

Insights

on Health Equity from the 2017/18
Quality Improvement Plans

Equity in health care matters. Yet we know that much can be done to improve health equity in Ontario. Each year, organizations across Ontario submit an annual Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). Part of the plan includes describing how they have worked to incorporate an equity lens into their quality improvement initiatives. This report provides a summary and specific examples of how organizations are addressing health equity through quality improvement, as described in their 2017/18 QIPs.

**Health Quality
Ontario**

Let's make our health system healthier

Key Findings

Health equity allows people to reach their full health potential and receive high-quality care that is fair and appropriate to them and their needs, no matter where they live, what they have, or who they are.

In their 2017/18 QIPs, organizations described focusing on populations within their respective communities. While organizations mentioned using similar approaches to address health inequities, they applied these approaches in unique ways suited to their distinct populations.

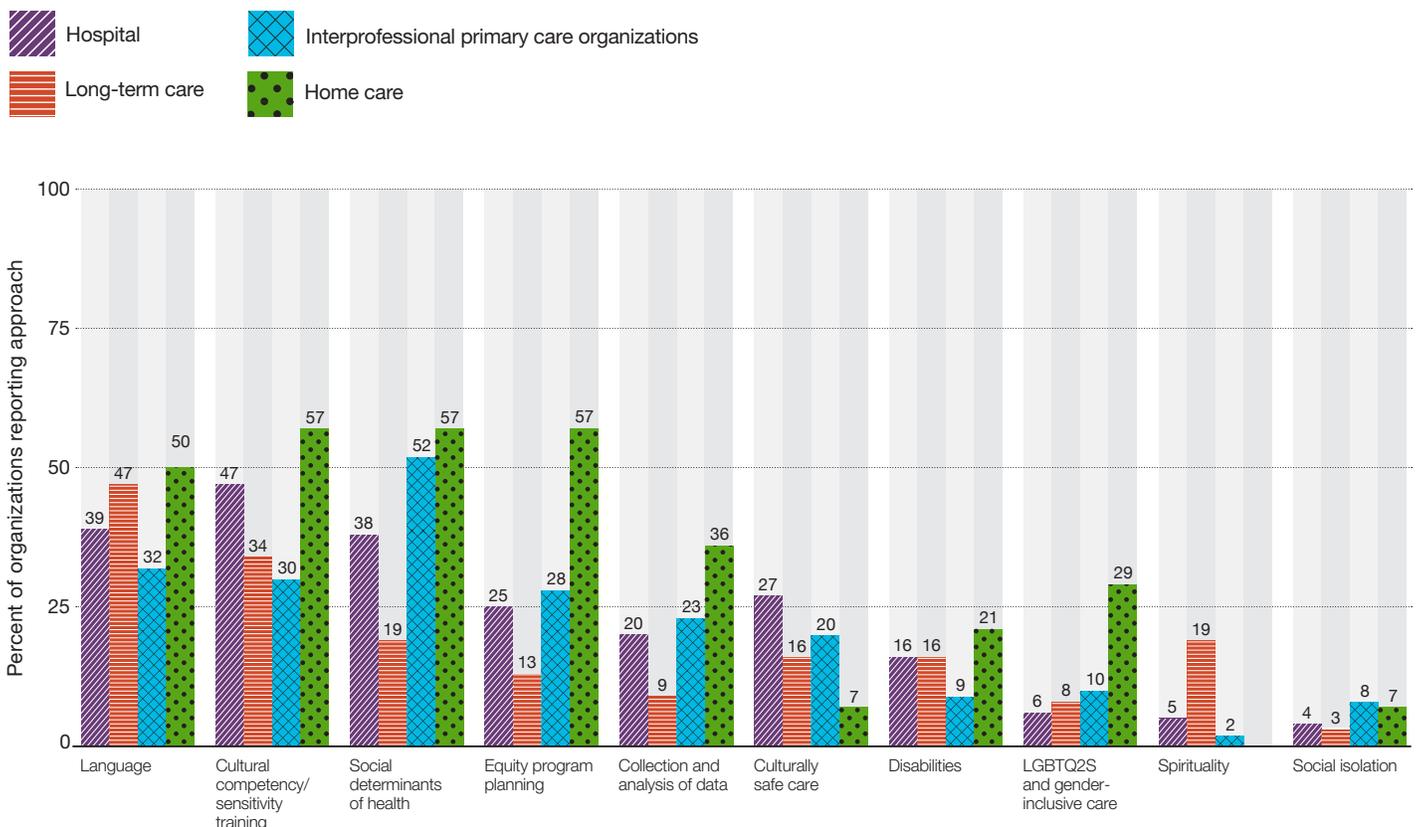
Figure 1 summarizes the types of strategies that organizations put into place to improve health equity, as described in their QIPs. Similar to our observations from the 2016/17 QIPs, interventions related to language and cultural competency/sensitivity training were the two most commonly described types of strategies.



