

QUALITY STANDARDS

Using Quality Standards to Improve Care

Spotlight Report on Ontario Shores

AUGUST 2023

Putting Quality Standards Into Practice

This spotlight report presents an example of an organization's success in implementing Ontario Health's quality standards to improve care.

Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences (Ontario Shores) is a specialized mental health hospital located in Whitby in the Ontario Health East Region. This report focuses on Ontario Shores' efforts to implement the [Schizophrenia: Care for Adults in Hospitals](#) and [Schizophrenia: Care in the Community for Adults](#) quality standards. These quality standards were first published in 2016 and 2018, respectively, and both have been updated in 2023.

Although this report focuses on Ontario Shores' experience implementing the schizophrenia quality standards, the report is meant to function as an example of how organizations can implement any [quality standard](#). Ontario Health Teams and the Ontario Health regions can also use this report to gain insight into how the organizations they support can be successful in their quality standard implementation efforts.

Over the past 5 years, provincial outcomes data related to schizophrenia care have remained stable, indicating a continued opportunity for improvement. For example, the [Schizophrenia: Care for Adults in Hospitals](#) quality standard states that adults with a primary diagnosis of schizophrenia who are discharged from an inpatient setting should receive a follow-up appointment within 7 days. However, recent data show that only 26.8% of adults in Ontario saw a physician in the week following a hospitalization for schizophrenia in fiscal year 2021/22.

Data from 2022/23 show that at Ontario Shores, more than 89% of patients received a follow-up visit within 7 days of discharge, compared to the provincial average of 26.8%.

This report describes how Ontario Shores successfully implemented quality standards to improve care and can be used as an example of how other organizations can do the same.

Step 1: Plan for Change

Get Leadership Buy-In

The work of implementing quality standards at Ontario Shores is driven by Dr. Phil Klassen, Vice President, Medical Affairs, and Dr. Elizabeth Coleman, Medical Director of Quality Standards. Their key responsibilities in implementing quality standards include maintaining alignment between the team's goals and the organization's strategy, championing the project, removing barriers, resolving conflicts, and making timely decisions.

Build a Interprofessional Implementation Team

To implement the schizophrenia quality standards, Ontario Shores created a team including members from operations, medicine, professional practice, project management, peer support, data/analytics, and clinical informatics. The quality standard implementation team worked together to clearly articulate each team member's role and maintain consistent engagement among team members and with their executive sponsors.

Start Small and Expand

Ontario Shores started their implementation journey in 2016 with the [Schizophrenia: Care for Adults in Hospitals](#) quality standard. They started by focusing on 4 of the 11 quality statements. They chose the statements using a prioritization matrix that considered value, usability, and implementation effort. In 2021, they began implementing statements from the [Schizophrenia: Care in the Community for Adults](#) quality standard.

Since 2016, Ontario Shores has continued to implement quality statements from other quality standards related to mental health and addictions as they are released by Ontario Health. Ontario Shores has now implemented almost all statements from all the mental health and addictions quality standards, leveraging learnings from previous implementation activities to operationalize efficiently.

Compare Your Current Practice With What Is Described in the Quality Statements

Ontario Shores compared their current practice with what is described in their chosen quality statements using a "3-bucket model." They grouped gaps in care relative to quality statements into 3 categories.

Bucket 1: Quality statements currently being implemented but not documented effectively

For example, Ontario Shores found that staff were not consistently documenting comprehensive assessments for people with schizophrenia. To make an improvement in this area, they leveraged their electronic health record (EHR) and developed a new documentation template that would allow them to better capture assessment data.

Bucket 2: Quality statements not being implemented consistently in areas where available technical and administrative controls could drive clinical change

For example, Ontario Shores created a schizophrenia treatment plan as a technology enabler in their EHR. This is a mandatory report to facilitate assessment and the prescribing of long-acting injectable antipsychotics and clozapine as clinically indicated. Physician engagement is increased when these plans are also used as progress reports. The use of treatment plans as progress reports elevates adherence to evidence-based medicine and to the quality statements. Treatment plans also capture the data of those in treatment and reasons for patient choices. Physicians are required to review reports or their performance on quality statements twice a year. Technology enablers have been a key driver in increasing overall quality standard adherence from 35% to greater than 90%.

