

Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

# Narrative for Health Care Organizations in Ontario

March 27, 2026

## OVERVIEW

St. Joseph's Villa has a long and deeply rooted history that began with the vision and dedication of the Sisters of St. Joseph and the Diocese of Hamilton. Their commitment to caring for others, especially those who are poor, vulnerable, or marginalized, laid the groundwork for an organization that continues to lead with compassion and excellence. The Sisters' legacy of service and healing remains a guiding influence for the entire Villa campus of care today.

Over time, countless staff members, leaders, governors, volunteers, and philanthropists have contributed to building upon this strong foundation. Their efforts have continuously advanced our Mission and strengthened the quality of our care. Today, with more than 425 long term care residents, 10 hospice residents, and a team of over 700 dedicated staff and volunteers, we remain steadfast in our commitment to making a meaningful impact in the lives of those we serve. This commitment is demonstrated not only through our focus on quality service, but also through our collaborative partnerships with residents and families in shaping how care is designed and delivered.

This year, St. Joseph's Health System introduced a renewed strategic plan anchored by a new mission statement: Unstoppable Compassion. Developed through the voices of staff, learners, volunteers, residents, community members, and partners, the plan outlines a clear and forward looking roadmap. It positions us to meet the needs of a growing and evolving population by delivering compassionate, high quality care and contributing to a healthier, more inclusive future for all. Grounded in our shared values of dignity, respect, service, responsibility, justice, and discovery, the

strategic plan is built on three core directions: Advance Health, Amplify Impact, and Invest in Teams. These directions reflect our longstanding legacy of mission based care rooted in compassion, faith, and discovery.

Aligned with this organizational vision, our annual Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) sets specific quality priorities that support our Mission, Vision, Values, and strategic direction. For the upcoming year, our focus areas include reducing potentially avoidable emergency department transfers, decreasing resident falls, strengthening leadership capacity through education and the implementation of a Just Culture, and achieving high resident satisfaction related to feeling heard and being able to speak without fear of repercussions. These goals reinforce our commitment to continuous improvement and to delivering exceptional care in a safe, respectful, and supportive environment.

## **ACCESS AND FLOW**

Timely access to services and effective resident flow remain central to optimizing outcomes and enhancing the quality of care we provide. In support of these priorities, we collaborate with our healthcare partners, including area hospitals, to implement initiatives aimed at minimizing unnecessary hospital transfers and emergency department utilization. These efforts are supported by emerging care models that emphasize timely access to primary care providers, ensuring residents receive the right care in the right place.

Our admissions department is comprised of three full time staff members and a social worker who work diligently to process applications efficiently, including those requiring urgent attention.

For residents who need additional support related to responsive behaviors, our partnership with Hamilton Behavioural Support Ontario (BSO) provides specialized expertise that enhances our ability to deliver safe, person centered care. This year, we improved access and flow within the admission process by expanding our electronic health records to include the RNAO Clinical Pathways. This integration streamlines the intake workflow and supports timely, consistent documentation. Key information such as socioeconomic details, resident and family/POA preferences, and holistic assessment data, is now captured through standardized tools. These enhancements strengthen communication, improve continuity, and ensure that interdisciplinary teams have immediate access to essential information at admission and throughout the resident's stay.

In our ongoing commitment to quality improvement, we have implemented an admissions satisfaction survey for residents and families. This tool enables us to identify concerns promptly and introduce improvements where needed. Residents and families were actively engaged in reviewing and refining survey questions to ensure they were clear, relevant, and meaningful. Additionally, we revised our admissions and transfer checklists to more accurately capture required processes, support smoother transitions, and improve the accuracy and completeness of information at the time of admission.

The addition of a second Nurse Practitioner has further strengthened our capacity for timely, on site urgent assessments. This has resulted in shorter wait times for residents and improved decision making regarding whether care can safely be provided within our facility. As a result, hospital transfers have been reduced

and avoidable ED visits have declined significantly.

