



## Unison Health and Community Services

### Accredited with Exemplary Standing

September 2018 to 2022

**Unison Health and Community Services** has gone beyond the requirements of the Qmentum accreditation program and demonstrates excellence in quality improvement. It is accredited until September 2022 provided program requirements continue to be met.

**Unison Health and Community Services** is participating in the Accreditation Canada Qmentum accreditation program. Qmentum helps organizations strengthen their quality improvement efforts by identifying what they are doing well and where improvements are needed.

Organizations that become accredited with Accreditation Canada do so as a mark of pride and as a way to create a strong and sustainable culture of quality and safety.

Accreditation Canada commends **Unison Health and Community Services** for its ongoing work to integrate accreditation into its operations to improve the quality and safety of its programs and services.

#### **Unison Health and Community Services (2018)**

Unison Health and Community Services is a non-profit, community-based organization that serves neighbourhoods in North West Toronto. Operating out of 5 locations, Unison offers core services that include primary health care, counselling, WestReach Program, health promotion, early years programs, legal services, harm reduction, housing assistance, adult protective services, Pathways to Education, diabetes prevention and Diabetes Education Program.

Unison's mission is working together to deliver accessible and high quality health and community services that are integrated, respond to needs, build on strengths and inspire change.

#### **Accreditation Canada**

We are independent, not-for-profit, and 100 percent Canadian. For more than 55 years, we have set national standards and shared leading practices from around the globe so we can continue to raise the bar for health quality.

As the leader in Canadian health care accreditation, we accredit more than 1,100 health care and social services organizations in Canada and around the world.

Accreditation Canada is accredited by the International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISQua) [www.isqua.org](http://www.isqua.org), a tangible demonstration that our programs meet international standards.

Find out more about what we do at [www.accreditation.ca](http://www.accreditation.ca).

## Demonstrating a commitment to quality and safety

Accreditation is an ongoing process of evaluating and recognizing a program or service as meeting established standards. It is a powerful tool for quality improvement. As a roadmap to quality, Accreditation Canada's Qmentum accreditation program provides evidence-informed standards, tools, resources, and guidance to health care and social services organizations on their journey to excellence.

As part of the program, most organizations conduct an extensive self-assessment to determine the extent to which they are meeting the Accreditation Canada standards and make changes to areas that need improvement. Every four years, Accreditation Canada surveyors, who are health care professionals from accredited organizations, visit the organization and conduct an on-site survey. After the survey, an accreditation decision is issued and the ongoing cycle of assessment and improvement continues.

This Executive Summary highlights some of the key achievements, strengths, and opportunities for improvement that were identified during the on-site survey at the organization. Detailed results are found in the organization's Accreditation Report.

### On-site survey dates

September 17, 2018 to September 20, 2018

### Locations surveyed

- **3** locations were assessed by the surveyor team during the on-site survey. Locations and sites visited were identified by considering risk factors such as the complexity of the organization, the scope of services at various sites, high or low volume sites, patient flow, geographical location, issues or concerns that may have arisen during the accreditation cycle, and results from previous on-site surveys. As a rule, sites that were not surveyed during one accreditation cycle become priorities for survey in the next.
- All sites and services are deemed **Accredited with Exemplary Standing** as of the date of this report.

See **Appendix A** for a list of the locations that were surveyed.

### Standards used in the assessment

- **6 sets of standards** were used in the assessment.

## Summary of surveyor team observations

*These surveyor observations appear in both the Executive Summary and the Accreditation Report.*

During the on-site survey, the surveyor team undertook a number of activities to determine the extent to which the organization met the accreditation program requirements. They observed the care that was provided; talked to staff, clients, families and others; reviewed documents and files; and recorded the results.

This process, known as a tracer, helped the surveyors follow a client's path through the organization. It gives them a clear picture of how service is delivered at any given point in the process.

The following is a summary of the surveyor team's overall observations.