Bucket 3: Quality statements that represented a significant change to the Ontario Shores care model and require resource reallocation, new technology, change management, staff training, or new partnerships to implement

For example, the ability to offer cognitive behavioural therapy for psychosis (CBTp) to each person diagnosed with schizophrenia required an assessment of clinical and training needs, a redistribution of roles and responsibilities, and new templates and measurement tools to capture implementation and outcomes. These changes took time and effort to implement but resulted in uniform access to CBTp for people diagnosed with schizophrenia.

Step 2: Implement Change

Select Implementation Strategies

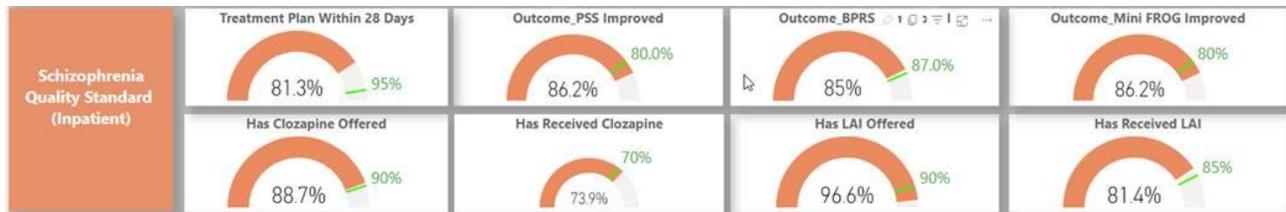
To select their implementation strategies, Ontario Shores considered the key barriers and facilitators to making the changes they prioritized. They also consulted with peer support workers and people with lived experience in the development of their implementation plan to ensure a comprehensive approach. Ontario Shores used a variety of implementation strategies to meet their targets, including:

- Enabling EHR technology (e.g., developing a new documentation template and administrative controls to drive change, as described above in Buckets 1 and 2)
- Involving physicians in decision-making around implementation early in the process, being transparent with the data, and celebrating their successes
- Making changes to operational approaches based on a monthly analysis of key quality indicators
- Routinely reviewing business intelligence reporting dashboards and discussing exceptions in detail, including on a case-by-case basis as appropriate
- Raising awareness of quality standards among patients, families, and caregivers by describing best practices on a website that provides resources for families and caregivers and supporting the Family Council by providing education sessions

Set Goals and Targets

Ontario Shores set individualized targets by looking at how they were doing relative to the indicators in the schizophrenia quality standards and by doing a literature search. They assessed their performance by leveraging existing data collection* for measurement aligned to the schizophrenia quality standards. Based on these inputs, they set targets for each measure that included a minimum threshold value, a goal target, and an exceeds-goal value. Their aim was to set reasonable yet aggressive goals. The figure below is a snapshot in time to show an example of their goal targets (marked in green) for various areas of care. In many cases, Ontario Shores' performance (marked in orange) has met or surpassed their targets.

*Ontario Shores used the Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale (BPRS-6) and Positive Symptom Scale (PSS) to evaluate improvement in symptom burden and the Mini Functional Remission of General Schizophrenia scale (Mini FROGS) to measure improvement in functional abilities specific to the implementation of long-acting injectable antipsychotics and clozapine.



Abbreviations: BPRS, Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale; LAI, long-acting injectable (antipsychotic); Mini FROGS, Mini Functional Remission of General Schizophrenia scale (a short version of the FROGS scale); PSS, Positive Symptom Scale (a subscale of the Positive and Negative Syndrome Scale [PANSS]).

Present Results Visually

In 2021, Ontario Shores rolled out a new physician and nurse practitioner performance dashboard to provide data to clinicians about their performance against quality statements in the quality standards. These data allow clinicians to assess their delivery of care and identify where further effort may be needed. These performance data replace the more typical conversational performance appraisal, and physicians' participation in the dashboard has gained them entry to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) [Quality Improvement \(QI\) Program](#). Through participation in the dashboard, these physicians complete their CPSO QI Program requirements for 5 years. (The figure above is a snapshot of the dashboard).

Step 3: Sustain Change

Monitor Performance

A subset of key performance indicators (KPIs) are selected by Ontario Shores each year for each quality standard being implemented, and the senior management team receives monthly status reports on the organization's performance on these KPIs.

Embed the Change Into Existing Processes

Quality improvements and practice changes are at risk of being lost through staff turnover and shifting implementation priorities. Since 2017, Ontario Shores has minimized this risk by including quality standard implementation in their annual action plans and in staff orientation upon hire. This ensures that quality standard implementation efforts are embedded in the organization's strategic direction and in existing processes, thus prioritizing this work for the entire organization.

