

Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

# Narrative for Health Care Organizations in Ontario

March 27, 2025

## OVERVIEW

Columbia Forest Long Term Care is a 156 long-term care home in Waterloo, Ontario. Our home is nestled in a quiet subdivision along a beautiful forest that contains walking trails. We are located at 650 Mountain Maple Avenue.

### Our Purpose, Mission, Vision and Values

In 2024, through broad consultation with stakeholders across our organization including direct engagement of residents, team members and family members of those in our care, Extendicare conducted a refresh of the Mission, Vision and Values. Our goals were to capture who we are, what we can all achieve working together and to put the feelings of communities into words.

Our Purpose?is helping people live better.

Our Mission?is to provide people with the care they need wherever they call home.

Our Vision?is a future where everyone in Canada has access to the care and support, they need to live their best lives.

Our Values:

We embrace every person for the individual they are.?

We care for each person as we would our own family.

We collaborate with others because we achieve more together.?

We are relentless in our efforts to improve.?

We respect the resources entrusted to us.

In 2023, Revera's long-term care homes joined Extendicare. This has provided an opportunity to combine strengths, learn from one another, establish communities of practice focused on continuous improvement and collaboration, and reinforce Extendicare's deep commitment to long-term care in Canada.

Throughout our organization, integration work continues to be an important focus in 2025 and beyond. We know collaboration allows us to achieve more together. By aligning and standardizing processes, policies and systems across our homes, all Extendicare LTC homes will deliver consistent, quality care.

### Quality Improvement

Extendicare's Quality Framework outlines the ways in which our home is supported to achieve success with a focus on quality of life, safety, regulatory compliance and resident engagement. In alignment with provincial requirements, each Extendicare home in the province is responsible for directing their quality improvement plan, with the support of a dedicated regional team who assist us with our home's quality initiatives. Our strategic direction and the initiatives that support the plan also meet or exceed standards set by Accreditation Canada and meet the requirements of our LSAA.

Our home's multidisciplinary Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

Committee oversees our quality program. It is led by our home's CQI lead. Membership includes our home leadership team, each designated program lead, Medical Director, Dietitian, Pharmacy Consultant, resident and family council representatives, and care team representatives, including a Personal Support Worker and Registered clinical staff. Our CQI committee meets at a minimum quarterly and uses a CQI Framework in alignment with Extendicare's enterprise-wide strategic quality priorities to identify key areas for quality improvement in our home, make recommendations, monitor and measure progress, identify and implement adjustments, and communicate improvement outcomes for the current and following year. Results are discussed and shared with residents, families, team members and external partners to support our priorities, targets, and activities.

Across our organization, Extendicare measures and monitors our quality initiatives using data accuracy and quality indicator results. Home-level quality reports are circulated monthly and reviewed by homes and regional teams across our network, to help monitor progress and drive meaningful conversation at each home's continuous quality committee meetings. Performance monitoring is a key part of our relentless efforts to improve performance and include but are not limited to the following:

Monitoring key quality indicators

Internal audits

External audits

## Annual Program evaluations

### Resident and Family Experience Survey results

In 2024, our home's Quality Improvement priority areas included Falls prevention, Restraint reduction, Antipsychotic deprescribing, and Worsened pressure injury. The following top areas for improvement identified from our 2023 Resident and Family Experience survey results were also included: I am satisfied with the timing and schedule of spiritual care services, I am updated regularly about changes in the home, and both Resident and Family Wound recommend.

We are proud of the following achievements and improvements that were implemented based on the 2023 survey results and that were part of our 2024 improvement plan: Columbia Forest remained a restraint free facility throughout 2024, Family Council was reestablished July 19th and continued to meet monthly throughout the remainder of the year (with the exception of December). We were able to offer more spiritual programs, such as weekly hymn sings and weekly church services, and visits from the local Priest. Bible Study started April 2024 for the Residents who were interested. Communication to Residents is posted daily on each Resident home area to inform them of important updates, including outbreaks, recreation programs, and special events.

Our monthly KPI meetings are effective in ensuring we are meeting to review Residents who are triggering our four focus quality indicators and to talk about strategies for improvement. We are proud to have maintained 0% restraints in our home. As a result, we will continue to monitor our processes but have not included in

our 2025 workplan as a priority indicator.

