



# Headwaters Health Care Centre Quality Improvement Plan 2024 – 2025

## OVERVIEW

Headwaters Health Care Centre (Headwaters) is a medium-sized community hospital located in Orangeville, Ontario, serving the regional areas of Dufferin County, Wellington County and Caledon. This region represents a mix of rural and semi-urban geographies forecasted to grow faster than the provincial average, reaching a combined population of 266,000 in 2041.

Headwaters' top priority is to provide safe, high-quality, patient centered care, as demonstrated by our Accreditation Canada survey result of Exemplary Standing in October 2023. Our purpose, values, and key strategic directions, [One Community, Caring Together](#), articulate our vision for the future, identify how we want to continuously improve and adapt the care we provide, to get even better in meeting the changing health care needs of our community. Our newly developed [2024-2029 Strategic Plan](#) and [2023-2028 Clinical Priority Plan](#) jointly serve as practical roadmaps to guide our organization's commitment to quality patient-centered care. With an unrelenting focus on safety, we use evidence-based practices, processes, and resources wisely and are guided by an ethical decision-making framework.

We opened our Patient Experience Office in 2023 to provide more ways for patients, families, and caregivers to share their thoughts on how we can continually improve care at the program level. We have developed a Patient Experience Framework that is helping to guide engagement and active participation of our community in weaving the voice of patients into our projects. Together with an expanded Patient and Family Advisory Partnership (PFAP), we are advancing recruitment of a diverse membership and supporting the integration of PFAP at the program level to elevate the patient experience.

Our physical footprint continues to be evaluated and updated to meet the ever-changing needs of our community:

- New replacement computed tomography (CT) machine in December 2023, which creates greater appointment availability and improved patient experience;
- Permanently funded 13 additional medical/surgical beds with an investment of \$6.643 million from Ontario Health; and over \$2 million for critical hospital upgrades and repairs;
- Relocation and renovation of our dialysis program began in January 2024 with the long term goal of increasing dialysis treatment chairs from 6 to 12;
- Renovations to the emergency department are in the planning stages, with the aim to improve the patient, visitor, staff and physician experience through redesigned waiting areas, clinical spaces, and patient flow.
- [Master planning](#) has also begun as we envision additional long-term upgrades and changes for the next 30 years.

As we define our priorities guided by the 2024 - 25 QIP, we will develop a work plan to improve quality by improving access and delivery of safe, equitable, high quality patient centered care,

while strengthening our focus on community partnerships to serve patients along their health care journey.

## ACCESS AND FLOW

Making sure our patients receive quality care in the right place at the right time is critical to supporting positive health outcomes and experiences. Providing timely **access** to appropriate sites of care and optimizing patient **flow** is therefore essential to ensuring safe, high-quality, patient-centered and timely care delivery.

Over the past year, Headwaters has initiated and/or strengthened several strategies to enhance access to both internal and external health care services.

- Geriatric Emergency Management Nurse consultation for rapid senior assessment and plan for ED diversion when appropriate;
- One time funding from the Ministry to expand our in-house Crisis Worker within the ED, on evening and weekends, providing timely mental health assessments, as well as information for patients and families on community mental health supports;
- Improved appointment booking for services like Diagnostic Imaging (same day dedicated ultrasound appointment slots) and outpatient clinics (provision of open Fracture Clinic appointments);
- Development of a Bilirubin Baby Program to support newborn care in the ED;
- Fit2Sit Program, in collaboration with Dufferin County Paramedic Service, to facilitate more rapid off-loading of patients, improving time to care in the ED and time to return to service for the Paramedic Services team.

Within our inpatient units and outpatient clinics, access and flow has been a major focus in many of our quality initiatives. We strive to ensure patients are receiving timely care and in the most appropriate setting.

1. New mental health partnership with Waypoint Centre, which provides on-call psychiatric consultation for our patients within the Emergency Department and on our inpatient units;
2. A new program called Headwaters2Home, in partnership with Bayshore Health Care, to facilitate returning patients to their home once acute care services are no longer required. This allows for the delivery of wrap-around allied health care for up to 16 weeks;
3. Expanded hours within our Pediatric Urgent Consult Clinic to provide rapid access to children under 18 years of age with specialized pediatric care or outpatient care;
4. Certification as an Ontario Breast Assessment Centre in 2023, to provide care closer to home for our community.

