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quality healthcare
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Healthy Healthcare Leadership Forum

**Key Messages and
Executive Summary**

**Toronto, Ontario
March 27, 2009**

Healthy Healthcare Leadership Forum – Key Messages and Executive Summary

Published by
Accreditation Canada

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Production of this report has been made possible through a financial contribution from Health Canada.
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Key Messages

- The Healthy Healthcare Leadership Charter has the potential to leverage advocacy efforts as well as support Quality of Worklife (QWL) initiatives in health services organizations across the country.
- The Healthy Healthcare Leadership Charter should be enhanced to further support the work of signatory organizations and increase both their accountability and commitment to the QWL agenda.
- A network dedicated to the issue of QWL is a valuable resource.
- The collaboration to improve QWL in healthcare must include all the voices/roles of the healthcare system, from the frontline to the systems level, in the design and implementation of this work. Shared ownership is a key component to the success of QWL improvement.
- Managers in healthcare play a pivotal role in the success of QWL initiatives in their setting and must be engaged and supported in implementing the strategic QWL goals of their organizations.
- Strategic QWL initiatives must be: i) informed by the experience and perceptions of frontline staff; ii) tailored to individual settings; iii) implemented in a timely way.
- Strategic QWL planning and the resulting initiatives must be clearly communicated and widely disseminated to facilitate full staff awareness and engagement.
- The dissemination of a strong and easily imparted argument outlining the “value for money” of QWL initiatives and the “return on investment” provided by QWL improvement would prove useful to the advocacy efforts of all QWL champions.
- While strategic planning and measurement of results are important to achieving sustainability in Canada’s healthcare system, establishing and resourcing infrastructure to support QWL initiatives is also crucial.
- Innovation is important and it often stems from what is already in place. The QWQHC can facilitate the growth of a wider network of champions, support further implementation and measurement of QWL initiatives, encourage effective use of metrics, and provide access to tools and information on QWL in healthcare.



Executive Summary

The Quality Worklife – Quality Healthcare Collaborative (QWQHC) is a coalition of twelve national health organizations working together to create healthier workplaces in order to improve patient care. Since its inception in 2005, the QWQHC has, with input from leading Quality of Worklife (QWL) experts and stakeholders, developed and disseminated its evidence-informed Action Strategy* to improve health system delivery and patient outcomes. The four key components of the Action Strategy are: i) making QWL a strategic priority; ii) measuring QWL; iii) implementing and evaluating strategies to improve QWL; iv) building knowledge exchange and actively connecting formal (research) and informal (frontline experience) knowledge.

To support broad engagement through a call to action, the QWQHC has developed and promoted the Healthy Healthcare Leadership Charter (“the Charter”). The Charter is intended to support the continual improvement of the health of all Canadian healthcare workplaces: it defines a healthy health care workplace as “A work setting that takes a strategic and comprehensive approach to providing the physical, cultural psychosocial and work/job design conditions that maximizes the health and wellbeing of health providers, quality of patient/client outcomes and organizational and system performance” (Within Our Grasp, p. 11). The Healthy Healthcare Leadership Charter reflects the key components of the QWQHC Action Strategy and provides healthcare leaders with a way to demonstrate their shared commitment to take concrete steps to improve Quality of Worklife in healthcare as well as make positive changes in their respective settings.

On March 27, 2009, The QWQHC hosted the Healthy Healthcare Leadership Forum in Toronto. The Forum engaged 44 representatives from Charter signatory organizations to provide feedback and reflections on the

uptake and use of the Charter to date, as well as identify QWQHC activities that would have significant impact in supporting QWL champions in their work.

The Forum was designed and facilitated based on information provided by the participants through a pre-Forum survey. The foundational data collected through the survey was expanded upon through facilitated discussion and the utilization of real time audience response technology. This stimulated a rich discussion on the successes and challenges faced by the signatory organizations in their ongoing efforts to improve QWL in healthcare. The impact and accessibility of the Charter were considered, as was the potential to leverage the Charter to promote the work of QWL champions across the country. The participants provided the QWQHC with valuable information and ideas to begin the process of enriching the Charter and enhancing the supports attached to it for signatories. In addition, participants highlighted a number of activities related to implementation, measurement, engagement and collaboration in which the QWQHC could engage in order to support the work of QWL champions.

The following key points arose from the discussions:

- Work to increase QWL in healthcare settings has been underway across the country and momentum continues to build. To avoid duplicating efforts or re-inventing existing effective practices, there must be a strong knowledge exchange mechanism in place through which QWL champions can share their work with peers and access a variety of resources, all in an effort to continue to innovate. Events such as the Forum are seen as highly valuable opportunities to learn from and network with fellow health care professionals, and as important vehicles that have the capacity to invigorate and re-energize the work of QWL champions.

* A document outlining the Action Strategy in its entirety can be found online at <http://www.qwqhc.ca/documents/2007-QWQHC-Within-Our-Grasp.pdf>

- The Charter has the potential to support and enhance organizations' endeavors to increase QWL. Further work can be done to heighten the Charter's capacity to promote and increase engagement and accountability across the country.
- Multilevel buy-in and support of QWL initiatives are crucial to creating healthier healthcare settings. Two more key components are: i) looking at QWL through the lens of frontline staff; ii) recognizing the impact managers have on staff engagement and the success of QWL initiatives.
- Appropriate infrastructure for QWL initiatives is required to sustain long-term commitment and impact.
- The QWQHC can support the work of QWL champions by: i) providing web-based access to QWL tools, information resources and expertise; ii) facilitating the work towards a standard reporting structure and encouraging organizations to measure QWL by working closely with accrediting bodies; iii) providing a template for organizations that maps out the implementation of QWL improvement strategies; iv) providing an evidence-based picture of what an organization that has improved its QWL looks like; v) building a strong network and communication strategy that facilitates collaboration within individual organizations and throughout the healthcare system.





