

Spring 2009

Welcome to the latest QWQHC e-Bulletin, designed to keep our partners and colleagues up-to-date on the work of the Collaborative.

Please feel free to forward this email to your colleagues. If they would like to receive the QWQHC e-Bulletin directly, they can be placed on the email distribution list by subscribing at <http://www.qwqhc.ca/signup-bulletin.aspx>

Le français suit.

Sold Out Summit!

The QWQHC's third annual Summit was held on March 3 & 4 in Ottawa. More than 175 delegates and 25 speakers from nine provinces and two territories took part in "Shaping the Future of Quality: Building on the Momentum". Summit themes included leadership, culture and engagement, and there were six interactive concurrent sessions, thought-provoking plenary presentations, an interactive town hall, and two post-Summit workshops.

Strong messages emerged as delegates reflected on the importance of linking quality, safety and health human resources to promote an integrative approach to enhancing quality outcomes. Reflecting on delegates' feedback, the primary Summit objective - for quality of worklife (QWL) champions to network and advance, promote, and share QWL initiatives - was achieved. There was an obvious energy and passion around the issue of QWL and we trust delegates left feeling reenergized and committed to improving QWL in their respective settings.



For more information on the Summit, please visit www.qwqhc.ca. Current postings include the conference program, a delegate list, speaker presentations and audio files. Summit proceedings will be available in the coming weeks.

Exploring the Possibilities

On March 27, the QWQHC hosted a day-long Forum for signatories of the [Healthy Healthcare Leadership Charter](#). The day brought together champions from across the country to talk about the potential use of the Charter and to provide input on high-impact activities that the Collaborative can engage in to further support the work of increasing QWL for healthcare providers.

Participants were sent a pre-forum survey to help set the direction for the Forum. The day focused on their successes and challenges in implementing QWL initiatives, as well as learning about the potential knowledge resources that this community of interest could provide.

A unique aspect of the Forum was the use of an audience response technology that allowed for real-time electronic voting from the 44 participants. This format allowed a deeper understanding of the type of activities signatories were engaged in. The signatories were able to see what was going on in other parts

of the country, hear about initiatives their peers were engaged in, and get some real-time reflection on the perspectives and activities of the many signatories across the country.

Three of the QWQHC National Partners, also Charter signatories, participated in the Forum and had these impressions:

How exciting it was for us, as QWQHC Partners, to participate in the Healthy Healthcare Leadership Forum last month! The enthusiasm of Charter signatories was palpable, as they shared success stories which we all can relate to and learn from. It was clear that the signing of the QWQHC Charter had a great impact on these organizations. The principles set out in the Charter are the same for all, but the implementation methods are different, as evidenced by the participants at the conference who were able to share their methods and experiences.

With the experience in the room, we collaborated on suggested directions for QWQHC. Among them was to identify champions from each signatory organization to promote QWQHC with their counterparts across the country (sharing experiences and lessons learned) to improve healthcare workplaces. We are hoping that each of us, within our own sphere of influence, can spread the word to improve healthcare workplaces for clients, staff and employers!

*– Norma Freeman, Canadian Nurses Association
Sue VanDeVelde-Coke, Academy of Canadian Executive Nurses
Richard McConnell, Victorian Order of Nurses Canada*



Overall feedback showed that participants felt the Forum was very valuable and provided an excellent opportunity to network, exchange knowledge, and discuss ways that the QWQHC can support their work. The information and assessment provided by signatories on the use of Charter to date, as well as its potential uses, created a strong foundation from which to build a framework that supports the use of the Charter by current and future signatories.

A summary report will be posted on the website within the next month. We extend a very big thank you to all the participants. Their contributions and enthusiastic participation made the day a resounding success!

Measuring for Success

On the second day of the Summit, Fatima Keshavjee-Johnson, QWQHC R&PD Specialist, led a short breakfast session to discuss participants' responses to a pre-session survey on organizational Quality of Worklife (QWL) measurement. Participants were asked what they were doing to measure QWL within their organizations; the barriers and successes as a result; and the major enablers to promoting measurement in an organizational context.

The goal was to create a community of interest around successful organizational QWL measurement, looking at enablers and context for measurement. The two questions that elicited discussion amongst delegates were: How did you build momentum? and What created energy and investment around measurement at your organization?

Key findings include:

- Shared values and community must exist in an organization around quality improvement (QI) and measurement first, for successful measurement to occur and be sustained. Through such shared values the organizational environment is made more conducive to the development, collection, sharing, communication, and use of QWL measures.
- A lot of work is already being done to measure and assess QWL. These measures need to now be packaged and communicated to enable information flow and integration into organizational-wide systems and plans.
- Systems need to be in place to enable the quick collection, communication, monitoring, and use of QWL measurement data and information.