Celebrate Success

The data provided by the Ontario Shores physician and nurse practitioner performance dashboard allow Ontario Shores to compare their results against regional and provincial results. Ontario Shores actively celebrates the achievement of physicians, nurse practitioners, and professional practice staff in meeting quality standard targets.

Step 4: Spread Change

Spreading the changes you have made involves moving beyond your unit or department to the entire organization or beyond your organization to other organizations to share tools, resources, approaches, successes, and lessons learned. For example, in 2019 Ontario Shores launched the Schizophrenia Quality Standard Spread Initiative Community of Practice; they collaborated with 15 health service providers (13 hospitals and 2 community organizations) to promote change in alignment with the schizophrenia quality standards. In 2021, they expanded this work by establishing the Quality Standards Implementation Institute. The institute offered more tailored support to 13 partners (11 hospitals and 2 community organizations).

In 2021, Ontario Shores and the Ontario Hospital Association developed the [Schizophrenia Care Dashboard](#) to share indicator results from hospitals with inpatient mental health units. This dashboard, which incorporates quality indicators from the [Schizophrenia: Care for Adults in Hospitals](#) quality standard, uses data to drive quality improvement efforts. It is updated quarterly based on schizophrenia discharge reports from the Ontario Mental Health Reporting System (OMHRS).

In 2022, the Schizophrenia Care Dashboard initiative expanded to focus on the entire patient journey across clinical settings. A key step in this expansion was selecting which quality statements from the [Schizophrenia: Care in the Community for Adults](#) quality standard to start with based on what could be reasonably measured. The data provided on the dashboard align with both schizophrenia quality standards and enable health care providers and policymakers to assess their adherence to and effectiveness in providing evidence-based care for people with schizophrenia. The dashboard also enables comparative analysis, which encourages collaboration and the sharing of successful strategies.

In May 2023, the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) and Ontario Shores collaborated to expand the implementation of the schizophrenia quality standards across Canada. The MHCC and Ontario Shores will provide tools, education, training, and change management support to 4 selected sites to enable them to implement the quality standards. Each site will benefit from a customized approach based on its unique organizational and regional needs.

Conclusion

There is work ahead to improve the delivery of evidence-based care across the health system, and leadership is needed to improve patient experiences and outcomes. To support these efforts, Ontario Health's quality standards and associated implementation resources are available to help organizations get started on this important work. We hope that sharing the experience of Ontario Shores demonstrates a path forward and inspires health care leaders looking to improve the quality of care provided in their organizations.

Getting Started

To view all of Ontario Health's quality standards, please visit our [quality standard library](#).

All quality standards are accompanied by a suite of resources, including:

- A **patient guide** to help patients and caregivers know what to ask for in their care
- A **quality standard placemat**: a quick-reference resource for clinicians summarizing the quality standard with links to helpful resources and tools
- A **case-for-improvement slide deck** explaining why the quality standard was created and the data behind it
- **Technical specifications** containing the quality standard indicators
- A **measurement guide** to support data collection and measurement

Ontario Health's [Getting Started Guide](#) is a good place to start for organizations interested in using quality standards to improve care. It addresses planning for, implementing, and sustaining change and provides samples of quality improvement plans and an action plan template.

Ontario Shores has also created the [Schizophrenia Care for Adults in Hospitals Implementation Resource Guide](#).

For any questions or for support with quality standard implementation, please contact QualityStandards@OntarioHealth.ca. Please also let us know if you've had success implementing a quality standard. We'd love to hear from you!

Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence

The Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence at Ontario Health was created to support the development of a comprehensive and connected mental health and addictions system for Ontario. The centre's role is to ensure that mental health and addictions care is:

- Delivered consistently across the province
- Integrated with the broader health system
- More easily accessible
- Responsive to the diverse needs of people living in Ontario and their families

The centre oversees the delivery and quality of mental health and addictions services and supports, which includes managing the system, supporting quality improvement, disseminating evidence, and setting service expectations. One of the centre's clinical priorities is schizophrenia and psychosis, and work is underway to begin planning for a provincial program that supports this clinical area, leveraging lessons learned from cancer, renal, and cardiac provincial programs. The centre will also help implement the Roadmap to Wellness, the province's plan to build a comprehensive and connected mental health and addictions system.

For more information about the centre, please contact MHACoE@OntarioHealth.ca.