To further support the reduction of unnecessary hospital utilization, we have partnered with the Nurse Led Outreach Team (NLOT). This mobile nursing service provides the Villa with several key supports, including preventing avoidable ED transfers, enhancing the skills and capacity of our nursing team, and facilitating repatriation of residents from hospital, ultimately helping reduce hospital length of stay.

We also continue to operate a temporary Alternative Health Facility (AHF) unit in partnership with Hamilton Health Sciences and St. Joseph's Hospital. This unit helps alleviate regional healthcare pressures by caring for stable hospital patients in a sub acute setting, easing strain on acute care facilities. In addition, we continue to provide onsite x ray and laboratory services, working closely with service partners to ensure schedules are maintained and results are received promptly.

## **EQUITY AND INDIGENOUS HEALTH**

St. Joseph's Villa and its broader health system are grounded in the core values of dignity, respect, service, justice, responsibility, and discovery. These principles guide our approach to care and reinforce our commitment to equity across all interactions. We remain dedicated to ensuring that every person we serve receives safe, high quality, and compassionate care reflective of their individuality.

As part of this commitment, we have integrated the collection of sociodemographic information into the Villa's admission process. This data allows us to better understand residents' backgrounds

and tailor care to meet their diverse needs. These insights have informed staff education on cultural sensitivity and supported individualized approaches that promote culturally safe and respectful interactions. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee will review and analyze the data gathered through admissions, as well as sociodemographic information from the Global Workforce Survey (Accreditation Canada). Findings will be used to develop recommendations that guide future equity focused initiatives across the organization.

We have an active and well engaged DEI Committee with representation from staff, management, residents, and families. The committee has developed an action plan to strengthen equity and accountability in both care delivery and employment practices, supported by diverse perspectives that guide planning, mandatory education, and ongoing DEI initiatives. We also continue to build partnerships with community organizations to ensure our practices remain culturally informed and authentic.

Throughout the year, we advanced several campus wide DEI initiatives, including Heritage Week, Equality Day, and National Ribbon Skirt Day. These events, open to all staff, residents, families, and visitors, fostered a welcoming and inclusive environment. We continue to work with system partners on DEI and anti racism priorities, supported by annual mandatory DEI training and additional in person learning opportunities that deepen understanding and strengthen inclusive practice.

We are also enhancing relationships with community Indigenous groups and collaborating with the St. Joseph's Health System, which includes access to an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Senior

Consultant. This partnership supports education for staff and leadership, and provides cultural support and connections for residents who may benefit from them. We have secured funding to advance Indigenous led education and engagement, and by 2028, we will implement 20 Indigenous led cultural sessions. These initiatives will be guided by Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, artists, and educators, and require partnerships with Indigenous led organizations. Programming will be delivered across staff, volunteers, residents, families, and the broader community to strengthen cultural understanding and promote meaningful engagement.

## **PATIENT/CLIENT/RESIDENT EXPERIENCE**

At St. Joseph's Villa, we are committed to ensuring that residents and families are active partners in their care and in the ongoing development of our programs and decision making processes. Their involvement is essential to shaping an experience that is compassionate, dignified, and responsive to their needs. As part of the admission process, residents and families receive information on how they can remain engaged, provide feedback, and participate in care planning and organizational initiatives. They are also introduced to our compliments and complaints program, reinforcing our dedication to transparent communication.

Our communication and feedback processes ensure that every voice has a place. The "Tell Us How We Are Doing" card allows residents and families to submit compliments, concerns, or suggestions at any time. Each submission is acknowledged within 24 hours, and we strive to resolve all feedback within 10 days. Common themes are reviewed collaboratively, with solutions developed in consultation with Residents' and Family Councils.

Annual satisfaction surveys offer further insight into the resident and family experience, and action plans are created jointly when opportunities for improvement are identified.