## EQUITY AND INDIGENOUS HEALTH

Headwaters Health Care Centre is committed to ensuring equal access to care and improved well-being for all patients and their families, regardless of social, economic, or demographic

status. The focus on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) is a key foundation of Headwaters' People Strategy Plan, launched in April 2023, and there have been several initiatives implemented over the past year.

Headwaters is looking to establish itself as an organization that serves our diverse community and has set core principles that foster a safe and inclusive environment; acknowledging that structural racism, discrimination, gender bias and oppression do exist within our society and can negatively impact the healthcare that patients receive.

As part of the Employee Engagement Survey in 2022, workforce statistics were gathered from staff and physicians voluntarily self-reporting on DEI metrics. Comprehensive leadership training was provided, and topics of learning included: Foundations of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Human Rights; The Identity Interrupting Bias: An Anti-bias Approach for the Workplace; Factor: Understanding Privilege and Social Locations; Bias and Discrimination: The Interpersonal Impact; Systemic Oppression: Past, Present & Future; and Action, Allyship and Tools for Change.

Our People and Culture team relaunched the previous Accessibility and Equity Committee to be expanded into our organizational Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Committee, with a vision of further embracing inclusion and diversity as a focus at Headwaters.

Ontario Health's (OH) Equity, Diversity and Anti-Racism Framework focuses on eleven (11) areas of action to achieve better outcomes for our patients, families, and providers in the health system, as well as the staff, physicians and volunteers who provide care. Headwaters will be adopting the OH Equity Framework to formalize a DEIB action plan and Multi-Year Plan for 2025 to 2027, and this will be supported through the IDEA committee beginning in Q4 of FY 23/24.

## PATIENT EXPERIENCE

Headwaters continues to partner with patients, families, and caregivers on our journey to achieving our purpose of *One Community, Caring Together*. Over the past year, we strengthened our Patient and Family Advisory Partnership (PFAP) through focused recruitment of volunteers, which has more than doubled in size in the past six months, with many Patient and Family Advisors (PFAs) joining the discussions and planning at the Quality and Practice Councils.

PFAs continue to provide input on hospital planning and operations by participating in working groups, committees, hiring panels, and capital planning. We collaborated with PFAs on several key quality improvement initiatives this year, including our dialysis suite renovation, our redesigned waiting rooms in the Emergency Department, website redevelopment, and our MyHealth Patient Portal.

In December 2023, we were pleased to initiate our new patient and family experience survey tool. It will support our strategic direction of *Nothing About You, Without You*, and assist us in

measuring our successes in embedding the patient experience in everything we do across the organization.

We also created a dedicated role of Manager, Patient Experience, who oversees PFAP and the newly created Patient Experience Office that actively engages patients and families through a patient relations process. We look forward to the launch of our Patient Experience Framework in March 2024, the master plan of our exceptional patient experience strategy throughout the entire organization, from executive leadership to frontline staff, and from policy to daily operations.

Designed for our patients, families and caregivers, Headwaters created landmark resources that each provide unique information when in our care: Patient and Family Declaration of Values; Patient Rights and Responsibilities; and the Admission Handbook. All of these have received the stamp of approval from our PFAP.

The Patient Experience Office actively engages patients and caregivers through the Patient Family Advisory Program (PFAP) in designing, reviewing, and maintaining the patient relations process. This process offers patients, their families, and the public a confidential mechanism to voice compliments and concerns about their experience or care. It also provides feedback that can help us track the quality of patient experiences and identify opportunities for quality improvement.

Patient and Family Advisors (PFAs) continue to provide input on hospital planning and operations by participating in working groups, committees, hiring panels, and capital planning. We have been pleased to collaborate with PFAs on several key quality improvement initiatives this year, including our dialysis suite renovation and expansion, our redesigned waiting rooms in the Emergency Department, and our new MyHealth Patient Portal.

## PROVIDER EXPERIENCE

Our team is comprised of 820 staff members, 215 physicians, dentists, and midwives, and more than 295 dedicated volunteers. Given the current workforce challenges, we recognize that it is more important than ever to ensure we are investing in the wellness of our people. Our organization has made many advancements in the last year to ensure that our teams have the tools, resources and support they need to provide exemplary care to our patients and families.

