

## HEALTH CARE COLUMN

December 15, 2016

### **Quality Has No Limits in Northeastern Ontario**

*Dr. Reena Dhatt, North East LHIN Clinical Quality Lead  
Answers Questions about Her Role in Northern Health Care Quality*

#### **What's your definition of quality as it applies to health care – particularly here in Northeastern Ontario?**

- A. Quality is not a new concept; most of us are trying to do the best job we can all the time for patients. What is new is formalizing and standardizing discussions around quality so we can learn best practices from each other. And that's important because quality is what enables improved patient outcomes and health care experience for fellow Northerners.

A health system with a culture of quality is safe, effective, patient-centred, efficient, timely and equitable. Quality can be driven by evidence (clinical practice guidelines, clinical trials etc.), by practice efficiencies (what is the best way to do something), and by process improvement (what can we do to make it easier on patients, administrators, and the system as a whole).



**Dr. Reena Dhatt**

#### **How is your work tied into the work of Health Quality Ontario?**

- A. I have a dual reporting relationship to Dr. Jeffrey Turnbull, Chief of Clinical Quality at Health Quality Ontario (HQO) and to Louise Paquette, CEO of the North East LHIN. I represent the interests of the North East LHIN at HQO's provincial quality table. HQO is the evidence-based group that evaluates the mountains of evidence available in health care today. Using a team that includes primary care providers, statisticians, and efficiency experts, it tries to apply the data in a "real world format." It makes simple recommendations for practice, the use of technology, the interpretation of data and the impact of these metrics on care.

**What is your role as Clinical Quality Lead and why is the NE LHIN involved in this?**

- A. My role is to serve as a facilitator for a group of quality champions across the North East LHIN. This group has already been involved in quality projects in their various organizations and have a passion for moving the North East forward with a shared quality vision. Quality is an integral part of the North East LHIN's Integrated Health Service Plan 2016-2019. I am chairing the North East LHIN Regional Quality Table. I will also take these stories and bring them back to HQO for discussion at a provincial level. This level of collaboration allows the North East to get the benefit of "lessons learned" from Quality Tables that were previously established and are further ahead on adoption of their work plan and quality discussions in their LHIN.

**What are the next steps?**

- A. We had 224 Northerners provide input on their quality care priorities last summer in our Northern Health Care System Survey. At our Regional Quality Table's second meeting on Nov. 30, we worked to determine our Northeastern priorities and workplan. If HQO is the group that suggests how things can best be done, the Regional Table might represent the "implementation and evaluation team." Not only are primary care providers responsible for quality. Anyone who has a role in the system can improve the way care is delivered.

***Dr. Reena Dhatt, a family physician based in Sudbury, was named the North East Local Health Integration Network (NE LHIN)'s first Clinical Quality Lead earlier this year. In this position, Dr. Dhatt will accelerate efforts to promote a culture of quality that will enable improved patient outcomes. Questions? See the NE LHIN website's [Quality Care in the North East LHIN](#) or email Jenn Osesky, NE LHIN Quality Lead Officer, at [jenn.osesky@lhins.on.ca](mailto:jenn.osesky@lhins.on.ca).***

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