

Building improvement capability and spreading improvement in health care



VISION:

The highest quality of health care for everyone, every time.

MISSION:

To accelerate improvement in the quality of health care throughout Saskatchewan.

VALUES AND PRINCIPLES:

Our values ...

- Create meaningful connections
- Spread passion for learning
- Work to make a difference

We demonstrate our values through these principles...

- Put the patient first
- Respect every individual
- Know and do what is right
- Think scientifically
- Be optimistic
- Add value every day
- Be accountable

OUR VALUE PROPOSITION:

The Health Quality Council (HQC) accelerates improvement of health and health care across Saskatchewan. We do this by building improvement capability and spreading innovation throughout the province, through education, improvement initiatives, and research.

Always learning, always improving

BUILDING THE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR AN ALWAYS LEARNING, ALWAYS IMPROVING HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

I'm pleased to share HQC's new strategic plan with you. It reflects how the way we work and plan has evolved into a more dynamic process and captures changes in the focus, efforts, and language of our health system that have occurred since our last strategic plan. Since then, our work across the system has become better aligned, our knowledge has deepened, and our relationships are stronger. As a result, HQC is more closely integrated into the provincial health care system than ever before. We are learning how best to support improvement in a more focused and coordinated health care system, while at the same time staying true to our legislated mandate to be looking to the horizon, to identify coming opportunities and challenges.

One thing that has not changed is the solid foundation of partnerships that powers our collective quest for improvement. HQC depends on partnerships with individuals and organizations across Saskatchewan's health care system to help generate new data, spread new knowledge, and build new skills, to achieve better health, better care, better teams, and better value.

The word "better" resonates with me; it captures the spirit of continuous improvement, of building on and surpassing what was achieved yesterday, of a never-ending quest for excellence. Our health system and its leaders want and need better

information and analysis to guide individual and collective efforts to improve — from a provider working at the bedside, to a community of leaders shaping policy and processes to support the many moving parts of our health care system.

That means we must continue building the infrastructure for an always-learning, always-improving health system. This strategic plan shows our commitment to keep increasing the improvement capability of health organizations, and to provide support for that through networks and collaboration. Similarly, we need to equip the province's health care workforce with the skills and knowledge needed to design with patients and families the kind of health care system we all need.

This plan was created after intense reflection on what HQC is, what we do, and how we best add value for patients, our health system partners, and the public. We looked to experts from here in Saskatchewan and those outside our province. We considered our legislation, our history, our skills, and what aspects of health system improvement — though started — need further development.

We have identified four strategic priorities we see as the best match between our unique skill set and experience, and the needs of our health system:

1. Integrate patients and families as partners in all aspects of health care.
2. Build learning systems to spread knowledge on improving quality and safety.
3. Measure care outcomes and processes to generate evidence for decision making.
4. Drive improvements in quality and safety by spreading best practices, ideas, and insights.

I encourage you to read this document to learn more about these priorities. Now more than ever, our agency has a critical role to play in helping accelerate improvement in health care. We play that role every day, throughout the province, by leading and supporting continuous system-wide improvement. With our partners — Saskatchewan's patients, families, providers, and organizations — we are discovering new paths to successful change and demonstrating what's possible. By measuring and assessing the results of our system's improvement efforts, we can make corrections in our course, when needed, on our shared journey to becoming a system that's truly Patient First.

Dr. Susan Shaw
Chair, Health Quality Council
(Saskatchewan)

Inspiring and enabling

INSPIRING AND ENABLING TRANSFORMATION BY BUILDING KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE IN QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Our organization was created in 2002 — through passage of The Health Quality Council Act — in response to a call for Saskatchewan to lead the country in developing a quality culture that would be the next great wave in health care.

Our job is to inspire and enable transformation in quality by building knowledge and expertise in quality improvement across the province's health system. In our work, we draw on the experience of patients, families, and providers, and evidence from around the world about what works. We never stop agitating for better, safer health care for all.

HQC operates at arm's length from the provincial government and is overseen by a board made up of Saskatchewan, Canadian, and international experts in clinical care, system management, health system research, health policy, patient- and family-centred care, and continuous improvement/Lean. We focus our attention on ensuring the health system has the capability to meet its own goals; we also address any aspect of quality of care that our board feels is important for the well-being and safety of patients.

