKids has been part of a larger paediatric network across North America working to further strengthen our collective commitment to safety. We call the program [Caring Safely](#). Objectives within our strategic plan support our relentless focus and attention to safety as we work towards our overarching goal – to eliminate preventable harm. Caring Safely has accelerated our progress by setting ambitious targets, leveraging transparency and comparative data, and introducing principles and practices from ultra-safe industries outside of health care, known as high reliability organizations. And the results to date show SickKids is becoming a safer place for our community of patients, families, staff, and volunteers because of Caring Safely.



As the first Canadian hospital to partner with Children’s Hospitals Solutions for Patient Safety (SPS), a network of over 140 children’s hospitals, we are leading and learning from organizations that are working towards the same goal by building on one another’s successes and confidence. Since entering SPS, another seven Canadian paediatric health centres have joined as well, dramatically strengthening collaboration on paediatric safety across Canada. This group shares the belief that, by putting aside competition and sharing our safety successes and failures, we can achieve our safety goals faster.

Caring Safely

means that everyone:



**Makes a personal
commitment to safety**




**Supports a
questioning attitude**



**Is accountable for clear and
complete communication**

Thank you for working together to eliminate preventable harm




At its core, Caring Safely is about eliminating preventable harm by reliably deploying specific safety strategies and tools while paying attention to important elements of a safety culture and associated behaviours. These are taught through training courses, including “Error Prevention,” which is available to all staff, especially when onboarding at SickKids. The main types of harm we’re focused on preventing include hospital acquired conditions (e.g., central line associated blood stream infections, surgical site infections, falls and pressure injuries), serious safety events, and employee safety events.

In 2022, we unveiled our new three-year safety goals to the entire organization based on the areas of focus outlined above:

- Reduce composite hospital acquired conditions
- Reduce the serious safety event rate
- Reduce staff days away, restricted or transferred

Sharing lessons learned is an important element of our safety culture, and staff are reminded frequently that the intent is always to pinpoint root causes, not to pin blame. For instance, we developed a methodology for HAC reduction starting with CLABSI, involving a combination of reliable adherence to evidence-informed bundles along with leadership methods. As behaviours of individuals and teams ultimately determine an organization's outcomes, the role of leaders at all levels is to effectively influence behaviors to achieve performance expectations. Leading for high reliability performance – finding and fixing barriers to support staff – is fundamental to creating and sustaining a culture of safety and performance excellence.

With respect to SSEs, we always strive to use a consistent language when describing what happened and the contributing factors to an event. Our standardized root cause analysis reveals system failures from which we develop corrective actions to prevent similar events from happening. All corrective actions are endorsed by senior leaders. The learning from root cause analysis is shared with staff through rounding, safety stories, town halls, reports, and summaries provided at safety meetings. In addition, we work to integrate corrective actions into policies, procedures and processes and track implementation. Our teams also ensure we share lessons learned with the family caregivers of patients who experienced harm.



We learn and improve just as much from studying what goes right, and that's the objective of our Good Catch program. Near miss events provide excellent learning opportunities for staff to understand through real-life examples of colleagues using safety behaviours and tools while on the job. Good Catch stories explain how harm was prevented and help spread these safety behaviours and practices to reduce preventable harm in the future.

Another element of our safety culture at SickKids is empowering staff to escalate issues and provide them the tools to report and learn from these events. Perhaps the most important tool is our online Safety Reporting System (SRS), which is used to capture safety events, safety concerns, hazards, and breaches. Safety reporting facilitates the identification, trending and communication of safety issues. Event follow-up allows us to identify opportunities for system improvement with the goal of preventing similar situations to keep patients and staff safe. SickKids continues to communicate with staff about the importance of using the SRS. The more robust our safety reporting, the more we can understand opportunities for quality improvement and focus on those specific areas.

Health equity

Health equity is an important component of the [SickKids Model of Child and Family Centred Care](#).

The [SickKids EDI Strategy](#) is aligned with [Ontario Health's](#) Equity, Inclusion, Diversity and Anti-Racism Framework to address racism and discrimination and reduce inequities in the Ontario health system. Developed using a health systems lens, our EDI Strategy provides a roadmap to achieve a more equitable, diverse and inclusive organization and support the vision of the [SickKids 2025 Strategic Plan](#).

One of the strategy's aims is to Integrate EDI in Care, Research and Education by eliminating disparities in access to services to optimize child health outcomes. In order to achieve those objectives, initial efforts will be to focus on embedding EDI in organization structures, systems and policies through the development of data systems to inform best practice, planning, implementation and evaluation.

Collection of equity and social determinants of health data will support population health management efforts to benefit patients. As of 2013, all Toronto hospitals were required to collect socio-demographic data for patients with eight core questions, to be collected on each patient every two years. With the re-issuing of revised set of socio-demographic questions in November 2022, SickKids is taking this opportunity to refresh and relaunch this initiative in collecting and using socio demographic data to improve outcomes – including experience, quality, research, and clinical. SickKids will measure and evaluate disparities in access to care, research and education to minimize variation, ultimately striving to improve child health outcomes.



Executive Compensation

Performance based compensation accounts for an additional 25% of the President and Chief Executive Officer's (CEO) annual base salary, 19% for the Executive Vice President (EVP) and 15% for Vice Presidents (VP)/Chiefs. 40% of the performance-based compensation is directly linked to achieving 100% of the QIP target in addition to financial and other operating targets of the institution. If the organization achieves 100% of the QIP targets set out above, in addition to achieving the financial and operational targets, the percentages listed below are multiplied by each executive's base salary to determine the value of the performance-based compensation tied to the achievement of the QIP.

The following executive roles participate in the Executive Performance Incentive Program. Incentives are awarded based on the degree of achievement of the above performance targets:

- President and CEO 10%
- Executive Vice President 7.6%
- VP, Finance and CFO 6%
- VP and CIO 6%
- VP, Human Resources 6%
- Chief Medical Officer, and VP, Medical and Academic Affairs 6%
- VP, Clinical 6%
- VP, Clinical and Chief, Professional Practice and Nursing 6%
- VP and Chief Legal and Risk Officer 6%
- VP, Transformation 6%

Contact Information

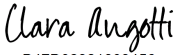
The Hospital for Sick Children
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Sign-off

I have reviewed and approved our organization's Quality Improvement Plan.



Kathleen Taylor, Board Chair

DocuSigned by:


Clara Angotti, Board Quality Committee Chair



Dr Ronald Cohn, President, and Chief Executive Officer