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Congratulations to Unison Health and Community Services on their continuing quality journey. The organization is commended for ongoing participation in the Accreditation Canada survey process. Unison serves a number of connected Toronto neighbourhoods with a diverse population and identified as experiencing some of the most serious health equity issues in the country. Unison is to be commended for offering a wide range of health and community services in response to the needs of these neighbourhoods.

Since the last survey, the organization has expanded the services in mental health and substance abuse, new resources and programs for youth experiencing barriers, laying the groundwork to create safe and welcoming services for LGBTQ+ clients and is soon to be delivering a Homebound program for seniors with complex needs. Unison has also focused on client and community engagement including the Client Engagement Task Force, new site space design and new telephone system and hotline as well as client input on changes to the organization's website.

The organization has many strengths including dedicated staff and Board, leadership in true community collaboration and collective care approaches and in responsive and respectful services for clients and their neighbourhoods. Unison is challenged in responding to the many great risks and needs of clients and families in the area served, the changing external environment and internal capacity including space and sufficient resources to meet demands.

The Unison Board of directors are deeply dedicated to the organization and those they serve. The Board has well-established good governance practices including well defined and implemented recruitment practices, regular meetings, education and committee structures of Finance, Governance and Quality that support effective oversight of the organization. The Board receives regular reports from Leadership on all areas of operations. Unison's work in the areas of quality, risk and client safety is closely monitored. The Board led a fulsome strategic planning process with engagement of leadership, staff, clients, community partners and other key stakeholders. Operational plans, linked to the strategic plan, are reviewed by the Board. The Board is commended for their passion and leadership in guiding Unison in times of change. The Board is encouraged in their plans to identify and

implement strategies that support meaningful input of clients and families in the overall direction of the organization.

The diversity and breadth of the community partners of Unison reflect the organization's strong commitment to comprehensive collaborative care services for clients and communities. It is evident that the organization embraces the significant benefits of collaborative and collective approaches to better serve people.

Community partners indicate that Unison is their most positive, successful partnership. They describe Unison as open and effective communicators. The Unison staff are regarded as highly competent, flexible, creative and prepared to meet challenges. They appreciate that Unison is extremely supportive of partnerships and is a leader in the community. They also appreciate Unison's openness about struggles and challenges. It was also noted that it is easy to make referrals to Unison. Partners noted that Unison considers comprehensive services including creating physical space for partner services. Unison is described as "our preferred partner". Client safety was noted as a strength of Unison. Partners spoke of shared policies and processes to support client, community and staff safety.

Community partners described many strengths of Unison including skills in gauging community needs, responsiveness, strong leadership that spreads throughout the organization, respect of agencies, client-focused, learning organization, curious and always changing and growing to meet community needs. Community partners wished that there were more resources to support additional services, including after-hours supports, and space. They reflected on the challenges for the community sector in securing space, tools and staffing resources to improve services for a most vulnerable population.

The management of Unison is commended for their leadership of a complex, comprehensive and integrated health and community services organization. The Leadership team is committed to effectively responding to the diverse needs of clients, families and their neighbourhoods. Unison has as impressive breadth and depth of community linkages and partnerships. The leadership team strongly supports collaborative and collective approaches to service, leveraging the strengths of provider partners to better serve clients. Notable also are the shared resources that support the operations of all agencies including shared policies and the impressive West End Quality Improvement collaborative.

It is evident that the Leadership team has made quality, client and staff safety and risk reduction significant priorities since the last survey. The team is commended for the development of a new Quality Framework and related initiatives that are demonstrating positive changes for clients, staff and the community. It is evident that staff are engaged in quality initiatives and clients have the opportunity to track progress and see their feedback acknowledged. The team is encouraged in continuing their work in these areas including staff and the voice of clients throughout.

