

Patient Relations Measurement and Reporting Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is patient relations?

A. Patient relations focuses on improving how hospitals, home and community care, and long-term care homes gather and respond to feedback, concerns, and complaints about care from patients, residents, clients, and their families and friends. Effective patient relations involves engaging patients and residents to understand their needs and preferences. It also includes the use of patient experience and patient complaints data to support quality improvement.

Q. What is Health Quality Ontario's commitment to improving patient relations?

A. As a result of amendments to The Excellent Care for All Act, Health Quality Ontario is supporting measurement, reporting and quality improvement in patient relations processes in hospitals, home and community care, and long-term care homes. Indicators, quality improvement resource tools, and reporting via Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) are available to assist provider organizations with their efforts. Health Quality Ontario also consults with the Patient Ombudsman Office, who is tasked with facilitating resolutions and investigating complaints involving health sector organizations and making recommendations to improve the health care experience for all Ontarians.

Q. What are the Health Quality Ontario indicators?

A. Descriptions and technical specifications of the indicators developed by Health Quality Ontario can be found [here](#).

Q. Are there patient relations indicators my organization is required to collect and report?

A. Each health sector has relevant sector-specific regulations that outline patient relations expectations. Organizations are encouraged to use Health Quality Ontario's indicators to meet these requirements.

Q. Will Health Quality Ontario publicly report patient relations indicators?

A. One patient relations indicator, "Percent of complaints acknowledged to the individual who made the complaint in 2, 5 and ten business days" is included in the 2018/2019 Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) as an additional indicator. No additional public reporting will be implemented in 2018/19. Any future consideration of broader public reporting will be done in consultation with the health system.

Q. What tools does Health Quality Ontario provide to help organizations collect patient relations indicators and improve their patient relation processes?

A. The patient relations indicators and their technical specifications are available on Health Quality Ontario's website. These specifications can be used to standardize complaints data collection across sector organizations. Additionally, Health Quality Ontario offers guidance documents for quality improvement in patient relations.

Q. What is the relationship between accreditation standards for complaints handling and patient relations indicators?

A. Accreditation standards are used by organizations to develop and assess their programs and services and to support ongoing quality improvement. Accreditation standards often suggest that organizations have a complaints policy in place, a method to collect complaints information and regularly review what they hear in order to make improvements. The patient relations indicators serve as an example of the type of complaints data organizations may wish to collect and monitor for trends in order to support quality improvement.

Q. Where can I find more information on patient relations activities?

A. Additional patient relations information is available on our website, which highlights the work done to date and next steps. Health Quality Ontario's website also includes patient engagement resources to support improved patient relations across health sector organizations. For additional inquiries please contact pt_rel@hqontario.ca.