- A lack of resources should precipitate more innovative ways of collecting, sharing, monitoring, and communicating QWL data and information throughout the organization.
- QWL measurement needs to fit within organization-wide plans that include dedicated resources and integrated systems that measure change on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis.
- All levels require support to develop competencies and leadership abilities enabling WL measurement.

These ideas are important to the QWQHC for future knowledge exchange and organizational development. Themes of collaboration and staying connected via the QWQHC were clear and participants were invited to take part in the Worklife Measurement Project currently underway. See below for details.

The Worklife Measurement Project: Phase One

The overall goal of the QWQHC is to drive improvements in quality worklife and quality healthcare through building system-wide sustainable engagement, action, accountability and knowledge exchange. Given this, one of our priority activity areas is to promote and support the use of QWL measurements and reporting aimed at helping organizations and systems to move toward this ultimate goal.

The QWQHC supports the development of feasible and workable measures and indicators. The current phase of its Worklife Measurement Project (Phase 1) focuses on the creation of a Canada-wide inventory of measures and their descriptors as used by health service provision facilities and organizations. These include hospitals, community health clinics and centres, long-term care facilities, home and continuing care organizations, community visit organizations, rehabilitation centres, and teaching centres. This introductory inventory is being created through the administration of a questionnaire targeted at human resources and organizational development administrators across Canada. Responses to the questionnaire will provide the Collaborative with sample information on:

- the description of organizations' worklife measures and their definitions
- the level of importance and influence measures have within these organizations
- a description of the 'how and what' of the data that is collected
- and a description of whether/how measures are being compared with other, similar organizations

In addition to the questionnaire responses, the QWQHC also invites respondents to comment on the QWQHC-identified key worklife indicators and whether this data is typically collected in their setting. These indicators include:

- turnover rate
- vacancy rate
- level of overtime
- absenteeism
- training and professional development
- workers compensation lost time
- health provider satisfaction

The findings of this questionnaire will be reported in the upcoming months and will serve to inform subsequent phases of the Worklife Measurement Project. In the next phase of this project, the QWQHC will analyze the data to explore the following questions:

- How can the QWQHC enhance organizations' familiarity and use of standard worklife measures?
- How can the QWQHC support the integration of worklife measures and indicators within organizations?
- Should the QWQHC pursue the building of a consensus on worklife measurement within the health care system?

For more information about the project, please contact Fatima Keshavjee-Johnson at Fatima.Keshavjee-Johnson@gwqhc.ca or 800-814-7769 ext 329.

Our Newest Workplace Champions

Welcome to three champions who have recently signed the QWQHC Healthy Healthcare Leadership Charter:

- Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association (SRNA), Regina, SK
- West Park Healthcare Centre, Toronto, ON
- Northwood Care Incorporated, Halifax, NS

West Park is the first rehabilitation healthcare facility in Ontario to sign the Charter, while the SRNA represents the first signatory in Saskatchewan. Congratulations!

Susan Dempsey, Corporate Director, Organization Health & Retirement Living at Northwood, notes that "Northwood promotes a positive work-life culture and supports work-life balance through its 'Healthy and Safe Workplace' strategic direction. Our kick off is planned for May 14, 2009 when we host a Health Fair. The involvement with QWQHC will help our organization focus our efforts and our resources so that we 'connect all the dots' to support a comprehensive program which supports staff work-life balance."

The QWQHC **Healthy Healthcare Leadership Charter** <http://www.qwqhc.ca/healthy-healthcare-leadership.aspx> provides a tangible and compelling way for health leaders to demonstrate their commitment to creating positive change in the health workplace. Here's how to sign:

1. Discuss the Charter and its guiding principles at a senior leadership team meeting to determine alignment with your organization's values and strategic priorities.
2. Have senior leaders review the recommended priority areas for action on the second page of the Charter to determine where your organization may already have developed leading practices, where you think more improvement is needed, and finally which priority activities your organization is planning to implement in the coming year.
3. Sign the Charter – include senior leaders, board chairs, union leaders, medical and nursing leaders, etc. Be as inclusive as possible; include all those leaders who will need to be on board to effectively address quality of worklife issues in the organization. You may wish to customize the Charter by attaching your own logo, or providing some additional organization-specific context.
4. Promote the signed Charter to staff, board members, and your community and through any external networks that your leaders may belong to.
5. Inform the QWQHC when your organization has signed the Charter so we can promote your leadership on our website. Send photos, stories, and PDF versions of your signed Charter to information@qwqhc.ca

Sharing Ideas & Expertise in Nova Scotia

Health care professionals in Nova Scotia are making a concerted effort to advance the agenda of improving QWL to impact the quality outcomes in healthcare. On February 13, delegates from across the province attended a QWL champions' day entitled "Advancing Quality Worklife Quality Healthcare in Nova Scotia". It was an exciting opportunity to see how healthcare authorities and healthcare settings are approaching their QWL work. Participants were able to access tools, ideas and activities and connect with others who have implemented initiatives in similar settings. Over the breaks and lunch hour, booths were set up by several organizations to showcase their work.

