

A List of Ontario Health Care Acronyms:



For Patient and Caregiver Advisors

What is this list?

The Ontario health care system is filled with acronyms (short-forms) that may be hard to understand for many people. As a patient or caregiver advisor, it's okay to have difficulty understanding the many acronyms you will come across. You're encouraged to ask health care staff to explain the meanings of acronyms they use, even if you have to ask more than once.

Below you will find a list of common acronyms used across the Ontario health care system. The left column lists acronyms that are commonly used. The middle column includes the meaning of the acronym, and the right column gives you additional details.

ACRONYM / KEY TERM	WHAT IT STANDS FOR	ADDITIONAL DETAILS
AAE	Advanced Access, Efficiency	An initiative that trains primary care practices to reduce wait times for patients.
ALC	Alternate Level of Care	A level of care given to hospital patients that are healthy and stable enough to be cared for elsewhere. Typically patients stay in hospital as ALC if they are waiting for additional care outside of the hospital.
AFHTO	Association of Family Health Teams of Ontario	An advocate, network and resource for team-based primary care clinics in Ontario. Primary care is most peoples' first line of healthcare (like family doctors).
AODA	Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act	A piece of provincial legislation that ensures the accessibility of individuals related to goods, services, facilities, employment, accommodation and buildings.

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AOHC	Association of Ontario Health Centres	An association that represents community-governed primary health care centres.
ARTIC	Adopting Research to Improve Care Program	An HQO led proven online platform for supporting health providers to apply research findings to their practice, and into improved quality care. Originally designed for the research hospital setting, ARTIC has since been developed into a provincial resource for all sectors of the health system.
CCAC	Community Care Access Centre	A health agency that helps provide more care to patients and caregivers in their home, or in their community
CCO	Cancer Care Ontario	The Ontario government's main advisor on health care for cancer and renal systems.
CHC	Community Health Centre	A non-profit organization funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health that employ interprofessional teams of staff to provide primary health care, illness prevention and health promotion programs and services that promote wellness in the community.
CIHI	Canadian Institute for Health Information	A Canadian health agency that collects and reports on clinical and non-clinical data.
CMHA	Canadian Mental Health Association	An organization that promotes the mental health of all and supports the resilience and recovery of people experiencing mental illness.
CPSI	Canadian Patient Safety Institute	A health agency that is focused on raising awareness and facilitating the implementation of ideas and best practices to improve patient safety.
CPSO	College of Family Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario	The body that regulates the practice of medicine to protect and serve the public interest.

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CQA	Common Quality Agenda	The name for a set of measures (also called “quality indicators” or “key performance indicators”) to focus performance reporting. These measures are selected by HQO in collaboration with health system partners.
DI	Diagnostic Imaging	A department in a hospital that uses medical technology to diagnose and consult on medical illnesses. Also called MI for Medical Imaging.
DRIVE	Data Repository Indicator Visualization and Evaluation	A database to support HQO’s core mandate to report to the public on the state of health care in Ontario
ECFAA	Excellent Care for all Act	A piece of provincial legislation that focuses on enhances every hospital's quality agenda.
EDS	Evidence Development and Standards	The branch of HQO that analyzes clinical and economic evidence to provide recommendations on funding of health technologies and establishing quality standards of care in the Ontario health system.
EMR	Electronic Medical Record	A centralized computer system that collects patient clinical and demographic information.
EOL	End of Life	End of life describes the period leading up to death and is often used when discussing the special support and attention given during that period when the goals of care focus on comfort and quality of life.
FHT	Family Health Teams	Primary health care organizations that include a team of family physicians, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, social workers, dietitians, and other professionals who work together to provide primary health care for their community.

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FY	Fiscal Year	Used for accounting and performance management. The time period from April to March.
GP	General Practitioner	A term used for a family doctor, or a physician in the community focused on family medicine.
Health Links		An initiative launched by MOHLTC in 2012 to provide coordinated, efficient and effective care to patients with complex needs by fostering collaboration between local health care providers, including: primary care, specialists, hospitals, long-term care, home care and other community supports. HQO facilitates the objectives of Health Links in partnership with MOHLTC and the LHINs.
HQO	Health Quality Ontario	A partner in transforming Ontario's health care system so that it can deliver a better experience of care and better outcomes for Ontarians and better value for money.
HR	1. Human Resources, 2. Health Records	1. A department in the hospital, 2. Specific documents within a patient chart.
HSP	Health System Performance	A branch at HQO that manages public reporting, performance monitoring and the development of patient experience tools.
HTA	Health Technology Assessment	The process followed to provide an evidenced based recommendation about whether a health technology warrants being publically funded.
ICES	Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences	An independent not-for-profit corporation funded by the government that leads studies that evaluate health care delivery and outcomes.

