



## Unity Health Toronto

### Accredited with Exemplary Standing

**Unity Health Toronto** has gone beyond the requirements of the Qmentum accreditation program and demonstrates excellence in quality improvement.

**Unity Health Toronto** is participating in the Accreditation Canada Qmentum accreditation program. Qmentum helps organizations strengthen their quality improvement efforts by identifying what they are doing well and where improvements are needed.

Organizations that become accredited with Accreditation Canada do so as a mark of pride and as a way to create a strong and sustainable culture of quality and safety.

Accreditation Canada commends **Unity Health Toronto** for its ongoing work to integrate accreditation into its operations to improve the quality and safety of its programs and services.

#### **Unity Health Toronto (2022)**

Unity Health Toronto is a multi-site health network that spans across Toronto with three hospitals, one long-term care home, seven family health team locations, two withdrawal management centres, two community-based dialysis sites, one ambulatory care building, one large education and research facility, and other satellite academic offices. We also provide services related to rehabilitation, community-based health & mental health, and telehealth/virtual care.

#### **Accreditation Canada**

We are independent, not-for-profit, and 100 percent Canadian. For more than 55 years, we have set national standards and shared leading practices from around the globe so we can continue to raise the bar for health quality.

As the leader in Canadian health care accreditation, we accredit more than 1,100 health care and social services organizations in Canada and around the world.

Accreditation Canada is accredited by the International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISQua) [www.isqua.org](http://www.isqua.org), a tangible demonstration that our programs meet international standards.

Find out more about what we do at [www.accreditation.ca](http://www.accreditation.ca).

## Demonstrating a commitment to quality and safety

Accreditation is an ongoing process of evaluating and recognizing a program or service as meeting established standards. It is a powerful tool for quality improvement. As a roadmap to quality, Accreditation Canada's Qmentum accreditation program provides evidence-informed standards, tools, resources, and guidance to health care and social services organizations on their journey to excellence.

As part of the program, most organizations conduct an extensive self-assessment to determine the extent to which they are meeting the Accreditation Canada standards and make changes to areas that need improvement. Every four years, Accreditation Canada surveyors, who are health care professionals from accredited organizations, visit the organization and conduct an on-site survey. After the survey, an accreditation decision is issued and the ongoing cycle of assessment and improvement continues.

This Executive Summary highlights some of the key achievements, strengths, and opportunities for improvement that were identified during the on-site survey at the organization. Detailed results are found in the organization's Accreditation Report.

### On-site survey dates

October 2, 2022 to October 7, 2022

### Locations surveyed

- **3** locations were assessed by the surveyor team during the on-site survey. Locations and sites visited were identified by considering risk factors such as the complexity of the organization, the scope of services at various sites, high or low volume sites, patient flow, geographical location, issues or concerns that may have arisen during the accreditation cycle, and results from previous on-site surveys. As a rule, sites that were not surveyed during one accreditation cycle become priorities for survey in the next.
- All sites and services are deemed **Accredited with Exemplary Standing** as of the date of this report.

See **Appendix A** for a list of the locations that were surveyed.

### Standards used in the assessment

- **26 sets of standards** were used in the assessment.

## Summary of surveyor team observations

*These surveyor observations appear in both the Executive Summary and the Accreditation Report.*

During the on-site survey, the surveyor team undertook a number of activities to determine the extent to which the organization met the accreditation program requirements. They observed the care that was provided; talked to staff, clients, families and others; reviewed documents and files; and recorded the results.

This process, known as a tracer, helped the surveyors follow a client's path through the organization. It gives them a clear picture of how service is delivered at any given point in the process.

The following is a summary of the surveyor team's overall observations.

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Unity Health - Summary of Team Observations  
On-site Survey Oct 2-7

The Accreditation Canada Surveyor Team commends Unity Health Toronto for demonstrating its strong commitment to quality and safety by undergoing their on-site survey on the heels of the COVID-19 pandemic. Healthcare organizations across Canada have experienced the strain of the response to COVID-19 in their operations and health human resources, a situation that in some ways has worsened 2.5 years into the declaration of the pandemic. Unity Health mounted a formidable emergency response to address the surge of patients with respiratory symptoms, increase testing capacity, and provide access to vaccines. In going ahead with its on-site survey, Unity Health is showcasing its commitment to a quality culture as a strategic enabler for achieving its mission.