As the organization moves forward, the Unison Leadership is encouraged to consider a more comprehensive communication plan linked to specific strategies and with targeted audiences. Furthermore, the organization is encouraged to continue to engage the voice of clients in planning and service design.

The staff and volunteers of Unison are passionate about respectful, responsive and best possible services for clients and their neighbourhoods. Staff at Unison are truly client-centred. Staff are very flexible, committed to working in partnership, to meet client needs. It is evident that staff are also skilled team members, not only within the Unison team but also within the greater collaborative care teams of multiple agencies.

Unison has a very low staff turnover rate. Staff indicate that clients, the neighbourhood and their teams are compelling reasons to work at Unison. Some staff also highlight worklife balance as a benefit.

Notable are the education and training opportunities afforded staff. It is evident that the organization invests in staff and also strives to provide opportunities for advancement whenever possible,

Unison offers many community programs and primary care services in four sites in North York. The population served is often a lower socio economic group who may be refugees and landed immigrants who are uninsured for health care. Services at Unison are free. This serves a large need in the communities. Access to services have improved in the last few years, with a decrease in wait lists, advanced access to primary care and triage at all sites to ensure urgent needs are prioritized. Referrals to internal services and external partners are timely and follow up is a part of every staff's role.

The collaborative team approach which uses the expertise of all staff is a positive factor which has improved access and flow for the client. Seamless service is the vision and Unison is definitely on the right track to achieve this type of care.









Clients expressed what wonderful care they receive and really appreciate the client centred model. They feel involved in their care and appreciate the focus on "explaining so you understand", help with landed immigrant status, dental care and links to prevention programs. "Awesome Care" was a quote used by clients. Clients are so grateful to the staff for their caring and respect. They stated "you are so helpful" and "I didn't know where to go or who to ask about my new baby, now I have a place". Clients were also very interested in giving more feedback on the groups and programs content. A good place to follow up with expanding areas that clients can have input.

## Overview: Quality dimensions results

Accreditation Canada uses eight dimensions that all play a part in providing safe, high quality health care.

These dimensions are the basis for the standards, and each criteria in the standards is tied to one of the quality dimensions.

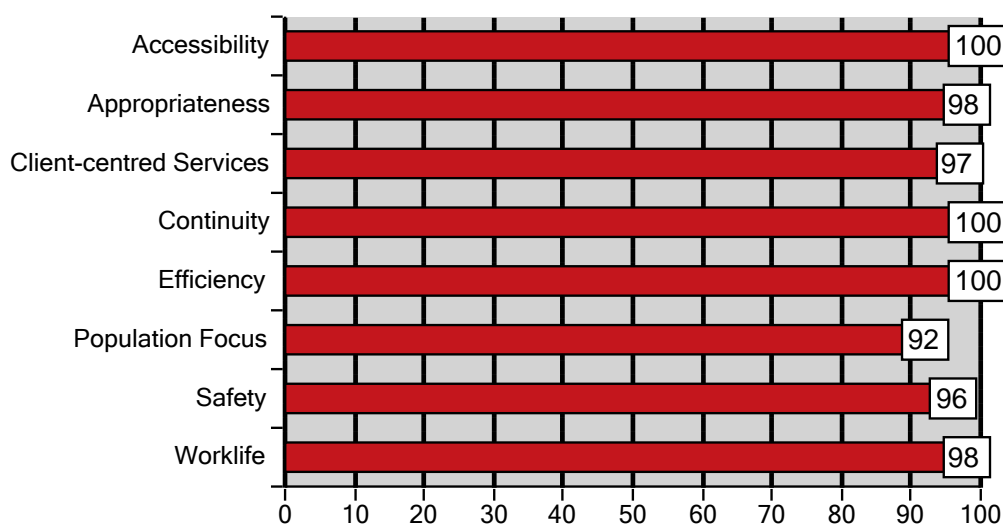
The quality dimensions are:

-  **Accessibility:** Give me timely and equitable services
-  **Appropriateness:** Do the right thing to achieve the best results
-  **Client-centred Services:** Partner with me and my family in our care
-  **Continuity:** Coordinate my care across the continuum
-  **Efficiency:** Make the best use of resources
-  **Population Focus:** Work with my community to anticipate and meet our needs
-  **Safety:** Keep me safe
-  **Worklife:** Take care of those who take care of me

Taken together, the dimensions create a picture of what a high quality health care program or service “looks like.” It is easy to access, focused on the client or patient, safe, efficient, effective, coordinated, reflective of community needs, and supportive of wellness and worklife balance.