Our health care system must strive to meet the health needs of each resident of Ontario... If we are to commit to continuous quality improvement, we must provide access for all, regardless of how far patients live from where the services are provided, what language they speak, their health status, or other socio-demographic factors. Programs and initiatives must take into account issues of equity, address them where possible, and avoid contributing to barriers to access for marginalized populations.

– Quality Matters: Realizing Excellent Care for All

Figure 1. Types of strategies to address health inequities described in the 2017/18 QIPs



Indicators related to health equity

In the QIP Workplan, under the Equitable dimension:

- There were **125 unique indicators** related to health equity described by **100 organizations**
- **68 of these indicators** were submitted by primary care organizations

Health equity indicators help identify opportunities for improvement and determine whether changes have led to improvement. Indicators need to be relevant, reliable, and valid.

Examples of indicators from the 2017/18 QIPs

Sioux Lookout Meno Ya Win Health Centre is measuring the percentage of patients responding positively to the statement, “The hospital staff took my cultural values and those of my family or caregiver into account.”

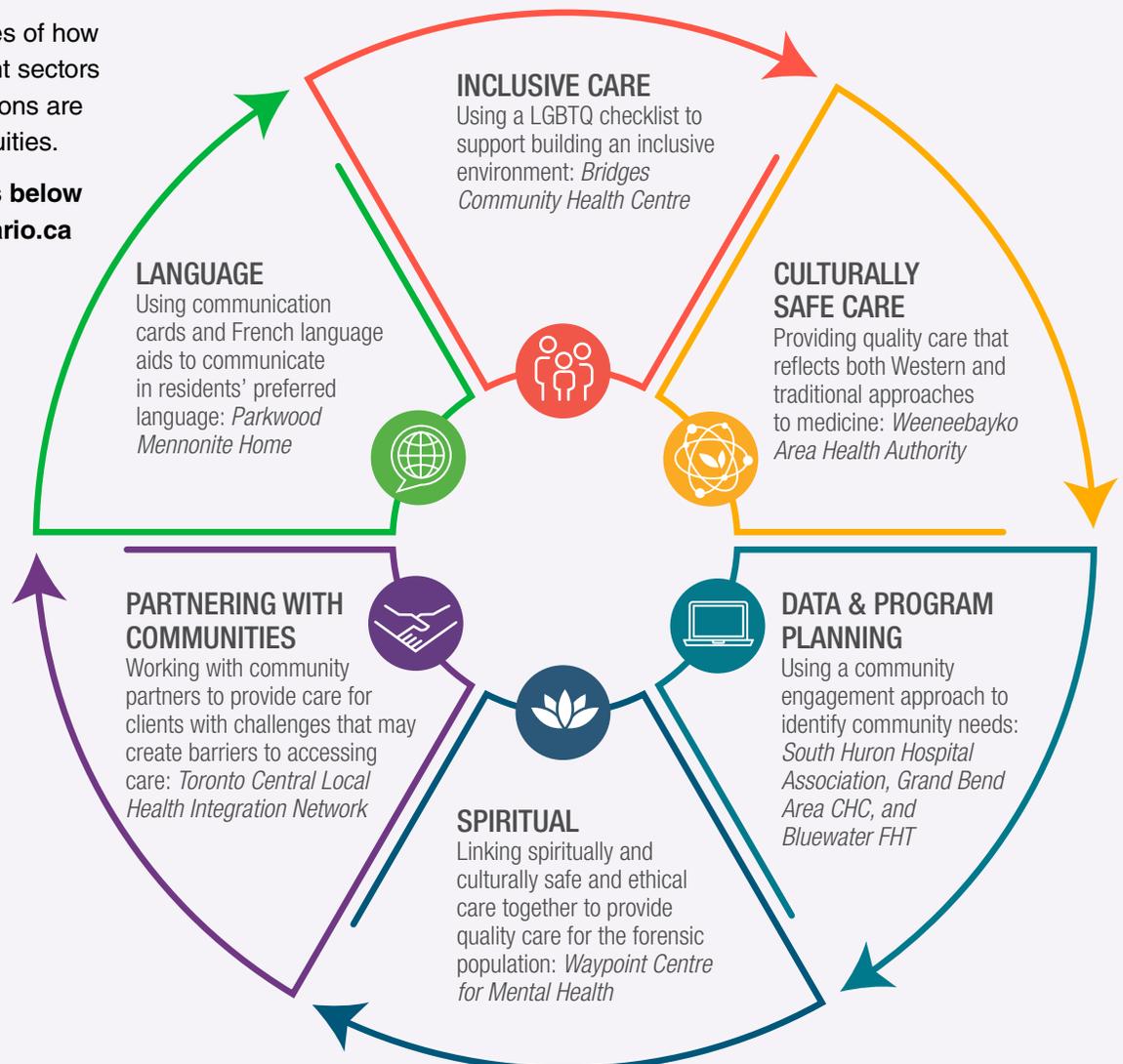
St. Michael’s Hospital Academic Family Health Team is measuring the ratio of colorectal cancer screening between patients who identify as transgender or gender non-conforming and patients who identify as cisgender.