Panel presentations provided a wealth of knowledge related to implementing QWL initiatives and spanned the journey that organizations take in doing so. "We wanted to connect people within the province so they know who to go to for support; and mostly, we wanted to reinvigorate the people that have been, and will continue to provide, leadership for Quality of Worklife," noted Carla Anglehart of the Nova Scotia Association of Health Organizations (NSAHO).

Many healthcare organizations in Nova Scotia are familiar with the QWQHC's *Within Our Grasp: A Healthy Workplace Strategy for Success and Sustainability in Canada's Healthcare System* and are using it to guide their work in improving QWL in their settings. Recognizing that connection, the organizers saw the event as a way to provide a roadmap on how to implement the Strategy, providing tools and real-life

examples of how to make it happen.

Canadian QWL in Action

Another four success stories have been developed for posting on the [QWQHC website](#). Here's a sneak peak at the newest stories online:

Featured Champion: Linda Silas

Move over G.I. Jane, there's a new action hero in town and her name is Linda Silas! As President of Canada's largest nursing organization representing 158,000 members and associate members in nine provinces, Ms. Silas is dedicated to improving the lives of nurses by undertaking research, putting research into action, and affecting policy through advocacy and alliance-building. She is also a passionate advocate for improving QWL in health settings.

Featured Practice: Research & Intervention Centre for Healthy Workplaces (CRISO-McGill)

There's a saying that if you're really close to an issue, sometimes 'you can't see the forest for the trees'. However, when it comes to promoting QWL, being in the thick of the woods can offer a unique perspective on ways organizations can reap the benefits of a healthy work environment. Such is the case for the Research and Intervention Centre for Healthy Workplaces (CRISO) that 'lives' inside the health and social sciences network, thanks to its affiliation with the McGill University Health Centre. CRISO is a group of action-researchers and senior consultants with expertise at the cutting edge of social sciences applied to organizational behaviours.

Featured Champion: Michael Leiter

While research into the concept of 'civility' might conjure up images of white-gloved manners in the Deep South of the 1800s, psychology professor Dr. Michael Leiter is proving there's a very modern link between civility in healthcare settings and improved patient care. Director of Acadia University's Centre of Organizational Research and Development (COR&D) and a Canada Research Chair in Occupational Health and Wellbeing, Dr. Leiter is a world-renowned researcher on employee engagement and its flip side, employee burnout.

Featured Practice: Trillium Health Centre

When Mississauga's Trillium Health Centre made developing a comprehensive support system for employee wellness a priority, they shrewdly modeled their program using criteria set by leaders in the business of 'best practices': the National Quality Institute (NQI) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). Launching a Healthy Workplace Program (HWP) in 2003, this large community hospital began the journey to improve quality and employee wellness - no small feat for a diverse organization with 4,400 employees, 700 physicians, and 1,000 volunteers spread out over two campuses and various off-site community programs.

QWQHC Updates

- As reported in the last e-bulletin, the QWQHC submitted a proposal to Health Canada for an additional two years of funding and has now received extended funding until the end of September. We are optimistic that an additional 18 months of funding will be announced shortly.
 - Join us for breakfast at the National Healthcare Leadership Conference in Newfoundland in June. The QWQHC will be hosting the session to provide more details on the work of the Collaborative and how we can be a resource to organizations across the health sector. To register, contact Tara Consunji or visit [conference info](#).
 - Coming soon! The QWQHC is currently redeveloping its website, including the creation of a new tool to help health organizations share successful practices that are demonstrating improvements to QWL. Submit a practice to add to our inventory and search other successful practices that your colleagues have implemented.
 - Watch for a new look for the e-Bulletin this summer. Colleagues can [sign up](#) to receive it directly to their inbox.
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What Can I Do?

The tremendous power for change comes from all stakeholders speaking with one voice and continuing to work together. Here are a couple of ways that you can help:

- **Champion the QWQHC Action Strategy** <http://www.qwqhc.ca/documents/2007-QWQHC-Within-Our-Grasp.pdf> **in your organization or jurisdiction:** We can provide copies of key materials and presentation templates. We may also be able to participate in brainstorming sessions with your group to do more.
 - **Contribute knowledge (stories, practices, research, tools) to the QWQHC Knowledge Exchange:** Send your stories to the QWQHC office at information@qwqhc.ca and we may include them as features on our website.
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Tara Consunji

Team Assistant

Quality Worklife - Quality Healthcare Collaborative

Tel: (613) 738-3800, ext. 447

Toll-free: 1 (800) 814-7769, ext. 447

Email: information@qwqhc.ca

Working together to make health workplaces healthier.