This chart shows the percentage of criteria that the organization met for each quality dimension.

**Quality Dimensions: Percentage of criteria met**



## Overview: Standards results

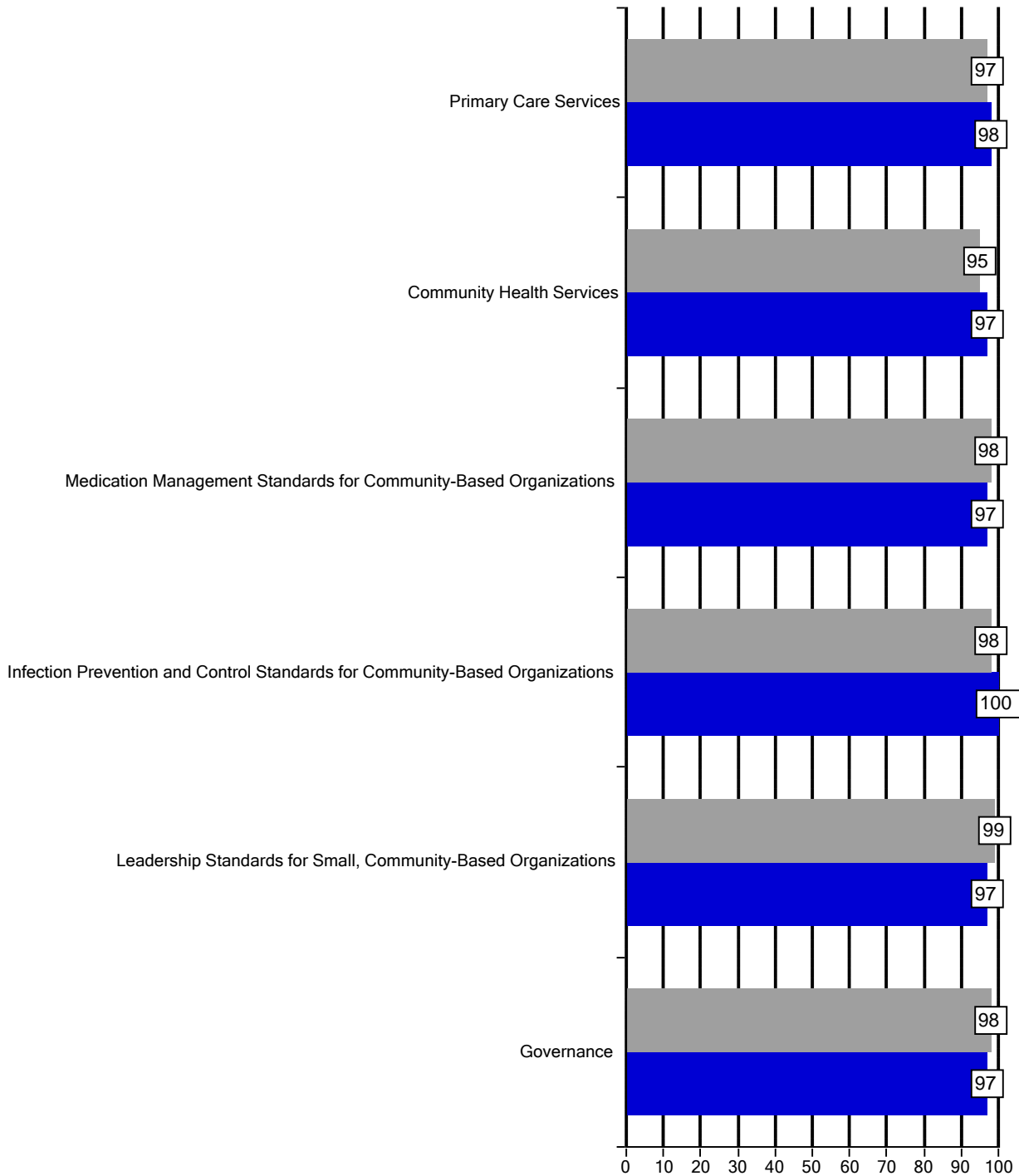
All of the standards make a difference to health care quality and safety. A set of standards includes criteria and guidelines that show what is necessary to provide high quality care and service.