Residents' and Family Councils remain highly engaged partners, providing valuable forums for open discussion on changes, challenges, and areas for improvement within long term care. Further to their involvement with the Continuous Quality Improvement Committee, we also saw increased resident and family participation this past year in several other committees, including Infection Prevention and Control, Falls Prevention, and Continence Care. Their involvement ensures that our quality improvement efforts remain grounded in lived experience and meaningful feedback.

To further strengthen the role of residents and families, we provide mentoring and educational opportunities designed to build confidence and support active participation. We also developed a satisfaction survey for those serving on committees and working groups to better understand their experiences, including whether they felt heard, respected, informed, and able to contribute effectively. Feedback from this survey led to revisions in wording to improve clarity, and the results continue to guide leadership in fostering an environment that is welcoming, inclusive, and supportive of open dialogue. In addition to committee-specific feedback, residents and families are invited to share input throughout the year across different services and events, such as fire safety activities and food and nutrition programs.

We also continue to strengthen resident and family engagement through our partnership with the St. Joseph's Hospital and St.

Joseph's Home Care Joint Patient and Family Advisory Committee (Joint PFAC). This committee supports resident and family participation across the entire care continuum, offering orientation, education, and networking opportunities to advisors. Working collaboratively, we developed three education modules designed to increase knowledge and confidence among advisors. This work directly supports one of this year's Quality Improvement Plan indicators focused on achieving high resident satisfaction with feeling heard and being able to speak up without fear of consequence.

## **PROVIDER EXPERIENCE**

We continue to face human resource challenges and are implementing strategies to strengthen staff retention and recruitment, including enhanced benefits, hiring incentives, and a preceptor program that supports skill development and mentorship. We also provide customer service training to reinforce strong, respectful interactions among staff, residents, families, and the broader organization.

To further support employee engagement and retention, we have introduced "Stay Interviews" to connect with new team members early in their employment. Human Resources will review the feedback gathered through these conversations to identify themes and opportunities for improvement, ensuring new staff receive timely and meaningful support.

We are enhancing and standardizing onboarding checklists across all departments, including management roles, to create a more structured and consistent onboarding experience.

This initiative will clarify job expectations, responsibilities, and

reporting structures from the outset, ensuring all employees understand their roles and accountabilities. For managers, the improved process will provide clearer guidance on leadership expectations and team oversight, increasing confidence and effectiveness in their positions. Overall, these improvements are expected to strengthen role clarity, improve communication, and support employee success across the organization.

We have implemented probationary performance evaluations for all positions and will provide managers with coaching to ensure these evaluations are completed effectively and consistently. The purpose of this initiative is to establish early, structured feedback on employee performance and overall integration into their roles, while enabling managers to identify areas where additional training, support, or clarification may be required to ensure long-term success.

Supporting staff experience and wellness remains a key priority, and we continue to foster a compassionate, supportive workplace. Our wellness initiatives include a year round recognition program with events such as staff appreciation days, BBQs, and service awards, along with access to an onsite wellness gym and complimentary massages provided by massage therapy students.

We analyzed the results of the Global Workforce Survey (Accreditation Canada), which provided valuable insight into staff experience across different domains. An action plan is being finalized incorporating staff input to address identified priorities and support meaningful improvements. To evaluate the impact of these initiatives, we plan to conduct targeted pulse surveys to determine whether the changes have strengthened staff experience

and to identify any remaining opportunities for improvement.

We conducted a comprehensive review of our Workplace Violence Prevention Program to strengthen expectations around respectful conduct and to clearly emphasize the importance of reporting racial and ethnic slurs. Education sessions have already been delivered both online and in-person to reinforce these standards and reporting procedures, and we have seen an increase in incident reporting as a result. In the coming months, we will also hold dedicated management sessions focused specifically on incident reporting, including how to address concerns involving discriminatory language and inappropriate behavior from residents, families, or visitors toward staff. This continued focus supports a safe, respectful, and accountable workplace environment.