Our CQI committee has determined that for 2025 our priority areas for quality improvement in our home will include Fall prevention, Pressure injury reduction and Antipsychotic deprescribing as well as the following areas from our Resident Experience survey as determined following consultation with our Resident and Family Councils: I enjoy eating meals in the dining room, I feel my goals and wishes are heard and considered in my care, and Bladder care products keep me dry and are comfortable.

### ACCESS AND FLOW

Extendicare is committed to working closely with our community partners including our regional Ontario Health at Home team, hospitals, and business partners to ensure safe, effective and high-quality care of residents across the organization and at the local home level. We do this through ongoing relationship building and partnerships with health system partners such as local long-term care homes, regional IPAC hubs, Ontario Health teams and various regulatory authorities.

In addition, our partnerships extend to our Medical Advisor and Attending Physicians as we work to improve medication management, clinical care and reduce unnecessary ED visits.

We work together with residents, their families and our health system partners to ensure safe, effective admissions to our home, and understand transitions throughout the system are not easy for those we serve. We work to apply additional care and attention to closely engage and support those in our care at times of change or at times where specialized supports are required in their health

care journey.

## Prevention and health promotion

Throughout the year, we support and participate in organization-wide awareness campaigns that educate team members, residents and families. Our home has access to an annual awareness calendar that highlights key health promotion and professional recognition events, which are supported nationally through communication and education, and locally at our home with activities that are tailored to the home's needs and demographics.

### Organization-wide campaigns include:

**Safe Spaces:** Combining four key autumn safety awareness events – Infection Control Week, Canadian Patient Safety Week, Seniors' Safety Week, and Fall Prevention Month – Safe Spaces is a six-week sustained safety campaign. Aimed at promoting a culture of safety across the organization through education, resources and home-level activities, the campaign equips our team members with knowledge and tools to continuously improve quality and safety and engages residents and families as partners in care.

**Stick it to the flu:** Through Extendicare's annual influenza vaccination campaign, all homes are encouraged to aim for 90% vaccination of residents and staff. Individual and home-wide incentives are provided for achieving this benchmark, and our home hosts on-site vaccination clinics.

**Hand Hygiene Day:** Led by our IPAC team, this annual day is marked with an intensive focus on tools and education to promote proper

hand hygiene practices for team members, residents and families. Homes across Extendicare participate in a friendly challenge to find the most creative and engaging ways to promote hand hygiene – from writing jingles to hosting events.

**Alzheimer's awareness:** We care for a population that is impacted by rising rates of Alzheimer's and dementia. In addition to intensive communication focus during Alzheimer's Awareness Month every January, our home has access to tools and education year-round that helps our team members to tailor care to the unique needs of those living with dementia – from Gentle Persuasive Approaches (GPA) training to dementia-focused tools for skin and wound care.

### Right care in the right place at the right time

On an ongoing basis, we work hard to support, train, retain and recruit qualified and compassionate team members to work together in the service of quality care for residents. We know strong interdisciplinary teams are essential to the delivery of quality care and we foster a culture of collaboration to contribute coordinated expertise, as resident plans of care are executed. In addition, we are actively recruiting Nurse Practitioners to support our collaborative models of care, continue to invest in building credentials among our team for advanced wound nurses (SWAN's), provide training and resources for our team to enhance skillsets in IV therapy with multi-venous IV training arms, compassionate end-of-life care and more.

### Building capacity

We recognize how important long-term care is within our health

system. At an enterprise-wide level, Extendicare is actively working to increase access to care through the construction of new homes built to modern design standards with the ability to welcome more people on the province's long-term care waiting list. In communities across the province, Extendicare is building for the future, with plans to redevelop every older home in our network. New homes are designed to deliver significant improvements to resident quality of life, with private bedrooms for all, enhanced communal lounges for activities and family visits, increases in space for restorative therapies and more.

## **EQUITY AND INDIGENOUS HEALTH**

Extendicare is committed to improving equitable access, experience and outcomes to reduce health inequities and advance indigenous health across our organization.

