

Queensway Carleton Hospital leads by example with Exemplary accreditation

Ottawa's Queensway Carleton Hospital leads the field in providing quality care, having achieved the highest award of "Accreditation with Exemplary Standing" from Accreditation Canada.

That standard of excellence positions the hospital among the best in the country.

Accreditation Canada's program is designed to improve client outcomes and health system performance with a focus on safety and quality. For many years the organization has represented 'best in class' standards for accreditation internationally, adopted by many countries around the world. Accreditation Canada evaluates the results of a peer review to determine whether the organization will be accredited, and provides a report that identifies strengths and areas for improvement. The report helps create and implement action plans, continuing the cycle of ongoing quality improvement.

Tom Schonberg, President and CEO of QCH, said according to the final report, "Queensway Carleton Hospital has attained the highest level of performance, achieving excellence in meeting the requirements of the Accreditation program.

"This evaluative process allows us to benchmark and compare ourselves nationally and internationally," explains Mr. Schonberg. "This helps us focus on quality and safety and best practices. High performance results are an indication that we are operating and implementing the broad array of best practices. To be the hospital of choice, you have to be a top performer."

Accreditation Canada is an independent, not-for-profit organization with headquarters in Ottawa that has been improving health quality through accreditation since 1958. They accredit more than 1,100 organizations representing over 6,000 sites and services across Canada. Organizations include hospitals, walk-in clinics and labs, emergency medical services, long-term care homes, home care services, mental health services, and community health programs.

QCH's commitment to compliance with Accreditation Standards is a continuous journey as the standards are constantly evolving to reflect best practices and top performance expectations.

"In preparation for the on-site Accreditation visit, hospital teams evaluated compliance with hundreds of processes/standards and prepared documentation for review by Accreditation Canada," explained Mr. Schonberg. "These documents included everything from how patients are assessed and admitted, how patients receive care and are discharged, how patients and families are involved in their care, our emphasis on patient safety, and pretty much everything related to the how and what of our strategic and operational activities."

During on-site review conducted by four healthcare professional surveyors in early November, much of their time was devoted to "tracers", which involves following numerous patients' journeys through various programs and services. The resulting report confirmed QCH's compliance with 2,014 of 2,026 standards, an overall compliance rating of 99%. In addition, QCH met every one of the 31 Required Organizational Practices.

"Accreditation is one of the most effective ways for hospitals to regularly and consistently examine and improve the quality of their care and services," points out Mr. Schonberg. "We can feel good about what we have achieved, but one of the benefits of the process is continuous improvement. We have scaled one peak but it can't stop there. It has really focused our organization to march forward. There are always areas that we can do better."

The administration is already working to improve areas identified in the report.

"We are calling together our leadership group to carry on the work of what we learned in the report."

Located at 3045 Baseline Road in Ottawa, Queensway Carleton Hospital is west Ottawa's only full-service community hospital, offering a diversity of medical and surgical programs and services.

Employing over 1,917 health care professionals, the 264-bed Queensway Carleton Hospital is focused on

maintaining and enhancing their cornerstone programs – Emergency, Critical Care Services, Childbirth, Geriatrics, Mental Health, Rehabilitation, Medical and Surgical Services.

Moving forward, Mr. Schonberg says QCH will continue to engage the community, through partnering with other health care institutions and involving those who use the services in the decision-making process.

“We are focusing on how we are literally integrating patient-family engagement. We are embedding the patient-family advisory council and engaging people in program planning, policies, to realize our hospital vision to be the hospital of choice. It’s our ‘common sense’ perspective. Sometimes we can’t see the forest for the trees and that is the value of engaging patients and families. Patient-family involvement will impact every aspect of how we operate.”

The other focus is on implementing best practices.

“We are a very busy hospital. Accreditation reemphasized our need to review our patient flow and efficiency, transition and hand off points as well as discharge back into the community.”

QCH serves a population of more than 400,000 and has one of the fastest growing catchment areas in Canada.

“We really try to motivate our staff to go beyond being mediocre. We strive to be a top performer. I am very proud to say that the majority of our team relates to that and gets personal satisfaction to be at the top. Our healthcare team provides expert care that puts our patients and families first.” An

In addition to staff, QCH has a team of 575 volunteers who provided 45,273 hours of service in the past year.

“Our culture is that we live and strive for the vision to be the hospital of choice.”

Colette Ouellet, Director of Quality and Patient Safety, said accreditation is critical to ensure the best in patient care, innovation and safety.

“This demonstrates that we are exceeding the expected standards for the quality of care we deliver and the safety of our patients.”

She added that accreditation has grown and adapted to meet the high demands and rigors of today’s health care system.

“All aspects of hospital care must meet the standard. Delivering the best quality is a whole hospital effort. From emergency preparedness to financial health and contingency planning, our leadership has to be there and behind us, committed to ensuring we have governance and leadership.”

“We all want to do the best we can. We have a great sense of pride. To have our efforts recognized by peer auditors is a great sense of accomplishment and recognition for the positive work we do.

We believe it is important.”