## SAFETY

St. Joseph's Villa remains dedicated to identifying the root causes of resident safety events and implementing appropriate corrective measures to strengthen practices and prevent recurrence. Resident safety is a core organizational priority, and all healthcare staff are expected to report incidents through the established safety reporting system. To further support risk mitigation, the clinical team conducts biweekly high risk safety rounds, focusing on residents who require enhanced monitoring due to factors such as pain management needs, the use of restraints and PASDs, suicide risk, fall risk, complex responsive behaviors, skin and wound concerns, and continence issues.

Our approach is guided by a comprehensive incident reporting policy that applies to residents, employees, and visitors. This framework ensures that all events are investigated in a structured

and consistent manner. When required by the severity or nature of the incident, the Ministry of Long-Term Care is notified. Each event is categorized on a six level severity scale, with level 6 representing the highest level of harm. Trends are analyzed regularly to inform quality improvement efforts. We also maintain accountability to our Board by reporting all level 5 and 6 incidents, which signify significant risk.

Quality focused governance meetings provide a venue for sharing resident safety narratives. These discussions examine contributing factors, identify opportunities for improvement, and outline steps taken to support safer care. Through coordinated teamwork and planning, lessons learned are transformed into effective measures for reducing future risks.

Management is expected to act promptly on any concerns related to safety or risk. All concerns are acknowledged within 24 hours, with the goal of achieving resolution within 10 days. When a longer timeframe is required, communication is sent to explain the delay and provide an updated date for resolution.

A culture of openness and accountability continues to guide our approach to incident management. Findings and key insights are communicated with the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Committee, leadership teams, and, where appropriate, resident and family councils to ensure shared awareness and collective learning. Through this collaborative review process, we identify trends and recurring themes and develop targeted strategies to reduce risk and prevent recurrence.

This year, we strengthened our oversight framework by enhancing

our program and committee evaluation processes. Mid-year and year-end evaluation tools were enhanced to more formally measure resident safety goals, assess performance outcomes, and establish clear improvement plans. These structured evaluations promote transparency, reinforce accountability, and ensure that quality and safety initiatives remain measurable and action-oriented. To support successful implementation, coaching was provided to program and committee leads on the revised processes and the rationale behind them, ensuring consistent application and a clear understanding of expectations. This enhanced approach supports continuous improvement and sustained organizational performance.

Nearly all staff have completed training in the Gentle Persuasive Approaches (GPA) program, with the goal of achieving full participation across the organization, including low-risk administrative and office staff. While the depth and application of training may vary depending on role and level of direct resident interaction, inclusion of all staff is intentional and essential. Providing all employees with foundational skills in de-escalation, respectful communication, and responsive approaches contributes to a safer environment for residents, families, and staff.

As part of our current Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), a key priority is advancing leadership training in Just Culture. Implementing a Just Culture promotes an environment where staff feel safe to openly report errors and near-misses, fostering transparency and learning rather than fear of blame. This approach strengthens resident safety, supports staff well-being, and encourages shared accountability.

## PALLIATIVE CARE

In our ongoing commitment to delivering high-quality palliative and end-of-life care, we continuously evaluate and strengthen our practices to ensure compassionate, resident-centered support for individuals and their families. The Palliative Care Committee identified enhanced education as a priority to strengthen frontline capacity and promote best practices across the organization. As part of this initiative, ten Personal Support Workers (PSWs) expressed interest in advancing their knowledge and skills in end-of-life care and successfully completed the PACE (Palliative Approach to Care Education) program. PACE equips PSWs with practical knowledge and skills to support individuals and families through life-limiting illness, dying, and bereavement. Through the program, participants learn to recognize common patterns of dying, communicate with empathy, maintain therapeutic boundaries, support dignity, respond to symptoms, and provide culturally safe, trauma-informed, compassionate care. These PSWs are now working alongside the interdisciplinary team as frontline champions and resources for high-quality end-of-life care.

