

Wellbeing for the provider, quality care for the system: QIPSF 2017

Enhancing the quality of health care and patient safety was once again the focus of this year's Quality Improvement and Patient Safety Forum held in Toronto on Oct. 23. But this forum also saw a definite focus on the wellbeing of providers and its importance to ensuring a high quality system.

More than 800 delegates – “QI (Quality Improvement) geeks” as they were termed by one speaker - registered for this second joint meeting of the Centre for Quality Improvement for Patient Safety (C-QuIPS) and Improving & Driving Excellence Across Sectors (IDEAS).

In his introductory remarks, Health Quality Ontario President and CEO Dr. Joshua Tepper talked about the recent “pivot” within his organization to focus on the Quadruple Aim framework for health quality instead of the Triple Aim. Whereas the Triple Aim advanced by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement talks about improving the patient experience, improving population health and reducing health costs, the Quadruple Aim adds enhancement of provider satisfaction and wellbeing.

Quality should not be done “to” front line providers, Dr. Tepper said, but rather should enable and sustain clinicians and other health care providers.

This focus was a major theme at the conference with a keynote presentation by Dr. Bryan Sexton (PhD), director of the Duke Patient Safety Center, at Duke University, Raleigh, NC and an international expert on resiliency. The session was followed by separate breakout sessions on quality improvement and joy in work and on enhancing caregiver resilience, both of which developed the same theme.

Sexton's interactive and entertaining plenary bluntly outlined the pressures facing those working in the health sector and demonstrated that many in the room were at risk of burnout because of their roles and commitment.

“Coming in early and leaving work late is not a sustainable quality improvement strategy,” Sexton said, citing studies showing the impact of provider burnout on patient safety as well as the health and wellbeing of providers themselves. “Resiliency is not powering through a difficult time. It is knowing how and when to take breaks.”

Sexton detailed research conducted at Duke showing that frequently taking time to focus on positive aspects of work and life can have a significant long-term impact on improving wellbeing. Similarly, he noted, creating positive safe spaces for people and acknowledging achievements also helps improve the workplace environment.

Rather than focusing on the negative as those who are burned out tend to do, Sexton said “the key to resilience is seeing the world with clear eyes.”

In addition to the breakout sessions dealing with improving the workplace environment, other sessions dealt with a wide ranging of quality and patient safety issues led by many clinical and patient advisor leads from throughout the province.

The conference provided a platform to raise the profile for C-QuIPS and IDEAS and for the organizations to feature their initiatives. C-QuIPS is a joint partnership between the University of Toronto's faculty of medicine and two of its major teaching hospitals – Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre and SickKids.

IDEAS is a comprehensive, province-wide initiative aimed at enhancing the province's health care system by building capacity in quality improvement and change management. The initiative is funded by the provincial ministry of health and long-term care and delivered through a partnership of the province's medical schools, Health Quality Ontario, the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences (ICES), and the Institute of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation at the University of Toronto.

This year's posters from the IDEAS program once again profiled a number of centre-specific programs with many focusing on transitions in care and coordinated care plans. IDEAS was also able to profile its unique new online QI training program for personal support workers providing home care in Ontario. The open poster competition also featured a number of projects dealing with programs to improve quality care including topics as diverse as improving identification of hemodialysis patients at risk of falls, to the challenges of storing and disposing of opioids involved in end-of-life care in the home.

Also receiving a high profile at this year's meeting was the [Change Day Ontario initiative](#) in which those involved with the province's health care system are asked to make a pledge about how they improve their own care or that of the system.

In their afternoon session, Dr. Kaveh Shojania, professor of medicine at the University of Toronto and Dr. Tara Kiran, a family physician and QI director for the St. Michael's Hospital Academic Family Health, Toronto highlighted selected papers and hot topics in QI and patient safety. Dr. Kiran dealt with studies looking at access to primary care and the potential for primary care providers to impact the social determinants of health. In discussing approaches to opioid use, Dr. Kiran referenced [a study](#) showing success with community-based buprenorphine programs in six remote First Nations communities.

The meeting closed with a focus on the partnerships involved in the conference and the need for a strong community and culture to encourage and support the development of quality care.

"Today is a partnership," said Lee Fairclough, Vice President of Quality Improvement at Health Quality Ontario in introducing closing speaker Dr. Michael Schull, CEO of ICES which partners in supporting the IDEAS program.

"Health care is not a product," said Schull noting the need for a strong community and culture with a shared language and tools to support a quality health care system.