Unity Health is one of Canada's largest Catholic healthcare networks serving patients, residents and clients. The organization provides care across the continuum including primary care, community care, hospital care including specialized tertiary and quaternary acute care services, palliative and long-term care. Unity Health is also heavily invested in leading research and education activities. During the survey Unity Health's three main sites were visited. This includes: St. Joseph's Health Centre which provides services to the communities of southwest Toronto and is affiliated with the University of Toronto; St. Michael's Hospital which is a teaching and research hospital in downtown Toronto providing adult trauma centre, neurosurgery, complex cardiac and cardiovascular care, diabetes and osteoporosis care, minimally invasive surgery and care of the homeless and disadvantaged; and Providence Healthcare which is well-regarded for its rehabilitation, palliative care, long-term care and community programs.

Board of Directors

Unity Health has a highly engaged and skilled Board of Directors. The professional diversity reflected in the Board's membership is a true asset that allows the organization to fully assess the broader environment and opportunities for Unity Health. New appointments have been geared to increase the

social diversity of the Board to better reflect the community it serves. The Board is engaged in governance aspects pertaining to quality, safety, and a strong emphasis on people-centred care. The Board of Unity Health represents a new board that came together through the amalgamation of three separate boards including St. Michael's Hospital, St. Joseph's Health Centre and Providence Healthcare's Boards. The Board continues to recruit new members utilizing a matrix that identifies the desired skill set and experience. During the survey, Board members reported that good and effective relationships are in place. An ethics framework and evidence-informed criteria informs the decision-making process. New members are oriented to their roles with the participation of board members, leadership and staff. The Board of Directors is actively involved in strategic planning and plays a critical role in identifying change and challenges in their operating environment. There are strong systems in place to support and monitor the implementation of Board directions and the Strategic Plan. Quality, safety and risk management is overseen by sub-committees that meet on a regular basis and receive organizational performance reports. The Board recruits, oversees the performance, and supports the ongoing development of the Chief Executive Officer for Unity Health. An accountability agreement is used between the Board and the CEO to set direction and monitor progress on the organizational priorities. Cascading accountability agreements are used throughout the organization flowing from the CEO's agreement. Patient advisors are active members of the Quality Committee and patient stories are a standing item in the agenda to help elevate the voice of patients and families in governance procedures. In addition, the Board reviews patient and family feedback captured through the patient experience survey. The Board is encouraged to continue to recruit for diversity and inclusion in new members, as well as consider adding a patient or family member to the Board.

## Leadership

The leadership team at Unity Health brings a values-based style of leadership that is committed to delivering high quality care with strong attention to the needs and preferences of patients and families. Leaders in the organization are viewed as resourceful, approachable and supportive. The leadership team has been able to harness the diversity of their staff, researchers and volunteers to better serve the unique needs of both patients requiring specialized services as well as the unique needs of the many communities across the Unity Health sites. Leaders at Unity Health demonstrate a commitment not only to the patients, but also to trying innovative approaches and influencing the larger system in which they operate. They played a critical role during the COVID-19 pandemic with an outsized response in assessment capacity, vaccination clinics, critical care surge, and shaping the operational response for the Province of Ontario.

Since the last Accreditation Canada survey, St. Michael's Hospital, St. Joseph's Health Centre and Providence Healthcare came together as a single organization in Unity Health. This amalgamation journey has been taking place in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic which forced the new organization both to slow down some of the integration activities and yet also implement organization-wide responses. The leaders in the organization have been able to manage the opportunities created by being a single entity while continuing to leverage the strengths that each of the partners brought into the mix. There is a recognition that this integration journey needs to continue as common platforms and processes continue to be developed including the adoption of an electronic patient record. Since the last survey, Unity Health has also developed its Strategic Plan 2019-2024 which outlines nine interrelated components including leading in world-class specialty