In addition, end-of-life care education is incorporated into nursing orientation for all newly hired staff. This orientation includes a heightened focus on recognizing the signs and symptoms associated with active dying, early identification of changes in condition, and appropriate clinical responses and communication.

Our Spiritual Care Team continues to provide emotional and spiritual support to residents, families, and staff throughout the end-of-life journey. Support for families extends beyond the passing of a loved one through follow-up contact, participation in on-site funeral services at the Villa, and Memorial Services held twice each year.

Chaplains lead the Honour Guard at the time of a resident's passing. During after-hours periods when a chaplain may not be available on site, clear instructions and a guiding script are available to support staff in carrying out the Honour Guard, ensuring this meaningful practice is conducted with consistency and respect.

We are in the final stages of implementing "Comfort Carts" to support family members whose loved ones are nearing end of life. In response to family feedback, these carts will be stocked with reading materials, activity books, religious texts, individually wrapped snacks, tissues, and a small blanket to provide comfort and practical support for those spending extended time at the bedside.

## POPULATION HEALTH MANAGEMENT

St. Joseph's Villa continues to embrace its role within the broader healthcare system by seeking proactive and collaborative approaches to support wellness, prevent illness, and help individuals manage chronic conditions more effectively. Our partnerships with long term care homes, hospitals, home and community care providers, and hospice organizations have deepened, allowing us to strengthen continuity of care and create smoother transitions for those moving between services. These relationships foster shared learning, coordinated planning, and collective efforts that enhance care quality and improve health outcomes.

Research remains an essential driver of system wide improvement. Through the extensive research activity undertaken by our partner hospitals, we have opportunities to contribute to innovative studies

that inform evidence based practices and advance population health. Our commitment to engaging in research that addresses emerging and persistent health needs ensures that we remain aligned with the evolving priorities of the communities we serve.

St. Joseph's Villa also supports caregivers and community members through a dedicated respite program. This short stay service, offering five available beds, provides temporary relief for caregivers while giving individuals access to safe, supportive care for up to 90 days per year. The program plays a vital role in sustaining caregiver well being and preventing unnecessary long term care admissions.

In addition, our campus of care continues to serve the community through the Adult Day Program, which enables individuals to remain at home longer by offering daily social, recreational, and therapeutic activities. While clients benefit from engaging programming, caregivers are able to maintain their overall well-being. This combined approach supports both individual independence and caregiver resilience.

Earlier this year, the Ministry of Long-Term Care announced funding for Ontario's pilot program, Community Access to Long-Term Care (CALTC), designed to support seniors and eligible individuals living at home by enabling them to age in place more effectively. Through this initiative, community members can access select long term care services, along with social and recreational programming offered onsite at the Villa. The program advances care beyond traditional boundaries by connecting individuals and their families to LTC services while they continue living in their preferred home environment, often well before any transition to a long-term care facility is needed. Central

to the CALTC model is coordinated care delivery, which includes transportation supports, service navigation, and access to integrated teams with specialized clinical expertise, ensuring that clients receive seamless, comprehensive, and proactive support in the community.

## CONTACT INFORMATION/DESIGNATED LEAD

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If you would like more information or have questions about the St. Joseph's Villa Quality Improvement Plan for 2026/27, please contact:

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## SIGN-OFF

It is recommended that the following individuals review and sign-off on your organization's Quality Improvement Plan (where applicable):

I have reviewed and approved our organization's Quality Improvement Plan on **March 27, 2026**

Peter Szota

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**Peter Szota**, Board Chair / Licensee or delegate

Deborah Fernandes

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**Deborah Fernandes**, Administrator /Executive Director

Laura Harrington

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**Laura Harrington**, Quality Committee Chair or delegate

Candy Sarraf

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**Candy Sarraf**, Other leadership as appropriate

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