

**Ministry of Health
and Long-Term Care**

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**Ministère de la Santé
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Dr. Andreas Laupacis
Chair
Health Quality Ontario
130 Bloor Street West, 10th Floor
Toronto ON M5S 1N5

Dear Dr. Laupacis:

I am pleased to write to you in your capacity as Chair of Health Quality Ontario (HQO). Pursuant to the requirements of the Agencies and Appointments Directive, this letter sets out my expectations for HQO for the 2018-19 fiscal year.

In 2018-19, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (the “ministry”) will continue to work in partnership with patients, families, Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs), health service providers and health care innovators to transform our health care system today and for the future. Together we will build on a strong foundation to improve patient experiences, increase access to care, and reduce wait times – while working to reduce health disparities. Patients First created the foundation of an integrated health care system to deliver world-class patient care closer to home, with services distributed equitably across the province. As we collectively transform health care, local care planning and delivery will happen at the community level and will focus on the patient and their family as the key partners in delivering care. Local health care providers and organizations will be empowered to work collaboratively to their full potential.

I ask that HQO consider how it will contribute to this Patients First vision and work with the ministry and the LHINs to realize our shared goal of transforming Ontario’s health care system to ensure the best health for all.

In 2018-19, the ministry will continue working with LHINs and other provincial agencies, health services providers, patients, families and other stakeholders to transform our health care system into the best health care system in the world, one that truly puts patients at the centre of coordinated care and works toward improved health for all.

Together we will build on a strong foundation to increase access to care, reduce wait times, and improve the patient experience – protecting health care for today and the future. This will be a system that makes it easier for patients to get the care they need closer to home,

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provides better value and more investments in patient care, and a system that provides even better care than it does now.

Patients First envisions an integrated health care system in Ontario that delivers world-class patient care and a system in which services are distributed equitably across the province. We will view everything that we do through an equity lens and with patients and their families in mind —because improving the patient experience and working to reduce health disparities and inequities is simply the right way to plan and deliver care.

As we continue to transform health care, we will focus on organizing how care is planned and delivered at the community level, with each patient at the centre of a "care community" of providers and organizations working to full scope of practice as a coordinated team. I ask that HQO consider how it will contribute to fulfilling this Patients First vision when planning for 2018-19, and work with the ministry and LHINs to realize the shared goal of health care transformation.

Under your leadership and that of the senior team, HQO has established itself as a system leader on quality and has done so by successfully executing its legislated mandate to:

- Monitor and report to the people of Ontario;
- Support continuous quality improvement;
- Promote enhanced patient relations in health sector organizations;
- Promote health care that is supported by the best available scientific evidence; and
- Support the Patient Ombudsman in carrying out her functions.

In addition to this ongoing work, I look forward to HQO's leadership on a number of key initiatives in the 2018-19 fiscal year.

Supporting Health System Quality

1. HQO will continue to support the delivery of the Patients First agenda by:

- Developing quality standards including patient oriented statements, monitoring and reporting, and recommendations for adoption.
- Working with the Ontario Quality Standards Committee to make recommendations on implementing quality standards and, where appropriate, engage with Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) clinical leadership, other health sector organizations and other partner organizations across the system.
- Supporting improved opioid prescribing practices by developing prescriber profiles, coordinating an integrated approach to education programs, and initiatives such as mentorship and academic detailing.
- Continue to support the integration of the Health Links approach to care into LHIN sub-regional planning and participate in the development of an enhanced performance measurement framework to better demonstrate the impact of the Health Links approach on patient experience, quality and cost.

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- Collaborate with clinical leaders at the LHIN and LHIN sub-region level to review quality data and identify key trends to guide efforts to improve health care performance and patient experience.
- Advance health system integration by identifying opportunities to align clinical, quality improvement and operational priorities across different health sectors (e.g. primary care, home and community care, etc.) and connecting provincial and regional quality improvement initiatives.
- Advancing Diagnostic Imaging Peer Review in Ontario, to support the implementation of a peer review process for diagnostic imaging.
- Improving access to specialists through support for implementation of musculoskeletal programs and evaluation of bundled payments for hip and knee replacement.
- In collaboration with partners, support quality improvement in the mental health and addictions sector, including building system capacity for improvement and transformation.

Surgical Quality in Ontario

2. HQO has been a leader in its support for hospitals to improve surgical care in Ontario through the Ontario Surgical Quality Improvement Network. To continue this work, HQO will:
 - Through the National Surgical Quality Improvement Program, provide support and resources to surgical teams across the province to achieve long-term surgical quality improvement goals and improved experiences and outcomes for patients.

Improving Patient Access to Information

3. Patients in Ontario are seeking better online information about their health system. As the ministry works to establish Ontario.ca/health as a key access point for this information, HQO will continue to:
 - Work closely with the ministry and partners to continue to support the development and refinement of the Ontario.ca/health site.
 - Work closely with the ministry to establish metrics and public reporting on health system performance and transformation as a result of the Patients First agenda.

Patient Engagement

4. HQO has been a leader in engaging patients and caregivers in Ontario. HQO's patient engagement initiatives will complement and enhance ministry, LHIN, and provider efforts to expand and deepen patient and family engagement at all levels of Ontario's health care system. To support these efforts, HQO will:
 - Provide training, education, tools and resources to support effective engagement between patients and their families, health care planning and provider organizations, and health care professionals to improve health care quality.

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I look forward to seeing HQO continue to build on these initiatives in partnership with the ministry, LHINs and others to support the delivery of your mandate. I thank you for your willingness to serve, as we work together to deliver a patient-centred health care system for the people of Ontario and generations to come.

Yours sincerely,

Original Signed by Minister

Dr. Eric Hoskins
Minister