care, joy in work for our people, impactful research and innovation, reimagining teaching and learning, achieving quality together, revolutionizing care through digital transformation, and investing in our future. The strategic planning process was exemplary in terms of allowing time for the important conversations on organizational values and validation with patients and families. More work is needed to cascade the strategic directions to the program level such that staff and physicians understand their roles in achieving the overall corporate goals and objectives. Unity Health has a strong and genuine focus on quality improvement and making this a strategic priority for the organization under the pillar achieving quality together. The organization approaches quality from eight domains including: patient and family-centred care, provider wellness, efficiency, timely, effective, safe, integrated and equity. Unity Health's emphasis on equity as a key cornerstone of quality is not only commendable, but also well aligned with the organizational values. The quality and safety activities are supported by an enthusiastic team of staff and members of the Board. Leaders throughout the organization participate and lead in collaborative quality improvement initiatives. Unity Health's Quality Plan reflects on the critical importance of patient and family engagement, safety and risk management. The Quality Plan helps leaders across the organization understand the importance of each focus area, its specific outcomes and the key actions needed to achieve them. Complementing the Strategic and Quality Plans, accountability agreements are used by the organization to help operationalize its strategic priorities and ensure senior and frontline leaders see themselves reflected in the Strategic Plan. While Unity Health has a sophisticated approach to quality with a strong central system to promote it, the survey uncovered inconsistencies in how different teams are approaching quality and safety. The organization is encouraged to ensure the culture of quality and safety is consistently embraced and implemented formally across all teams at Unity Health, as well as to improve the ways in which staff and patients/families participate in the identification and monitoring of quality improvement initiatives.

### Community and Community Partners

Unity Health is well regarded by its many community partners. The organization is seen as collaborative, transparent, supportive and influential. Community partners interviewed during the survey commented on the joy of partnering with Unity Health across the Toronto region. Unity Health is recognized for their clear role in community partnerships and networks and their willingness to share their expertise and knowledge. The organizational leaders are well regarded and recognized for their willingness to be part of the solution. There is a recognition of the caliber of expertise and innovative practices that Unity Health brings to the table. The values of the organization provide a strong foundation and guide the operational activities toward what matters most. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Unity Health provided infection prevention and control expertise and support to local long term care agencies and other congregate settings in the community. The range of supports offered also included management guidance and grief counselling for staff in the community. They also played a critical role in COVID-19 assessment and vaccination activities, as well as setting regional and Provincial policy through the Scientific Tables and other Command Centre structures its leaders participated in. In terms of the opportunities, community partners interviewed during the survey highlight the potential role that Unity Health can play in helping shape the processes and priorities of Ontario Health Team tables. Spanning across multiple OHTs, Unity Health could leverage its system level perspective to identify opportunities for greater consistency, scaling up of promising practices and identification of common priorities. With its strong foundation in research, Unity Health may also

want to consider the role it can play in building the capacity of its community partners to participate in community-based research that builds the evidence on interventions across the care continuum of health and social services. Finally, as an influential partner in the Province of Ontario, Unity Health may want to embrace its role in advocating for the system level changes needed to improve the system of care.

### Staffing and Worklife

The COVID-19 pandemic has strained health human resources nation-wide. The emergency response followed by 2.5 years of pandemic response activity has had an impact on staff at Unity Health. Shortages in staffing have resulted in increased pressure on the existing staff, and there are real risks of staff burnout and disengagement. The leadership and human resources team at Unity Health are aware of these issues and are taking a number of remedial actions including providing resources for leaders across the organization to better support the mental wellness of their staff, e.g., additional training, support with just in time team mental wellness sessions (code lavender). Recognized by the Institute of Health Innovation, Unity Health's Joy in Work Framework is a comprehensive approach to promote staff wellness based on a deep understanding of staff needs and innovative activities to promote it. Despite these challenges, there is a positive work atmosphere at Unity Health. Staff who were interviewed expressed a very high level of satisfaction with the organization. They thoroughly enjoy their work and are deeply passionate about the care and services they provide as well as being part of an organization driven by its values. Unity Health is also commended for the deep sense of belonging that staff and patients have to the organization. Unity Health tries to ensure a great work – life, and that staff health, safety and satisfaction is prioritized. This is achieved through numerous supports and mechanisms ranging from an enhanced employee assistance program, opportunities for training and development, and a commitment to staff safety. Staff and volunteers are acknowledged and rewarded when appropriate through numerous recognition and social events. The organization is commended for its efforts to become a more equitable, diverse and inclusive organization. Of note is the harmonized exit interview process which helps uncover issues affecting staff retention and informs organizational action. Unity Health has been recognized as one of Toronto's top 100 employers.

