

Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

# Narrative for Health Care Organizations in Ontario

February 25, 2025

## OVERVIEW

The vision for Norfolk General Hospital's (NGH) 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, NGH 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, NGH 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.

NGH 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.

#### 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

Norfolk General Hospital (NGH) is committed to ensuring patients receive timely, efficient, and seamless access to care, aligned with our vision of fostering healthier communities through exceptional rural healthcare. By optimizing system capacity and strengthening coordination across healthcare sectors, NGH is improving patient flow and enhancing the overall care experience for patients, families, and staff.

A key focus is on reducing delays and ensuring timely transitions within the hospital and across the healthcare continuum. Through collaborative partnerships with primary care providers, long-term care facilities, and regional hospitals, NGH is driving initiatives to:

- Reduce emergency department wait times by expediting initial assessments and streamlining patient flow.

- Improve ambulance offload times through enhanced coordination and resource optimization.

- Address discharge barriers early to facilitate timely transitions from hospital to home or community care.

- Enhance bed availability by optimizing inpatient capacity and reducing avoidable hospital stays.

- By integrating innovative care models, data-driven decision-making, and proactive communication strategies, NGH is strengthening access to care while maintaining a focus on safety, quality, and patient-centered service delivery. These initiatives align with our core values—Compassionate, Inclusive, Respectful, Collaborative, Person-Centered, and Accountable—as we work toward a more efficient, responsive, and connected healthcare system.

## EQUITY AND INDIGENOUS HEALTH

Norfolk General Hospital (NGH) 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—NGH 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, NGH engages 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, participating in a community of practice to advance regional health equity initiatives and improve access to care.

NGH 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.

NGH 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, NGH 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 Norfolk General Hospital (NGH), 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 and supported by our core values—Compassionate, Inclusive, Respectful, Collaborative, Person-Centered, and Accountable—NGH continuously strives to elevate the patient experience by actively engaging patients, families, and residents 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 healthcare experiences and fostering transparency and

mutual understanding. This hands-on approach helps us better connect with patients and identify areas where we can improve the quality of care.

To further enhance access and equity, NGH incorporates patient voices into its Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), collaborating closely with PFAC members, community representatives, and key stakeholders. This collaboration drives efforts to reduce health disparities and ensure that care delivery is responsive to the diverse needs of the community. One key initiative is the enhancement of patient access to medical records, empowering individuals to take an active role in their care and fostering greater transparency.

Leadership rounding with patients remains a cornerstone of our approach, creating opportunities for open communication and addressing concerns directly. These interactions ensure that leadership is in tune with patient experiences and can respond swiftly to emerging needs. Additionally, NGH has established robust patient feedback mechanisms—actively seeking and responding to concerns raised. This ensures a dynamic and responsive approach to meeting patient expectations and delivering continuous quality improvements.

Regular patient experience surveys serve as another vital tool in our efforts to enhance the patient experience. These surveys provide valuable data-driven insights that inform ongoing efforts to improve care delivery. By embedding patient feedback into our everyday practices and collaborating with patients, families, and the community, NGH ensures a sustained commitment to meeting the evolving needs of those we serve.

In all aspects of our operations, NGH is 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

Norfolk General Hospital (NGH) is committed to cultivating 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 healthcare team.

### Recognition & Engagement

NGH actively celebrates the dedication, resilience, and contributions of its staff through comprehensive recognition initiatives. These include:

Personalized appreciation efforts, such as thank-you cards, spotlight features, 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, NGH remains focused on enhancing workplace culture, engagement, and well-being through strategic initiatives that

support staff resilience and professional fulfillment.

### Well-Being & Workforce Sustainability

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

Ongoing wellness programs with 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

NGH 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.

### Commitment to an Outstanding Team

As part of our strategic direction to foster an Outstanding Team, NGH is dedicated to ensuring that all staff feel recognized, supported, and empowered to thrive in a collaborative, respectful, and engaging workplace. Through leadership engagement, staff well-being initiatives, and a strong culture of appreciation, we reinforce our commitment to building a resilient, high-performing workforce that delivers exceptional care to our community.

## SAFETY

Norfolk General Hospital (NGH) 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—NGH 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 NGH'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

NGH 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

NGH 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

NGH 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, NGH 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, NGH 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 Norfolk General Hospital (NGH), 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, NGH 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 NGH 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 NGH'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, NGH 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

NGH'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, NGH 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

Health is shaped by more than just medical care—it is influenced by social, economic, and environmental factors that impact individuals and families every day. At Norfolk General Hospital (NGH), we are committed to a proactive, community-centered approach that focuses on preventative care, health equity, and strong system partnerships to improve overall well-being.

#### Guided by Community Needs

Understanding and addressing the evolving healthcare needs of our region is at the heart of our strategy. Through a comprehensive community assessment, NGH has reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring our services align with the present and future needs of the people we serve. This assessment has informed our strategic plan, guiding investments in new programs, workforce development, and infrastructure to strengthen local healthcare.

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

NGH 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. Our approach includes:

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 like housing, income, food security, and mental health to ensure patients receive holistic care.

Tailoring healthcare delivery to diverse community needs—enhancing accessibility and removing barriers to care for vulnerable populations, including seniors and underserved groups.

### Collaborative Partnerships for System-Wide Impact

As an active participant in the Ontario Health Team, NGH 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

NGH is committed to enhancing health literacy and self-management, ensuring individuals have the tools and knowledge to take an active role in their well-being. This includes:

Expanding digital health solutions such as virtual care, remote patient monitoring, and online health records for improved accessibility.

Strengthening community outreach and education to engage individuals in preventative health and wellness initiatives.

Enhancing mental health and addiction services by integrating supports into primary and acute care pathways.

### Shaping the Future of Healthcare

By bridging gaps between healthcare services, addressing social determinants, and embracing innovation, NGH is driving a population health approach that extends beyond hospital walls. Our ongoing community assessment ensures 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 Norfolk General Hospital's (NGH) commitment to excellence in patient care and continuous quality improvement, the Emergency Department Return Visit Quality Program (EDRVQP) plays a pivotal role in supporting our Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and advancing 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.

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, NGH pinpoints opportunities for clinical and operational improvements, 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 improve 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 NGH'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 provide 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.

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 NGH'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 NGH'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

Jennifer Edwards

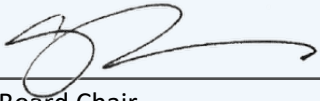
Director of Quality, and Clinical Practice

(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):

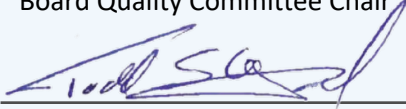
I have reviewed and approved our organization's Quality Improvement Plan on  
March 5, 2025



Board Chair



Board Quality Committee Chair



Chief Executive Officer

EDRVQP lead, if applicable