Some criteria—specifically those related to safety, ethics, risk management, or quality improvement—are considered high priority and carry more weight in determining the accreditation decision.

This chart shows the percentage of high priority criteria and the percentage of all criteria that the organization met in each set of standards.

**Standards: Percentage of criteria met**

■ High priority criteria met 
 ■ Total criteria met





## Overview: Required Organizational Practices results

Accreditation Canada defines a Required Organizational Practice (ROP) as an essential practice that must be in place for client safety and to minimize risk. ROPs are part of the standards. Each one has detailed tests for compliance that the organization must meet if it is to meet the ROP.

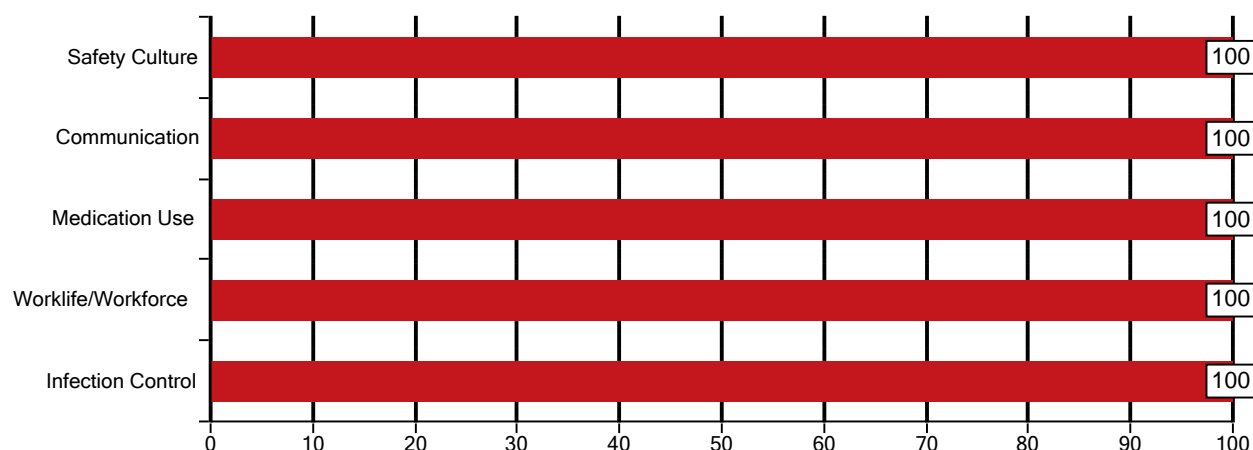
ROPs are always high priority and it is difficult to achieve accreditation without meeting most of the applicable ROPs. To highlight the importance of the ROPs and their role in promoting quality and safety, Accreditation Canada produces the Canadian Health Accreditation Report each year. It analyzes how select ROPs are being met across the country.