### People-centred Care and Client Satisfaction

The services provided at Unity Health are truly client centred. Staff and leadership respond to the unique needs of their patients by constantly adapting programs and services for adequacy and accessibility. However, the capacity to respond in their usual high standards manner is at or beyond its limits in emergency at both St. Michael's and St. Joseph's. The hourly consequences are negatively impactful on patients/clients, their families, and the professional and support staff of Unity Health. All involved appreciate this is not the quality of care to which they all are committed.

Patient satisfaction is routinely monitored utilizing a patient experience survey that is able to provide results at the organization facility and unit level. Patient satisfaction surveys are enhanced by more in-depth engagement activities that seek to incorporate patients' preferences into the program and service design. Patients and families interviewed during the survey highlighted the caring and supportive approaches offered by staff during their stay at Unity Health facilities. Some of the









examples included high quality care, clear communication styles, genuine listening and responding to their needs, transparent disclosing of adverse events and implementation of system changes to prevent recurrence and paying attention to the emotional experience of care. At the strategic planning, service design and quality improvement level, patients and families reported having numerous opportunities for providing feedback and contributing meaningfully. Patient and Family Council reps also reported high levels of support and training to ensure their successful participation in meetings and quality improvement processes. Some of the areas of opportunity uncovered during the survey included the need for more diversity and inclusion in the composition of patient and family councils. This will require adjustments and support to ensure that patients and families who face greater barriers to participation can be meaningfully integrated into the process. Members of the Patient and Family Councils also report an interest in complementing satisfaction and output measurements with an outcome evaluation of the contributions that they are making to the quality of care in Unity Health. There is recognition that more work is needed to implement formal advisory councils in programs across the organization and to consistently include the voice of the patient and family in the development of the structures and processes that direct care.

## Overview: Quality dimensions results

Accreditation Canada uses eight dimensions that all play a part in providing safe, high quality health care.

These dimensions are the basis for the standards, and each criteria in the standards is tied to one of the quality dimensions.

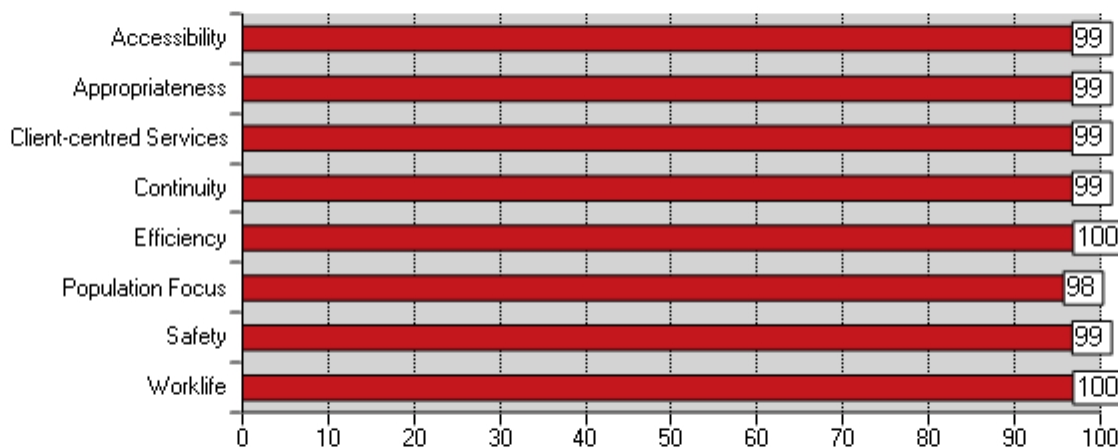
The quality dimensions are:

