

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

Office of the Minister

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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 2017-18 fiscal year. Moving forward, I will be issuing a mandate letter every fiscal year.

In 2017-18, 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.

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.

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As you complete this work I would like to commend you on your strong collaboration with organizations across the health system including your work in engaging patients and caregivers. HQO's patient engagement initiatives will be an important support to the ministry's efforts to expand patient engagement in Ontario, including the newly-created Minister's Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC), and LHIN PFACs. I look forward to seeing HQO continue to build on these partnerships to support the delivery of your mandate. In particular, this includes working with LHIN clinical leadership and ensuring that the work of regional quality tables is aligned with the Patients First agenda.

This year, in addition to the work noted above I would like HQO to focus on some key areas that will support system transformation

Supporting Health System Quality

1. To support the delivery of the Patients First agenda, HQO will:

- Establish the Ontario Quality Standards Committee (OQSC) to develop a more coordinated provincial approach to clinical care standards and supporting their adoption.
- Develop quality standards including patient oriented statements and recommendations for adoption.
- Where appropriate, identify and engage with LHIN clinical leadership, other health sector organizations and other partner organizations across the system to support the OQSC and implementation of quality standards.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

2. As the ministry implements its Strategy to Prevent Opioid Addiction and Overdose, HQO will:

- Support the implementation of quality standards on opioid prescribing for acute and chronic pain, by increasing availability of information for practitioners on prescribing practices, building on and enhancing primary care practice reporting, and coordinating an integrated approach to education programs and initiatives such as mentorship and academic detailing to support improved prescribing practices.

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Dr. Andreas Laupacis

3. In addition, HQO will advance Diagnostic Imaging Peer Review in Ontario, to support the implementation of a peer review process for diagnostic imaging.

Evolving Quality Improvement Plans

4. Under the *Excellent Care for All Act, 2010*, and the ministry's proposed amendment to Regulation 187/15: Annual Quality Improvement Plan, HQO will:

- Provide advice to the government on quality improvement measures across the health care system including regarding the specification of mandatory Quality Improvement Plan indicators for hospitals.

Improving Access to Specialists

5. Access to specialists takes longer than it should for many conditions. Delays and cancellations occur as patients wait to access the specialist care they need. HQO will:

- Through the Adopting Research to Improve Care program, support the implementation of strategies and programs to improve access to specialists for patients with musculoskeletal conditions.
- Support the evaluation of bundled payments for hip and knee replacement.
- Lead the modernizing of public reporting for wait times of surgery, diagnostic imaging, and emergency department length of stay, including introducing the public reporting of time to specialist consultation for surgical procedures.

Evaluating Genetics Testing Technology

6. In support of the ministry's genetics strategy, HQO will:

- Submit relevant funding recommendations to the ministry through the newly established Ontario Genetics Advisory Committee, a standing subcommittee of the Ontario Health Technology Advisory Committee.

I thank you for your willingness to serve, as we work together to put patients at the centre of a health care system that is accessible, equitable and integrated, and one that will be there for generations to come.

Yours sincerely,

Original Signed by Minister

Dr. Eric Hoskins
Minister