At Extendicare, we embrace every resident for the individual they are, and care for them as we would our own family. Our Equity and Indigenous Health program reflects our core values by recognizing and honouring the diverse identities, cultures, and experiences of each resident. By integrating culturally appropriate care and Indigenous traditions, we affirm the importance of personal heritage in shaping well-being. Through culturally diverse programming, menu selection, staff education and meaningful community partnerships, we create a safe and inclusive environment where residents feel valued, respected and empowered to be their authentic selves. This commitment is essential to providing compassionate and equitable care.

Our Equity and Indigenous Health program is informed by our Resident Council and Family Council, and by the data we gather

from our annual Resident and Family Experience Survey. Through partnerships with local Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and regional health organizations we are able to integrate healing practices and culturally significant activities into care plans. Personalized support ensures residents feel seen, respected and connected to their heritage.

Implementing mandatory training on cultural safety, anti-racism, and the history of Indigenous Peoples in Canada for all staff, fosters awareness and equips caregivers with the skills to address systemic barriers and biases. Identifying and addressing systemic gaps in care, including access to interpreters, culturally appropriate meals and resources, and the provision of trauma-informed care, are skills taught in staff training. Regularly assessing program outcomes through resident feedback, and staff input, helps us ensure continuous improvement

Some examples of programs we have implemented include: recognizing and celebrating cultural events such as Ramadan and Diwali. In 2025 we commit to continued support and recognition for diversity and inclusion for staff, residents and families in our home.

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

Active engagement of residents and families is essential to our values. Annually, through an anonymous survey, we seek feedback from residents and their families about what is going well and what we can do to improve. The annual survey provides our home with a summary of the scores and comments for each of the areas of care and services offered. We use this report to collaborate with the residents and family councils to determine an action plan to

improve the experiences of those we serve. On a regular basis during the year, we discuss progress updates and strategies for improvement via town halls, resident and family council meetings and newsletters.

Our ongoing goal is to incorporate feedback to continually improve the quality of care we provide by ensuring the care each resident receives is reflective of their individual needs and wishes.

Extendicare is proud to have a National REACH (Resident Experience Action Council for Homes) comprised of resident and family representatives from our long-term care homes in each province we serve. The council is co-led by resident and family members and provides valuable input on organizational initiatives and decisions. A head-office supported community of practice meeting is held bimonthly and is open to all residents and families interested in sharing best practices and learning new ways to approach engagement, co-design, and council roles and responsibilities.

Our 2024 Resident and Family Experience Survey Results:

Date of 2024 Annual Resident and Family Experience Survey:  
September 3 – October 11, 2024

Resident: Would you recommend this home? 93.8%

Family: Would you recommend this home? 100%

Survey results were reviewed by CQI committee: January 15, 2025

Survey results were shared and discussed with Resident Council:  
January 9, 2025

Survey results were shared and discussed with Family Council:  
February 20, 2025

A copy of the survey results was provided to Resident Council:  
January 9, 2025

A copy of the survey results was provided to Family Council: January 2025

Survey results were posted on our bulletin board: December 27, 2024

Survey results shared with staff in the home: December 27, 2024

During discussions with the Residents and Family council when sharing our 2024 results, three areas were determined to be most important priorities for us to focus on and these are included in our 2025 QIP.

Top three areas Resident Experience survey priorities for improvement in 2025:

I enjoy eating meals in the dining room- [68.20%]: Staff will receive education on improving the Resident experience during mealtimes. Regular feedback will be obtained from Residents on the overall atmosphere in the dining room, and this feedback will be incorporated into change ideas.

I feel my goals and wishes are heard and considered in my care - [64.70%]: Training for staff will be provided on person centered care. Quarterly plan of care reviews will be completed with each Resident input.

Bladder care products keep me dry and are comfortable - [40.70%]: Product vendor will be invited to attend Resident Council and Family Council to discuss products with Residents and Family members. All residents will be audited to ensure they are wearing the correct product and correct size.

## PROVIDER EXPERIENCE

Extendicare Columbia Forest is part of a large organization in which there are many opportunities to engage with staff and leadership in sharing quality improvement goals and commitments. This is achieved through employee engagement surveys, sharing of best practices organization wide, regional quality labs and participation in the Ontario Long Term Care Association Quality Committee and annual quality forums.