	<b>Accessibility:</b>	Give me timely and equitable services
	<b>Appropriateness:</b>	Do the right thing to achieve the best results
	<b>Client-centred Services:</b>	Partner with me and my family in our care
	<b>Continuity:</b>	Coordinate my care across the continuum
	<b>Efficiency:</b>	Make the best use of resources
	<b>Population Focus:</b>	Work with my community to anticipate and meet our needs
	<b>Safety:</b>	Keep me safe
	<b>Worklife:</b>	Take care of those who take care of me

Taken together, the dimensions create a picture of what a high quality health care program or service “looks like.” It is easy to access, focused on the client or patient, safe, efficient, effective, coordinated, reflective of community needs, and supportive of wellness and worklife balance.

This chart shows the percentage of criteria that the organization met for each quality dimension.

**Quality Dimensions: Percentage of criteria met**





## Overview: Standards results

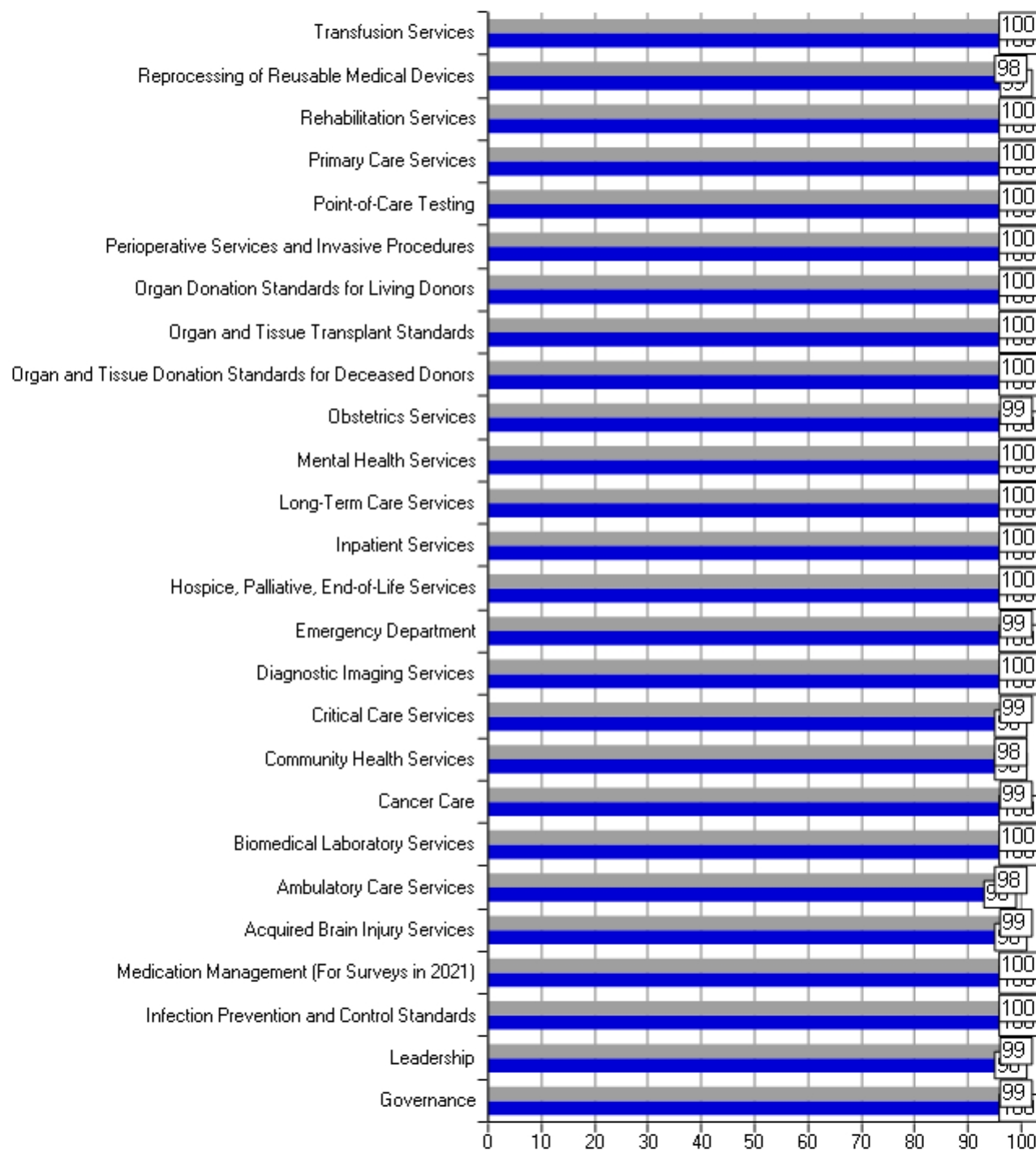
All of the standards make a difference to health care quality and safety. A set of standards includes criteria and guidelines that show what is necessary to provide high quality care and service.