We unveiled Our People Strategy, designed to empower and enable our staff and leaders to reach their full potential. It is built around the most predominant themes from the 2022 Employee Engagement Survey and includes four key pillars: Talent Management, Health, Wellbeing & Safety, Learning & Development, and Culture & Recognition. These pillars are grounded in our corporate values and centered on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. This multi-year initiative supports an environment fostering growth, innovation, and excellence while upholding the highest standards of care.

Through the People Strategy, we are developing and implementing an education, learning and development strategy that provides our people with internal and external opportunities to maintain and enhance their skills. As part of this work, our Foundation created a Nursing Education Scholarship Fund to complement our training, education and tuition assistance programs to further support nurses and their professional development. We continue to develop new institutional partnerships to expand and enhance educational opportunities, including organizational participation in both the Clinical Extern Program & Internationally Educated Nurses Program (Supervised Practice Experience Partnership-SPEP). We are also pleased to announce an anticipated partnership with Toronto Metropolitan University.

Headwaters continues to invest in our people by expanding and supporting the work of our leaders to ensure they attend huddles, round in all areas of the organization, and provide one-to-one sessions to staff requiring support. During this past year, Headwaters has continued to implement activities and resources to support the well-being of our people, including opening a dedicated Wellness Centre for staff, physicians and volunteers, seasonal team building activities and staff recognition and Headwaters Heroes programs through our Headwaters Engagement Action & Recognition Team (HEART).

One of the hallmarks of our success is the spirit of collaboration that defines us. The seamless teamwork among our staff and physicians, and the selfless dedication of our volunteers have created a harmonious environment where excellence is not just a goal but a shared reality. It is apparent that we do live and breathe our value of teamwork.

## SAFETY

Headwaters is committed to providing high quality, safe care. Foundational to this commitment is our comprehensive Integrated Quality and Safety Framework, built on the six quality dimensions of Health Quality Ontario, and which guides the organization's adoption of quality and safety principles and practices.

The Professional Practice and Quality Team members engage in the important work of supporting the evaluation, design and enhancement of processes and standards to ensure patients are kept safe while receiving care. Together with the program leadership, they explore and learn from patient safety events, and collaborate with external patient safety communities of practice to share learnings.

Headwaters utilizes a robust electronic incident reporting system that allows our frontline staff to report patient and staff safety incidents. As incidents are reported, notifications are sent to appropriate leaders, promoting immediate response, timely follow-up, investigation, awareness, and support of the people involved including our patients and families. Incident reports are accessible to staff as well, , who can view the status of their incident report, as well as the outcome and actions taken as a result. This helps us to close the loop for our people. Data is

monitored daily by the Manager, Professional Practice, Quality & Innovation for quality assurance and trend identification purposes.

The Professional Practice and Quality Team developed electronic templates to assist with safety incident investigations to ensure that all the pertinent data is collated for review, in addition to the original incident report. Clinical educators provide support and guidance to frontline staff and at the program level, which streamlines and standardizes the approach for the investigations.

When a serious patient safety incident occurs, an interprofessional quality of care review is completed and root causes are identified. Strategies to address the root causes, both immediate interventions and ongoing safety practices, are developed and implemented by the teams. The outcomes of patient safety incidents are shared at department quality rounds, safety huddles and staff in-services, as well as the Board Quality Committee.

This year Headwaters will participate in the Never Events Reporting Initiative developed by Health Quality Ontario to learn how to provide the best care to our patients and foster a “just culture” in the system and to reduce the occurrence of “never events.”

Headwaters implemented our Quality and Safety huddle boards in every department, both clinical and non-clinical, across the organization. We have instituted corporate level patient safety metrics that are monitored by all departments monthly. The Professional Practice and Quality Team works with each department to develop, monitor and improve program level safety metrics that are meaningful for their environment. Additional indicators, such as turnaround times for bed cleaning and facility repairs requests, are tracked at the non-clinical support services level. The Decision Support team has developed, in collaboration with each clinical program, scorecards and real time dashboards, that help teams track their performance in promoting quality and safety practices, all of which are shared on the huddle boards.

We proudly launched our *Five Key Safety Principles* education campaign this year, with a focus on specific messaging for patients/family members and for staff. These colourful banners remind us of the role we all play in supporting high-quality and safe care. They highlight some of the Accreditation Canada required organizational practices that serve as a foundation for our safety campaign.