The evolution of our strategy

In our early days, our focus was on filling gaps in quality and safety, using measurement tools to identify such gaps, and transparent reporting to call attention to what needed to be fixed. We worked with partners in improvement projects, gave workshops on quality improvement methods, and helped regions establish in-house improvement expertise.

More broadly, we worked with partners in the health system to identify common priorities, then developed initiatives and training to improve quality in those areas — such as our successful work tackling long-term illnesses through the Chronic Disease Management Collaboratives.

While the results were encouraging, system-wide improvement demands a more comprehensive approach, so we broadened the scope of our work by launching the Accelerating Excellence strategy. Through it, we helped senior leaders understand their role in championing quality and safety (Quality as a Business Strategy); involved physicians and nurses in improvement work (Clinical Practice Redesign and Releasing Time to Care™); highlighted the importance of systematic, ongoing measurement (Quality Insight website); and offered training in the advanced skills needed to lead improvement efforts (Quality Improvement Consultant program).

In 2011, on the advice of international experts, senior health system leaders in Saskatchewan agreed to adopt a single common improvement methodology; Lean was the method chosen. We have supported new training and improvement activities using this shared approach to continuous improvement.

Next steps on our transformation journey

Since 2002, our provincial health care system has come a long way in its ability to improve quality of care. Together we are getting better at setting health system goals and monitoring our progress toward achieving them. Health regions and organizations are fostering quality improvement through training and organized activities. Across the province, we see great examples of improvement in individual units and organizations, and we are proud of those instances where improvements have spread system wide.

To redesign the health system, we must continue gathering and applying knowledge — and sharing the lessons that emerge. We are motivated by the following three maxims:

1. Large-scale change demands the spread of improvements and innovation: Every major improvement in health care is important — but if advances are isolated to one setting or situation, the system overall does not benefit.
2. We can't perfectly predict the path we need to follow to get to better, safer health care: Health systems are made up of multiple, diverse, interconnected elements. Because of health care's mix of services, the relationships among them, and varying influences and demands, change initiatives must be flexible and responsive.

3. Saskatchewan's health system must be a learning system: The way to bring about transformation in a system with so many diverse elements is to ensure that effective learning — by individuals, teams, and organizations — is made a top priority, essential to the system, and is provided with coordinated support.

Although we have made good progress, our collective journey to become a system that is patient- and family-centred, safe, appropriate, effective, efficient, and affordable is not over. The experience of other health systems further along in their transformation journey shows that we must continue to relentlessly pursue our shared aims of better health, better care, better teams, and better value.

The Government of Saskatchewan, Ministry of Health, Health Quality Council, and health system organizations — in partnership with patients and families — all have critical roles to play in this shared journey.

HQC's role: Accelerating learning and spreading improvements to keep our health system moving forward.

The factors that promote the spread of improvement, innovation, and large-scale change are

- a shared purpose;
- clear aims that are measured transparently;

- a common methodology for improvement;
- a partnership of patients, families, and clinicians designing and evaluating changes; and,
- support for learning and for spread of innovations, to ensure skilled leadership, education and opportunities to learn across teams and organizations, and faster, more informative measurement.

Saskatchewan's Patient First Review gave our health care system its shared purpose: to put patients first in all decisions about managing and delivering care. As a system, we have made significant progress on measurement and improvement methodology — and have put in place structures and processes to support their continued development. However, the latter two factors — promoting collaborative partnerships and support for learning — require more work to build on early foundational improvements.

Over the term of this strategic plan, HQC can best accelerate improvements in quality and safety by focusing on bringing patients and families together with clinicians, administrators and researchers to design and test changes, and by supporting learning across the system — by individuals, teams, and organizations.

Integrate

PRIORITY 1:

INTEGRATE PATIENTS AND FAMILIES AS PARTNERS
IN ALL ASPECTS OF HEALTH CARE



Saskatchewan patients and their families must be partners in furthering patient-centred care; their involvement is critical when planning and evaluating quality improvement projects, educating providers, and helping shape research and policy.