Read more about indicators to measure health equity on **Quorum**.

Spotlight Stories

Here are a few examples of how organizations in different sectors and geographical locations are addressing health inequities.

Click on the examples below or visit quorum.hqontario.ca to learn more about the initiatives mentioned.

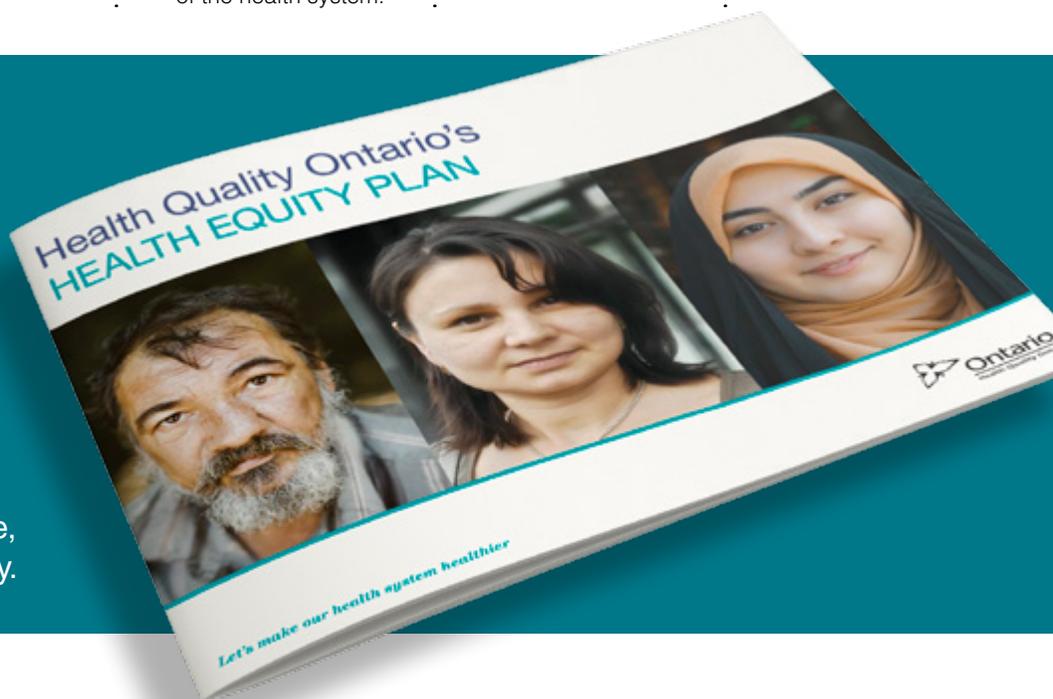


Recommendations to advance health equity in **2018/19**

- 1** Use the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's **Health Equity Impact Assessment Tool** for program planning to support improved health equity in the services your organization provides.
- 2** Discover who you may not be serving in your client/patient/resident population by collecting and analyzing sociodemographic data. Consider using **Measuring Health Equity: Demographic Data Collection in Health Care** to guide data collection and/or the **Ontario Health Profiles** to access area-level health data.
- 3** Complete the core online training offered by the **Ontario Indigenous Cultural Safety Program**. It provides a vital opportunity for health professionals to examine present-day realities of colonization and the ways in which culture, education and history shape health practice and impact Indigenous experiences of the health system.
- 4** Develop partnerships within your community to enable inclusive work across sectors and agencies (for example, community and social services, children and youth services, community safety and correctional services).
- 5** Identify ways to understand the impact of your health equity program – for example, by collecting quantitative or qualitative data.

To learn more about health equity

Health Quality Ontario has developed a Health Equity Plan to embed equity into our own work and to encourage providers, system leaders, and planners to make it prominent in their thinking, discussions, and planning as they build a system that is safe, effective, patient-centred, efficient, and timely.



To connect with the quality improvement community

Quorum is an online community where people interested in quality improvement from across the province can come together to learn from one another, share, and collaborate. On Quorum, you can find and connect with others working on similar initiatives, browse a bank of quality improvement projects, participate in Q&A with quality improvement specialists across the province, and read posts such as those linked in the Spotlight Stories.



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