Some criteria—specifically those related to safety, ethics, risk management, or quality improvement—are considered high priority and carry more weight in determining the accreditation decision.

This chart shows the percentage of high priority criteria and the percentage of all criteria that the organization met in each set of standards.

### Standards: Percentage of criteria met

■ High priority criteria met 
 ■ Total criteria met



## Overview: Required Organizational Practices results

Accreditation Canada defines a Required Organizational Practice (ROP) as an essential practice that must be in place for client safety and to minimize risk. ROPs are part of the standards. Each one has detailed tests for compliance that the organization must meet if it is to meet the ROP.

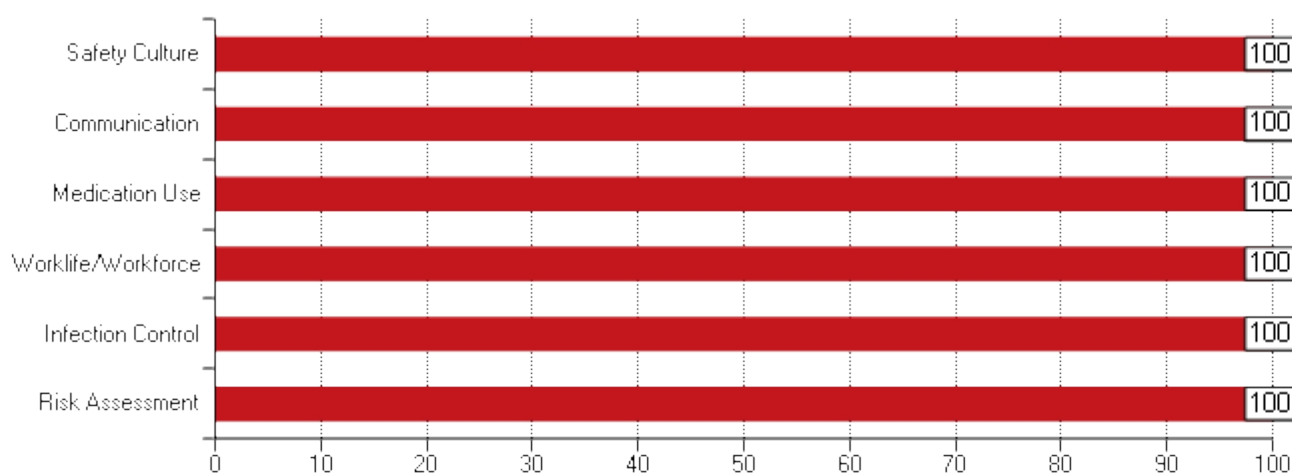
ROPs are always high priority and it is difficult to achieve accreditation without meeting most of the applicable ROPs. To highlight the importance of the ROPs and their role in promoting quality and safety, Accreditation Canada produces the Canadian Health Accreditation Report each year. It analyzes how select ROPs are being met across the country.

ROPs are categorized into six safety areas, each with its own goal:

- **Safety culture:** Create a culture of safety within the organization
- **Communication:** Improve the effectiveness and coordination of communication among care and service providers and with the recipients of care and service across the continuum
- **Medication use:** Ensure the safe use of high-risk medications
- **Worklife/workforce:** Create a worklife and physical environment that supports the safe delivery of care and service
- **Infection control:** Reduce the risk of health care-associated infections and their impact across the continuum of care/service
- **Risk assessment:** Identify safety risks inherent in the client population

See **Appendix B** for a list of the ROPs in each goal area.