## Patient and Staff Safety Banner

<b>S</b>	<b>Safe Environment</b> Please tell your manager if you have any safety concerns	
<b>A</b>	<b>Avoid Falls and Infections</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be aware of slips and trips</li> <li>• Clean hands protect lives, please wash your hands</li> </ul>	
<b>F</b>	<b>Family, Friends and Caregivers are important</b> Caregivers are important members of a patient's health care team	
<b>E</b>	<b>Everyone needs to be identified</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use two patient-specific identifiers</li> <li>• Always wear your ID badge</li> </ul>	
<b>T</b>	<b>Tell us about your health</b> Ask the patient about their current medications, symptoms and allergies	
<b>Y</b>	<b>Your next steps</b> Inform patients about what they need to know in their discharge plan	



## POPULATION HEALTH APPROACH

Headwaters believes that our partnerships with patients, families and external collaborators continue to be one of our most valuable assets in achieving our purpose of *One Community, Caring Together*.

We are an active partner in the Hills of Headwaters Collaborative (HOHC) Ontario Health Team, mandated is to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone who lives and provides care across Dufferin-Caledon. It includes over 38 partners from acute care, mental health and addiction services, housing, public health, social services, community supports, hospice and palliative care.

As a member of the Hills of Headwaters Collaborative Ontario Health Team, we co-developed a [“Where to Go” campaign](#) so that our community accesses care in the most appropriate location. Given that the emergency department (ED) is often the "front door" to the organization, developing approaches to improve access and flow in the ED is important.

The current priorities of the Hills of OHT are categorized in five work streams:

- Integrated Care through Population Health Management & Equity Approaches
- Support Patient Navigation & Digital Access
- Collaborative Leadership
- Primary Care Engagement
- Health and Social Care Integration

Headwaters has joined several working groups within these streams to help guide our contributions to the partnership's response to these system level opportunities for improvement. These include Integrated Care/ALC/Home First Project, Palliative Care, Mental Health & Addictions, Digital Access and Physician Recruitment & Retention.

As part of our efforts to provide proactive services to promote health, prevent disease and help people live well with their conditions, Headwaters launched several initiatives with community partners:

- The new Breast Diagnostic Assessment Program, in collaboration with the surgical and diagnostic imaging departments, allows for streamlined care beginning from a patient's screening mammogram.
- Our Diabetes Education Centre has recently expanded its services for greater access to education, monitoring, and illness management for our patients.
- Continuation of the Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT), in collaboration with an OPP officer and Headwaters' Crisis Specialist, to provide de-escalation and appropriate mental health or addictions crisis support.
- TeleCheck and the Dufferin Community Paramedic Program are designed to make it easier for seniors, people with disabilities and those with chronic illnesses to get the care they need in their home. The free and confidential check-in programs connect TeleCheck trained staff and volunteers, paramedics with older adults to help manage their health routines and support daily wellness.
- New developments with TeleCheck include an upcoming partnership with Polycultural Immigrant and Community Service, to provide language translations for TeleCheck clients with multicultural needs.
- Our new partnership with Bayshore Health Care has seen the introduction of the Headwaters2Home Program, a bundled care model that provides patients with timely access to home support options.

These partnerships support the ability of the Headwaters team to care for the unique needs of our community using a population health approach for services.

## EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the executives reporting to the CEO are accountable for the achievement of performance targets in our QIPs.

The purpose of performance-based compensation is to:

- *drive performance and quality of care*
- *establish clear performance expectations and expected outcomes*
- *ensure consistency in the application of the performance incentive, accountability, and transparency*
- *enable teamwork and a shared purpose.*

Performance-based executive compensation is linked to achieving the specific QIP targets, as well as achieving other organizational improvement targets. The amount of compensation that is performance-based for each executive team member is determined as a percentage of that member's base salary.

Headwaters' Executive Team Composition and Portion of Compensation Linked to Performance:

President & Chief Executive Officer, Chief of Staff & VP Medical Affairs, VP Patient Experience, Health Integration and Chief Nursing & Health Disciplines Executive, VP Corporate Services & CFO, and VP People & Culture will have his or her Performance-Based Compensation tied to the achievement of all nine key indicators in the Board approved 2024-25 QIP.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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## SIGN-OFF

I have reviewed and approved our organization's Quality Improvement Plan on March 26, 2024.  
 Board Chair: Dr. Hugh O'Brodovich  
 Board Quality Committee Chair: Gerry Merkley  
 Chief Executive Officer: Kim Delahunt