ROPs are categorized into six safety areas, each with its own goal:

- **Safety culture:** Create a culture of safety within the organization
- **Communication:** Improve the effectiveness and coordination of communication among care and service providers and with the recipients of care and service across the continuum
- **Medication use:** Ensure the safe use of high-risk medications
- **Worklife/workforce:** Create a worklife and physical environment that supports the safe delivery of care and service
- **Infection control:** Reduce the risk of health care-associated infections and their impact across the continuum of care/service
- **Risk assessment:** Identify safety risks inherent in the client population

See **Appendix B** for a list of the ROPs in each goal area.

**ROP Goal Areas: Percentage of tests for compliance met**



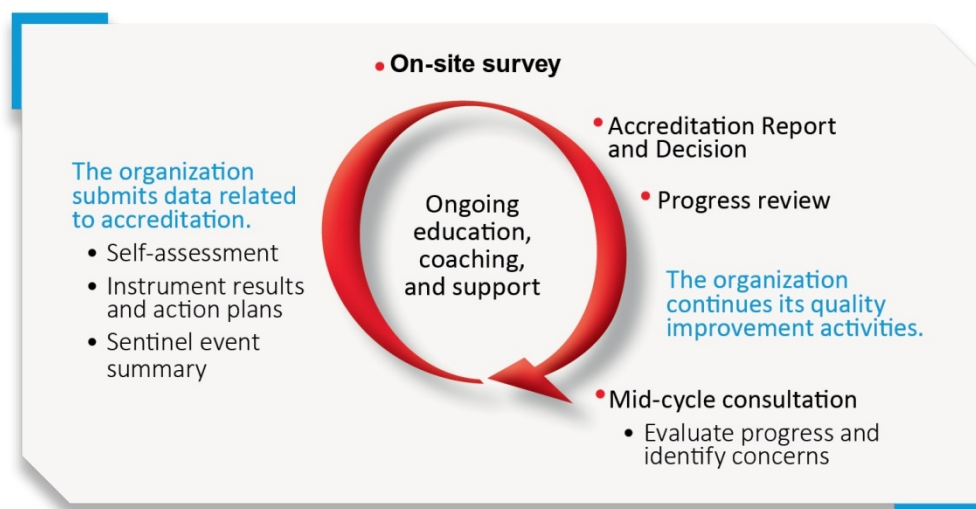
## The quality improvement journey

The Qmentum accreditation program is a four-year cycle of assessment and improvement, where organizations work to meet the standards and raise the quality of their services. Qmentum helps them assess all aspects of their operations, from board and leadership, to care and services, to infrastructure.

The program identifies and rewards quality and innovation. The time and resources an organization invests in accreditation pay off in terms of better care, safer clients, and stronger teamwork. Accreditation also helps organizations be more efficient and gives them structured methods to report on their activities and what they are doing to improve quality.

In the end, all Canadians benefit from safer and higher quality health services as a result of the commitment that so many organizations across the country have made to the accreditation process.

### Qmentum: A four-year cycle of quality improvement



As **Unison Health and Community Services** continues its quality improvement journey, it will conduct an in-depth review of the accreditation results and findings. Then a new cycle of improvement will begin as it incorporates any outstanding issues into its overall quality improvement plan, further strengthening its efforts to build a robust and widespread culture of quality and safety within its walls.

## Appendix A: Locations surveyed

- 1 Bathurst-Finch
- 2 Keele-Rogers
- 3 Lawrence Heights

## Appendix B

### Required Organizational Practices

#### Safety Culture

- Accountability for Quality
  - Patient safety incident disclosure
  - Patient safety incident management
  - Patient safety quarterly reports
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#### Communication

- The “Do Not Use” list of abbreviations
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#### Medication Use

- High-Alert Medications
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#### Worklife/Workforce

- Patient safety plan
  - Patient safety: education and training
  - Preventive Maintenance Program
  - Workplace Violence Prevention
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#### Infection Control

- Hand-Hygiene Compliance
  - Hand-Hygiene Education and Training
  - Reprocessing
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