

Quality Improvement Journey Enhances Care for Patients/Residents with Early Warning Signs of Clinical Deterioration

Western Zone 2019-2024

Overview

Through quality assurance activities and the Healthcare Insurance Reciprocal of Canada's (HIROC) self-assessment tools, NL Health Services' Western Zone initiated work to improve care for patients/residents with early signs of deteriorating condition. This initiative allows health-care professionals to recognize clinical deterioration earlier and intervene. Research shows that virtually all critical inpatient events are preceded by warning signs that occur hours in advance. Recognizing clinical deterioration is a common challenge in health care.

The project included the implementation of two standardized, evidence-based tools: National Early Warning Score (NEWS2) and Recognize Early Soft-Signs, Take Observations, Respond, Escalate (RESTORE2 TM Mini). Both tools are used to support staff and providers to identify when a person has risk of deterioration.

Aim

To reduce preventable harm in hospital and long-term care facilities by recognizing the signs of patient and resident deterioration earlier and escalating care to the appropriate health-care providers to respond.

To implement the NEWS2 and RESTORE2 TM Mini which are tools to identify deterioration early.

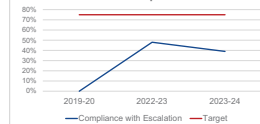
Impacts

- This project aligns with the Transformation priority in NL Health Services' Strategic Plan.
- Clinical deterioration can lead to unexpected deaths and medical emergencies. This initiative has improved inpatients' health within the Western Zone.
- Staff and providers have supports to identify earlier when a person is at risk of deterioration. This allows time to provide the appropriate care before a patient's situation becomes critical.

“ It all comes down to good communication with the patient and family. ”
- Patient/Family Advisor

Metrics

Did Appropriate Escalation of Care Occur (based on the new tool) for Acute Care Inpatients?

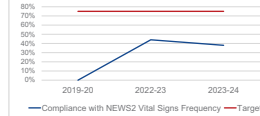


The Hospital Standardized Mortality Ratio (HSMR) improved from 112 in 2019-20 to 91 in 2023-24.

HSMR is an indicator of health-care quality that measures whether the death rate at a hospital is lower or higher than you would expect.

HSMR compares the actual number of deaths in a region or hospital to the number that would have been expected based on the types of patients a hospital or region treats.

Was the Frequency of Vital Signs Monitoring Appropriate for the Acute Care Patient's NEWS2 Score?



There was a 23% decrease in code blue calls on medical and surgical units of Western Memorial Regional Hospital from 2021-22 to 2023-24.

A code blue is a hospital emergency code used to describe the critical status of a patient (respiratory or cardiac arrest).

Progress towards Goals

Implemented NEWS2 in all acute care sites in the Western Zone of NL Health Services.

Initiated implementation of RESTORE2 TM Mini in all long-term care sites in the Western Zone during 2024-25.

“ NEWS2 made me re-think what was happening with my patient. I investigated further and found that he had a change in his condition. I modified the treatment plan and started a new medication as a result. ”
- Physician

Activities

- Engaged patients, residents, staff, physicians, Healthcare Excellence Canada and others to build comprehensive action and change management plans, including key indicators.
- Created pathways to escalation and a rapid response team to improve patient outcomes.
- Built electronic documentation tools with algorithms to identify patients at risk.
- Developed and delivered educational modules (in-person and self-directed) for staff and physicians.
- Developed supporting policies and medical directives.

Opportunities

- Continue to audit completion of the required elements of the tool.
- Continue with sustainability strategies.
- Continue implementation of Western Zone's learnings to other zones across the province.



ICARE

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Quality and Risk Program

NL Health Services