

# Update

Health Results Team (HRT)  
Information Management  
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Produced for our partners and information management stakeholders across the health care sector.

October 2006

## Sharing Knowledge and Optimizing the Use of Quality and Accurate Data



*by Adalsteinn Brown,  
Information Management Lead,  
Health Results Team*

The ongoing goal of Ontario's Information Management Strategy continues to be to produce better data. Along with quality data, it is imperative that accurate and timely information be readily accessible to support critical decisions affecting planning, administration and the delivery of health care. A greater sharing of knowledge among health care providers is also crucial as we move forward.

Ontario is fortunate to have so many truly outstanding health care providers. Their ideas contribute to improving the quality of care, impact positively on health outcomes and save lives. Cross-pollination of their ideas is therefore important, and can lead to further innovations and creative solutions.

To that end, I am pleased to inform you of two new initiatives that will facilitate this exchange. One creates a repository of practices that health care providers across the system can draw on for ideas on how to improve integration, health human resources, process redesign, quality and patient safety and information management within their organizations. This **Health Care Improvement Practices Registry** creates a tangible mechanism to applaud, track and record the successes in health care from which we can all learn and benefit.

The second initiative will prove to be a powerful navigational tool to help the health care community get a clear picture of the scope of health information available in the province. The new **Health Information and Resource Directory** will also be a key link to data analysis experts within the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

## The Health Care Practices Registry: Fostering a Culture of Quality Improvement

It is vital to foster a health care culture and environment that inspires us to seek improvements and challenge ourselves on an ongoing basis to better meet the changing health care needs of Ontarians.



This is the spirit behind the newly launched **Health Care Improvement Practices Registry**. The on-line registry, now available on the ministry's website at [www.health.gov.on.ca](http://www.health.gov.on.ca), aims to help recognize and foster a culture of excellence where the tremendous wealth of knowledge and experiences within the health care system can be leveraged for the benefit of everyone.

The registry currently recognizes over 80 improvement practices that fall under at least one of a number of categories, reflecting the key themes of this spring's *Celebrating Innovations in Health Care Expo*.

*...continued on page 2*

## *The Health Care Improvement Practices Registry ...continued from page 1*

These categories include:

- Meeting Community Needs through Integrated Care
- Innovations in Health Human Resources
- Improving Efficiency through Process Redesign
- Improving Quality and Patient Safety
- Innovations in Health Information Management

Some of the participants included in the registry recently shared their views on the new initiative.

“Comparing or benchmarking practices is an excellent idea. It opens the doors to sharing our strengths and overcoming weaknesses to improve health care,” said Dwayne Jones, Lead Cardiovascular Perfusionist at Kitchener’s St. Mary’s General Hospital.

“In our environment, information sharing can be a disjointed process. A web-based registry is a good first and logical step to address this,” Jones said.

The objective of the St. Mary’s Regional Cardiac Care Centre’s improvement practice is to decrease the rate of transfusion of blood components and products to at least half the provincial average on an ongoing basis, through multimodal blood conservation in cardiac surgery.

Rhona McGlasson, project manager of the Toronto Joint Network of the Toronto Western Hospital, said the improvement practices registry offers a unique opportunity for health care providers to learn from one another. “There is a lot of great work going on out there. The ability to learn from the work of others is something we don’t do enough,” McGlasson said.

“It’s important to view successes across the continuum. Promoting this philosophy is moving health care in the right direction,” McGlasson said.

The Joint Network’s practice involves patients receiving elective hip and knee replacement surgery.

“The registry is a very positive approach to seeing other organizations’ practices and projects and how they are meeting challenges,” said Ginny Schedewitz, client services manager at Paramed Home Health Care in London.

“We can use this information to move critical projects forward,” Schedewitz said.

Paramed’s improvement practice involves decreasing the rate of medication discrepancies by 75 per cent in one year in clients returning home from hospital by implementing medication reconciliation.

Donnabeth Sweetland, manager of education and development at the Community Care Access Centre of London and Middlesex, said the improvement practices registry “just makes good sense.” “These days, because of how fast we’re moving, if someone has done something amazing in an area and put in resources and time, it makes sense to share and learn from their experience,” Sweetland said.

*...continued on page 4*

## **In their own words – What health care providers have to say about the new registry**

*“Comparing or benchmarking practices is an excellent idea. It opens the doors to sharing our strengths and overcoming weaknesses to improve health care.”*

*Dwayne Jones, Lead Cardiovascular Perfusionist,  
Kitchener’s St. Mary’s General Hospital*

*“There is a lot of great work going on out there. The ability to learn from the work of others is something we don’t do enough.”*

*Rhona McGlasson, Project Manager,  
Toronto Joint Network, Toronto Western Hospital*

*“The registry is a very positive approach to seeing other organizations’ practices and projects and how they’re meeting their challenges.”*

*Ginny Schedewitz, Client Services Manager,  
Paramed Home Health Care, London*

*“These days, because of how fast we’re moving, if someone has done something amazing in an area and put in resources and time, it makes sense to share and learn from their experience.”*

*Donnabeth Sweetland, Manager of Education and  
Development, Community Care Access Centre of  
London and Middlesex*

# The Health Information and Resources Directory: A Provincial “Yellow Pages” of Health Information

There is a vast wealth of health data and information resources available in Ontario, which can make pinpointing and accessing current information a challenge.