We will:

- increase opportunities for patients and family members to be health system advisors, and support them in those roles; and,

- work with health care providers — as well as patients and families — to ensure that all care encounters are grounded in mutual dignity and respect, transparent and effective communication, and collaboration.

Build

PRIORITY 2:

BUILD LEARNING SYSTEMS TO SPREAD KNOWLEDGE
ON IMPROVING HEALTH CARE QUALITY AND SAFETY



Real transformation comes through learning — by individuals, teams, and organizations.

Saskatchewan's health system needs common goals and coordinated approaches to learning, based on timely data.

We will:

- strengthen the provincial process for identifying, prioritizing, developing, spreading, and integrating improvements;

- work with health system and academic partners, and patients and their families, to integrate quality improvement education directly into the delivery of health care, so that everyone who works in or is touched by the health system has opportunities to develop the skills they need; and,
- serve as the hub for health care redesign, bringing stakeholders together to develop, test, and spread innovations for improving quality and safety.

Measure

PRIORITY 3:

MEASURE HEALTH CARE OUTCOMES AND PROCESSES TO GENERATE EVIDENCE FOR DECISION MAKING



Making good data available quickly — on people's health needs, care processes, and results — is essential for providing high-quality care. This will assist everyone involved in planning, understanding, and improving the health system. Gathering, analysing, and using that information must be an integral part of delivering care.

We will:

- work with the Ministry of Health, health organizations, and eHealth Saskatchewan to design better measures of health system quality, safety, and performance, and provide training on how to most

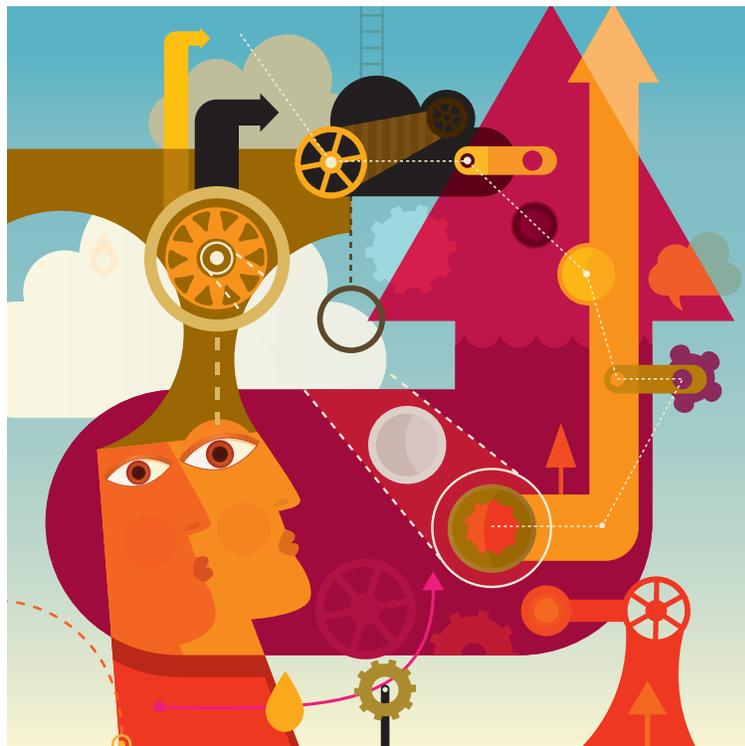
effectively display, interpret, and use data;

- develop instruction on measurement for improvement as part of an Integrated Learning System;
- provide teams with coaching and direction in creating clinical measurement systems; and,
- work with health system and academic partners to provide advanced data analyses and grow capacity in Saskatchewan for better use of information in health care.

Improve

PRIORITY 4:

DRIVE IMPROVEMENTS IN QUALITY AND SAFETY BY SPREADING BEST PRACTICES, IDEAS, AND INSIGHTS



Saskatchewan's people and health care needs are unique, but health systems all over the world face common problems. Our improvement and redesign initiatives should incorporate best practices in large-scale change and the experience of high-performing health systems worldwide.

We will:

- inform political and health leaders about change and learning health systems;

- create opportunities for patients and quality improvement champions to share their insights, knowledge, and experiences to promote positive change; and,
- connect with Canadian and international experts on quality improvement, research, patient- and family-centred care, and large-scale change and bring their insights to Saskatchewan.