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IDEAS	Improving and Driving Excellence Across Sectors	A province-wide initiative to enhance Ontario's health system performance by increasing quality improvement, leadership and change management capacity across all health care sectors.
IHI	Institute for Healthcare Improvement	An international health agency in the United States focused on improving healthcare.
IHSP	Integrated Health Service Plan	A central strategy deployed by each of the 14 LHINs in Ontario. Each focus on the needs of the patients within their catchment areas.
IPC	Interprofessional Care	A principle where multiple healthcare professionals work collaboratively to deliver care.
ISMP	Institute for Safe Medication Practices	A health agency committed to the advancement of medication safety.
IT	Information Technology	A department focused on clinical and non-clinical information systems and technology.
KTE	Knowledge Transfer and Exchange	The process of sharing timely, useful evidence-based research findings with decision-makers and others who use research.
LHIN	Local Health Integration Network	A regional healthcare management authority between the hospital and the ministry.

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Measuring Up/Yearly Report		HQO's yearly report on the performance of Ontario's health care system.
MLPA	Ministry / LHIN Performance Agreement	A series of quality and service-based agreements between the LHIN and the hospital.
MOHLTC	Ministry of Health and Long Term Care	The portion of the provincial government that governs healthcare, long-term care and health promotion / prevention.
Never Events Report		A joint report with the Canadian Patient Safety Institute that educates Canadians on events that should never happen in hospitals, and spurs professionals to take the steps needed to prevent these events.
NPAO	Nurse Practitioners Association of Ontario	An organization that advocates for nurse practitioners in Ontario.
OANHSS	Ontario Association of NonProfit Homes and Services for Seniors	A provincial association representing not-for-profit providers of long term care, services and housing for seniors.
OCFP	Ontario College of Family Physicians	An association that represents family physicians in Ontario.
OHTAC	Ontario Health Technology Assessment Committee	A standing advisory subcommittee of the HQO Board that makes recommendations about the uptake, diffusion, distribution, or removal of health interventions in Ontario.

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OHA	Ontario Hospital Association	Supports hospitals across the province by providing hospital staff and leadership with high-quality products and services, education opportunities, and championing health system innovation and policy
OMA	Ontario Medical Association	Represents the political, clinical and economic interests of the province's medical profession.
ONA	Ontario Nurses Association	A proactive union committed to improving the economic welfare and quality of work-life for its members, to enable them to provide high-quality health care.
OPSEU	Ontario Public Service Employee Union	A trade union that represents about 120,000 employees in the broader public service of the Province of Ontario, Canada.
Practice Reports		Reports that provide physicians with the comparable regional and provincial data that they need to inform their quality improvement efforts. Practice Reports are created using existing administrative health databases to give physicians customized data about their practice.
Patient Relations		The term used to describe the structure and/or process that organizations use to handle and resolve patient and family concerns and complaints.
PFCC	Patient- & Family-Centred Care	An approach to the planning, delivery and evaluation of health care that is grounded in mutually beneficial partnerships among patients, families and health care.
PHI	Personal Health Information	A term used to generalize all health information related to a patient.

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PHIPA	Personal Health Information Protection Act	PHIPA provides a set of rules for the collection, use and disclosure of personal health information
QA	Quality Assurance	A term used to describe activities that are undertaken to ensure the quality of any task performed is at an acceptable level.
QBP	Quality Based Procedure	A clinical procedure that is used to help calculate hospital budgets based on comparing a hospital's actual costs to typical costs.
QCIPA	Quality of Care Information Protection Act	Under the legislation, information provided to hospital quality of care committees and other designated quality of care committees that deal with quality improvement would be shielded from disclosure in legal proceedings.
QI	Quality Improvement	A principle of involving all stakeholders in planned changes to improve patient outcomes, better system performance, and better professional development.
QIP	Quality Improvement Plan	A government mandated annual strategy to improve quality.
QI RAP	Quality Improvement Reporting and Analysis Platform	A secured, web-based application where users can enter data and track performance as part of HQO's quality improvement initiatives.
QIS	Quality Improvement Specialist	A role in the hospital focused on advocating for quality improvement.

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QS	Quality Standard	A defined and measureable standard of care that someone should be able to expect from the health system for a particular health condition.
Quality Compass		An HQO owned web-based repository of evidence-informed best practices, change ideas linked with targets and measures, and tools and resources contextualized to Ontario with examples of effective implementation and success stories.
RN	Registered Nurse	A nurse who has graduated from a nursing program at a college or university and has passed a national licensing exam to obtain a nursing license.
SQAC	System Quality Advisory Committee	A committee that HQO has asked to develop a common definition for quality and a roadmap for improving it that can be used by leaders in the system.
SLT	Senior Leadership Team	A group of health administrators consisting of the organizations CEO and VPs.
TBD	To Be Determined	A term used when further planning is needed.
Theme Reports		HQO produced reports that look at key topics of interest that help tell us how specific parts of Ontario's universal health system are performing. Unlike HQO's yearly report, Measuring Up, theme reports focus on a system challenge, and take a more in-depth look at how Ontario is doing.