

Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

# Narrative for Health Care Organizations in Ontario

March 21, 2023



## OVERVIEW

Unison Health and Community Services is committed to delivering high quality and accessible primary health care and community services that are integrated, respond to needs, build on strengths and inspire change. In keeping with the mandate of Community Health Centres across Ontario, Unison offers a broad range of programs and services addressing a number of the social determinants of health, such as income, education and housing. Our vision of 'healthy communities' and our values of accountability, collaboration and equity are central to everything that we do.

At Unison, we prioritize services to equity deserving populations. During 2023, we will begin to roll out our new strategic plan. Among our four strategic priorities, we will:

- 1-Promote an enhanced person-centred care model focusing on digital health, quality, safety and staff wellness;
- 2-Leverage strategic collaborations and alliances, with particular attention to four Ontario Health Teams in our service area;
- 3-Strengthen internal and external communications;
- 4-Integrate and mobilize anti-black racism efforts across the organization.

We will undertake various initiatives in keeping with these priorities during 2023-24. In order to be responsive to rapidly changing circumstances, we will focus on one key quality improvement project involving 2 indicators. For this QIP, we will focus on cancer

screening completion rates. We will develop and use new custom indicators to determine a baseline, identify populations who are experiencing the greatest barriers to getting screened, and test out changes that may enable more clients to actually get screened for cervical and colorectal cancer. This is very well aligned with at least two of Unison's strategic priorities and with the efforts of Ontario Health Teams in their Collaborative QIPs.

## **PATIENT/CLIENT/RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERING**

Unison serves diverse people who are equity deserving by meeting them where they are in terms of their needs and priorities. We have not yet been able to implement co-design as part of our QIP, although we did seek client input to evaluate our new workflow for 7-day follow-up after hospital discharge in 2019. In 2022 we conducted our first client experience survey since 2019, and 237 clients gave us feedback. We trained neutral interviewers to approach people at Unison sites and invited them to complete a survey, with help from the interviewer as required. We also e-mailed out surveys. From the data collected, we identified some items for an action plan. One of our action plan items is to improve access to primary care. Therefore, we are planning for some waiting room conversations in 2023 to ask clients for input on plans for a new virtual drop-in primary care service. This will probably take the form of a display at the sites, with some questions for clients to answer, perhaps animated by a facilitator.

## **PROVIDER EXPERIENCE**

Managers conduct regular one-on-one meetings as well as team meetings with health care providers. These meetings are used to discuss provider wellbeing and engage provider(s) in identifying any areas for improvement. All staff had the opportunity to complete the Worklife Pulse and the Canadian Client Safety Culture surveys from Accreditation Canada. Unison reported the results of these surveys to staff, and invited their input on action plans aimed at addressing areas for improvement. During the pandemic, the organization shared resource materials to support providers and offered a few virtual opportunities to learn mindfulness/centering techniques during bi-weekly CEO Zoom town halls. In 2022, the management team made efforts to appreciate staff in a variety of ways – snack carts and an early fall all staff gathering with food trucks and games as many providers expressed that they missed getting together with colleagues. We also worked with our benefit provider to increase the amount of coverage for mental health counselling and broadened the scope of practitioners covered so that in addition to Social Workers and Psychologists, the plan now covers Clinical Counsellors, Marriage/Family Therapists, Psychoanalysts, and Psychotherapists.

## WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Maintaining a safe work environment is a strategic priority for Unison, part of strategic priority # 1 (in the Overview). Unison has a framework of policies and protocols intended to create a workplace that is safe and free from violence. Each new staff person receives mandatory orientation to relevant policies and protocols, including Unison's Anti-Harassment, Anti-Violence and Occupational Health and Safety Protocols. The organization conducts periodic risk assessments and various types of safety drills, as well as monthly safety inspections, and provides resources to support staff safety, such as security guards during evening hours and panic buttons. De-escalation training by an external expert has also been provided to managers and front-line staff.

We have a reporting system that enables staff to self-report incidents of workplace harassment, violence and health and safety. The Occupational Health and Safety Committee reviews and analyzes all reports received – with a view to mitigating existing issues, to the extent possible, as well as preventing and reducing incidents in future. Incidents are investigated, as required, by the organization's human resources team. Unison staff are able to access counselling supports through the organization's benefits program. Incidents are reported to the Board based on severity level and level of risk to the organization. This happens on an as needed basis.