Our annual employee engagement survey provides an opportunity for team members to give their feedback on various issues such as staff satisfaction, innovation, and work environment. Based on previous employee engagement results we worked this year to improve two-way communication to better engage our team members?. This included the launch of two communication forums accessible to all, enabling employee access to timely information and updates from across the organization. ?

The resulting improvements include Quarterly turnover improving

from 9.6% to 6.8% across Extendicare ?and employee engagement increased by 6 points with almost 16,000 surveys completed.

Extendicare has a nationwide Care Champion Program which celebrates the meaningful work, commitment and passion demonstrated by our dedicated team members. This program places a spotlight on team members who go above and beyond to improve care, every day for our residents. Active team members at our long-term care homes can be nominated by our residents, family members, co-workers or managers for special recognition of the extraordinary care they provide.

We are participating in career fairs as a strategy to improve recruitment of registered staff. We value the feedback received from our employee engagement survey and finds creative ways to implement their change ideas.

## SAFETY

At Extendicare, we take a system approach to preventing and reducing resident safety incidents.? At the core of this approach is system learning and process improvement.?

Incidents and risks are escalated rapidly within the organization, so that they can be addressed and mitigated, with rapid response support provided to home care teams by specialized organizational support team members.? When a root cause from an incident in one home is identified that may pose a risk elsewhere, an alert is sent out to all care teams across our organization.? These alerts flag issues and risks home leaders should be aware of, and preventative measures homes need to take in relation to care practice and risk prevention.



Safety data is analyzed continually from all Extendicare homes, to identify improvement opportunities. Standardized process, policy, practice and technology improvements are developed in response, and shared through education with care teams across all our homes.?? Biweekly education and question and answer (Q&A) webinars are held on safety and clinical practice topics derived from this analysis and attended by leaders and clinicians from all Extendicare homes throughout the year.

From front-line to senior leadership, safety incident reporting, awareness and response, is embedded in our roles and daily work.? All these program elements, and more, comprise our safety culture program.?

Columbia Forest remained a restraint free facility for all of 2024 and we continue on this journey for 2025.

## PALLIATIVE CARE

Residents and families in long-term care deserve compassionate, high-quality care. Our teams collaborate with residents and families to tailor plans of care based on each residents' individualized needs.

We provide enhanced palliative care training for interdisciplinary teams, in partnership with Pallium Canada, enabling high-quality clinical, spiritual and emotional palliative care supports for residents and their families. In 2025 as an organization, we are training additional facilitators so we can provide ongoing educational opportunities as we continue to build a culture utilizing a palliative approach to care.

In collaboration with Pallium all Extendicare homes have a registration link to family caregiver education on palliative care. The CARERS course is available free of charge and is an excellent educational opportunity we promote for caregiver support.

We are currently updating our Palliative Program policies and procedures to further emphasize the importance of a palliative care philosophy. The revised policies and procedures will be implemented in 2025 with associated staff education and training. The focus will be on earlier awareness and identification of those who require a palliative approach to care through implementation of a standardized Palliative assessment which is designed to guide staff in addressing the holistic needs and symptom management of each resident.

## POPULATION HEALTH MANAGEMENT

Extendicare Columbia Forest considers the unique demographics in our home when planning care delivery requirements, programs, resources and external partnerships. In our home our population needs consist of a wide variety of age-related illnesses, including dementia, Parkinson's, and mental health. To meet the individualized needs of our residents, we have implemented programs such as dementiability, GPA, restorative care and palliative care.

We also collaborate with Ontario Health at home, Hospice of Waterloo Region, Waterloo Region Public Health, Behaviour Supports Ontario, Alzheimer's Society, and local colleges and universities.

## CONTACT INFORMATION/DESIGNATED LEAD

Trudy Gibson, Executive Director - [trudy.gibson@extendicare.com](mailto:trudy.gibson@extendicare.com)  
Jenn Dermo, Interim Executive Director - [jenn.dermo@exeassist.ca](mailto:jenn.dermo@exeassist.ca)

## 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 24, 2025**

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**Erin Coreno**, Board Chair / Licensee or delegate

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**Jenn Dermo**, Administrator /Executive Director

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**Yianna Ioannou**, Quality Committee Chair or delegate

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**Helen Lyons**, Other leadership as appropriate

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