The new **Health Information and Resources Directory (HIRD)** is a web-based solution designed to serve as a universal and in-depth provincial “Yellow Pages” of health information. It replaces both the *Ontario Health Planning Data Guide* and the *Ontario Health Planning Survey Guide*. It is intended for those involved in information management, health system administration, planning, delivery, as well as data analysis and management.

The information contained within the HIRD has never before been available in one place. This online tool will direct users to an array of information resources, data warehouses and other tools managed by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, or organizations like the Ontario Hospital Association and the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI).

Health care organizations will find it very helpful because it provides a conduit to information on a broad range of issues, from complex continuing care to prenatal and maternal health. For instance, users can call up information about CIHI’s national Discharge Abstract Database tracking hospital discharge information in Canada or learn about the Niday Perinatal Database, which tracks variables relating to maternal, newborn and prenatal care and characteristics in eastern and southeastern Ontario. Or a user could search the directory to find experts in the province on ambulatory care or Aboriginal Health.

Additionally, health care professionals often have a fairly deep understanding of a select range of information, but may not be readily aware of resources beyond their scope of expertise. It is hoped that the directory can serve as a bridge to help link professionals and experts with particular skill sets across health care communities.

Currently, the directory contains about 500 profiles, including 95 informational holdings and databases, 60 performance indicators, 50 surveys and some 80 ministry data analysis experts. It also contains about 215 contact profiles of custodians or owners associated with the information profiles.

The directory will be made available in stages over the next few months to users outside the ministry. Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) and public health units will be included in the first phase. Hospitals, Community Care Access Centres (CCACs) and other users will follow.

---

*The information contained within the HIRD has never before been available in one place. (...) Health care organizations will find it very helpful because it provides a conduit to information on a broad range of issues, from complex continuing care to prenatal and maternal health.*

---

Organizations and individuals with profiles on the directory are assigned a portal allowing them to log on and directly update their profiles. The system will also prompt them by e-mail, according to a pre-determined schedule, to review their profiles so that the information remains accurate and current.

The directory was designed to be user friendly and easily searchable. All information contained in the HIRD is linked to a common subject list. Users can search the directory by subject, keyword, section (e.g., people) or across the entire directory (e.g., profiles for all data experts and information holdings that reference acute care). Users will be provided with a description of the information source, how it can be accessed, as well as contact information.

## *The Health Care Improvement Practices Registry ...continued from page 2*

The London and Middlesex CCAC's initiative involves the development of a regional wound care education program to advance the quality and outcomes of client care.

All improvement practices included in the registry were evaluated by ministry staff based on quantitative measures, such as relevance and measurable outcomes. For instance, did the practice improve access to health care delivery or impact on patient-centered care? Did it improve clinical outcomes or increase efficiency or distribution of resources?

It is anticipated that submissions to the registry will come from a wide range of sources, including acute, primary care and long-term care facilities, family health teams, and professional organizations among others.

Health care providers are invited to submit an improvement practice to the registry for consideration by logging onto the website at **[www.improvementpractices.on.ca](http://www.improvementpractices.on.ca)**.

All submissions need to include an evaluation of the practice using quantitative measures. The registry places

a strong emphasis on quantitative results because using and tracking data on a regular basis is critical to improving any clinical or administrative practice. Gathering baseline data about a new practice or initiative that is being implemented within a facility and then tracking the findings allows for the collection of evidence required to determine whether a specific change has led to improvements.

Practices will be evaluated based on the established criteria and health care providers will be notified as to whether their submission has been accepted. There is no limit to the number of improvement practices an individual or organization can submit. To ensure the validity of the various practices included on the registry, the ministry will conduct random reviews on a periodic basis. This will involve randomly selecting a small sample of organizations and requesting a visit to their site to observe the practice and interview various individuals throughout the organization, who are involved with the practice. The organization will be asked to provide the most recent supporting data related to their improvement practice.

### For more information

Write to [HRTIM@moh.gov.on.ca](mailto:HRTIM@moh.gov.on.ca), or call 416-212-4263. Visit the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's web site, Information Management section (for Health Care Providers) at:

**[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/transformation/providers/information/information\\_mn.html](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/transformation/providers/information/information_mn.html)**