**ROP Goal Areas: Percentage of tests for compliance met**



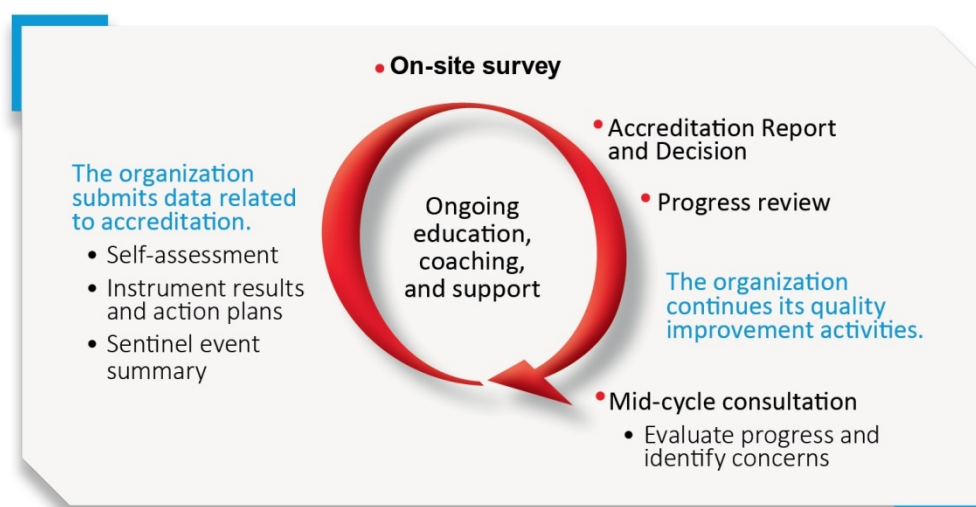
## The quality improvement journey

The Qmentum accreditation program is a four-year cycle of assessment and improvement, where organizations work to meet the standards and raise the quality of their services. Qmentum helps them assess all aspects of their operations, from board and leadership, to care and services, to infrastructure.

The program identifies and rewards quality and innovation. The time and resources an organization invests in accreditation pay off in terms of better care, safer clients, and stronger teamwork. Accreditation also helps organizations be more efficient and gives them structured methods to report on their activities and what they are doing to improve quality.

In the end, all Canadians benefit from safer and higher quality health services as a result of the commitment that so many organizations across the country have made to the accreditation process.

### Qmentum: A four-year cycle of quality improvement



As **Unity Health Toronto** continues its quality improvement journey, it will conduct an in-depth review of the accreditation results and findings. Then a new cycle of improvement will begin as it incorporates any outstanding issues into its overall quality improvement plan, further strengthening its efforts to build a robust and widespread culture of quality and safety within its walls.

## Appendix A: Locations surveyed

- 1 Providence Hospital
- 2 St. Joseph Health Centre Toronto
- 3 St. Michael's Hospital

## Appendix B

### Required Organizational Practices

#### Safety Culture

- Accountability for Quality
  - Patient safety incident disclosure
  - Patient safety incident management
  - Patient safety quarterly reports
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#### Communication

- Client Identification
  - Information transfer at care transitions
  - Medication reconciliation as a strategic priority
  - Medication reconciliation at care transitions
  - Safe Surgery Checklist
  - The “Do Not Use” list of abbreviations
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#### Medication Use

- Antimicrobial Stewardship
  - Concentrated Electrolytes
  - Heparin Safety
  - High-Alert Medications
  - Infusion Pumps Training
  - Narcotics Safety
- 

#### Worklife/Workforce

- Client Flow
  - Patient safety plan
  - Patient safety: education and training
  - Preventive Maintenance Program
  - Workplace Violence Prevention
- 

#### Infection Control

- Hand-Hygiene Compliance
  - Hand-Hygiene Education and Training
  - Infection Rates
- 

#### Risk Assessment

- Falls Prevention Strategy

## Required Organizational Practices

- Pressure Ulcer Prevention
  - Suicide Prevention
  - Venous Thromboembolism Prophylaxis
-