## PATIENT SAFETY

When there is a client safety incident at Unison, we involve the relevant providers and managers in reviewing what happened and reflecting on it, articulating what has been learned, and planning/implementing changes to practices or systems. We communicate with the affected client about the results of our investigation and what has been put in place to prevent future such incidents. We have also begun asking affected clients to give us feedback on our processes. We document incidents. A summary of incident reports is shared 3 times annually with all primary health care managers. Incidents that have relevance and learning for all sites are shared by managers with their teams. Quality and safety is a standing item on monthly team meeting agendas. Case conferences are another method used to identify and coordinate care plans for more complex clients with all members of the client's inter-disciplinary team. We recently created a client story about how staff at a site worked together to support a woman experiencing post-partum depression. The Social Work team took the lead on responding to this situation, and other teams received both a verbal and written description of what went well and what was identified for future improvement.

## HEALTH EQUITY

Unison has been collecting sociodemographic data including race-based data for all clients with a health record for many years and has been part of the former Toronto Central LHIN's initiative, "We Ask Because We Care". An annual summary of the data is shared with staff and board. We have analyzed and used sociodemographic data to inform design of health/mental health promotion groups. As noted in our QIP Work Plan for 2023-24, we intend to use our sociodemographic data to look for insights about clients who have

declined or who are overdue for cancer screening.

Unison also has an Organization Culture Statement with questions that we give to candidates what are invited to interviews for employment opportunities. The statement indicates that Unison works from an inclusive, sex positive, pro-choice, harm reduction, anti-racist, anti-oppression, and participatory framework. Candidates are requested to consider how well this matches their own value system and to give us their thoughts on how they could ensure that these values are integrated into their day-to-day work.

In Unison's strategic plan for 2016-21, we identified 4 priority populations, among them: mental health and substance use, seniors with complex needs, youth at risk and LGBTQ+. We worked to design and offer new group programs targeted at these populations. Our Social Work Team met with Black-African-Caribbean (ABC) people and designed various wellness and mental health groups targeted at ABC and other diverse populations in our service area. In response to digital access issues that became more prominent during the pandemic, we designed a program called Seniors Online that provides seniors with training and devices and has a well-received inter-generational component. We designed a program targeted at youth violence prevention in some of the neighbourhoods, which is youth-led. Prior to the pandemic, we also assessed Unison for a welcoming culture for LGBTQ+ people and made some changes such as redesigning forms. As a multi-service organization, we provide a wide range of non-medical offerings, of which only a few have been highlighted here.

During the pandemic, we reallocated resources and transformed services/programs to be able to address emergent needs of the

vulnerable clients we serve who were contracting COVID-19 and/or suffering from the knock-on effects of mandatory isolation periods and lockdowns. We supported isolated clients through wellness checks and virtual group programming. We obtained and gave away laptops, cell phones, tablets and sim cards for wifi access. We assisted clients and community members with applying for income supports, when eligible, or accessing emergency funds when not eligible. We provided access to food by distributing prepared meals and food vouchers, as well as by running free running produce markets. Unison housing services, in place for many years, continued to offer assistance with housing search, eviction prevention and rent bank grants throughout this time.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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## OTHER

Unison is part of the West End Quality Improvement Collaboration (WEQIC). With 4 other Toronto CHCs, we share resources and information and implement QI projects with common indicators that enable us to challenge and learn from each other. A list of the other CHCs in the WEQIC is included in the External Collaborators section of the work plan. In addition, Unison is part of several Ontario Health Teams, with full membership in both the North Toronto Ontario Health Team (NTOHT) and the North West Toronto Ontario Health Team (NWTOT). We participate on the Joint Operations/Quality Committee of the NTOHT and presented during 2022 to this OHT's primary care table on the cancer screening quality improvement project implemented by WEQIC/Unison during 2015-18.

## SIGN-OFF

It is recommended that the following individuals review and sign-off on your organization's Quality Improvement Plan (where applicable):

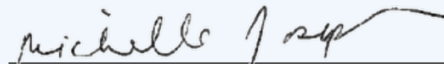
I have reviewed and approved our organization's Quality Improvement Plan on  
March 21, 2023



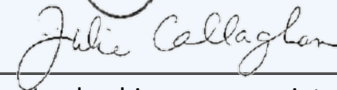
Board Chair



Quality Committee Chair or delegate



Executive Director/Administrative Lead



Other leadership as appropriate: Senior Director Community Health and Quality



Senior Director Primary Care