

# Qmentum Quarterly

QUALITY IN HEALTH CARE

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Accreditation Canada is a not-for-profit, independent organization that has been fostering quality in health services across Canada and internationally for over 50 years. Accreditation Canada provides health and social service organizations with an external peer review to assess the quality of their services based on standards of excellence. Accreditation Canada is accredited by the International Society for Quality in Health Care.

Les éditions du Point is a specialized publisher. One of its journals, *Le Point en administration de la santé et des services sociaux*, is intended for health professionals and administrators and has been published for six years. Les éditions du Point's publications target administrators, managers, and professionals in health care. The publications are intended as tools for information, support, professional development, and continuing education, as well as for reflection, analysis, and expression. While remaining very close to the concerns of the targeted readership, the publications are also guided by national and international thinking.



WENDY NICKLIN  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
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# Taking the Vitals of Emergency Health Services

Pick up any Canadian newspaper and chances are you'll stumble upon an article on some aspect of emergency health services. We've all heard the horror stories, either from the media, a family member, or a friend. But rather than get discouraged about the problems that do exist, those of us with an interest in health care are in a unique position to do something about it.

Here's what we're doing. A few years ago, due to increasing interest from stakeholders and escalating pressures within the health care environment, Accreditation Canada began work on an emergency health services initiative that led to the creation of Emergency Medical Services Standards and Emergency Department Services Standards. Organizations that assess themselves against these national standards recognize that embarking upon the road of quality improvement and safety will in turn help improve client outcomes and contribute to the effectiveness of the health care system. When EMS and other health care providers collaborate towards quality improvement, better patient care is achieved.

This issue of *Qmentum Quarterly* begins outside of the hospital in the vital field of emergency medical services. Louis Francescutti of the University of Alberta shares his thoughts on re-energizing emergency medical services, which includes providing paramedics with the opportunity to work within their full scope of practice. William Hill of Medavie EMS describes his organization's journey to develop and implement a patient safety plan, and the progress they are making in the area of patient safety. Ron Yee, recently retired from the BC Ambulance Service, and Charles Sun with the Vancouver Island Health Authority summarize the British Columbia No CPR Program, which helps paramedics and other frontline health care providers identify and respect a patient's wish regarding death.

Emergency health services represents a continuum, and David Williams of truesimple consulting takes us from emergency medical services to inside the doors of the emergency department with a look at how process improvement can improve patient care. Alan Drummond of Perth and Smith Falls District Hospital reflects on the need for national standards for emergency care and reviews early attempts at defining these standards. Erin Tilley and Lori Adler of the College of Nurses of Ontario examine the effects of overcrowding from

the perspective of emergency room nurses, and share the results of recent research on this subject. From Accreditation Canada, Stéphane Cardinal and Tracy Murphy summarize findings from recent accreditation surveys that used the Emergency Department Services Standards, noting strengths as well as opportunities for improvement.

It wouldn't be an Emergency Health Services issue without taking a look at the important aspect of emergency management and disaster preparedness. Daniel Kollek of the Centre for Excellence in Emergency Preparedness discusses the reasons behind the lack of disaster readiness in Canadian hospitals and shares how being prepared for disasters can improve quality of care. John Lindsay of Brandon University and Gerry Delorme of Manitoba Health provide a brief history of incident management systems and tell us about Manitoba's Emergency Response Management System. Finally, Ron Meyers of the Canadian Standards Association explains the importance of having an emergency management program and gives us an overview of their Emergency Management and Business Continuity Programs standard.

When perusing the articles in this issue, you will notice how emergency situations are repeatedly shown to be key health care access points for Canadians. For Accreditation Canada's *Qmentum* accreditation program to truly represent the health care continuum, it was essential to include emergency health services. We are pleased to provide accreditation to emergency medical services and emergency departments, and we will continue our work to contribute to improving quality throughout the health care continuum with the emergency health services initiative. On behalf of everyone at Accreditation Canada, I wish you a good summer with some time for rest and relaxation with family and friends.

Until next time...