

Canadian College of Health Leaders – Eastern Ontario Chapter Spotlight Profile

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What are the key current Quality challenges in health care?

The influx of patients and limited capacity for all health care services is a major issue both within the

together and thinking about our issues as a collective. Providers are desperate for practical tools that will allow them to help patients in a more coordinated way. As Quality leaders, we need

*Patient Safety is a foundational piece of quality.
We need to maintain a constant focus on it.*

hospital and in the community. When we reach out to other hospitals we see everyone is facing the same challenges. Because the issues are systemic, no one area or specialty will be able to solve them alone. There are no ideal or 'textbook' solutions. However, there is a collective will to improve and a recognition that work needs to be done. This creates the burning platform for improvement. Finding a solution will take all of our leaders coming

to offer a very thoughtful, practical, but coordinated approach.

Oct 30th – Nov 3rd is Canadian Patient Safety Week. Which Safety issues are top of mind currently?

One significant risk on the rise stems from the increasing volume of patients with mental health issues presenting at the hospital. With this increase comes challenges around ensuring the safety of the

Biography-in-Brief

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Samantha has been the Director of Quality & Patient Safety at TOH for the past 3 years. Prior to that, she worked in quality, safety and risk in a variety of other health sectors including home care, long term care, pharmaceuticals, medical devices and at Canadian Blood Services. Each experience contributed to her comprehensive understanding of the application of quality in health care.

patient as well as that of the provider. We have had a strong focus on this issue at TOH for the last 3 years, but continued efforts are

needed at ongoing risk assessment and prevention. We know from the literature and our peers that this is an area for continued focus.

TOH recently celebrated an accreditation success, receiving 'exemplary' status – the highest possible ranking. Any lessons learned or advice for others?

As good as your strategic approach to accreditation may be, success is dependent on the foundation laid by senior leadership in the many years prior. At TOH, senior leaders focused the organization on a handful of key indicators and common objectives. They recognized and acknowledged a culture of quality and safety. In preparation for accreditation, we helped providers reflect on the great work they had already done. In doing so, we helped to light the passion our providers have for providing great care. In a culture of high performers, this has the effect of inspiring people to do even better. They used the accreditation process to continue to make

improvements. As a result, people felt great leading up to, during and after the accreditation audit. As the largest health care organization in Canada, 'exemplary' standing is really hard to get and we are proud of what we accomplished. If we can do this, surely we can solve some of the other seemingly unsurmountable issues together?

Any advice for those new to leadership in healthcare?

There are many smart people working in health care. As an organization, TOH is full of IQ. IQ is the foundational piece, but alone it is insufficient. Even the smartest people in the world can't solve big problems alone. And textbook solutions don't work in reality. As quality leaders, we need to bring

together IQ with the EQ side – it is only by bringing the knowledgeable people together with team based strategies that we will impact the outcomes. It is natural to get frustrated, but working together helps people move past feelings of being overwhelmed, past the personal sacrifices, and past blame toward collective advance.



Thank you to Samantha Hamilton for meeting with us!

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