



ACCREDITATION
CANADA

Virtual Assessment Report

Qmentum Long-Term Care™ Program

Regional Municipality of Niagara Services

Assessment date(s): December 14,15,2023

Report Issued: January 25, 2024

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About Accreditation Canada

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About the Virtual Assessment Report

The Organization identified in this Accreditation Report is participating in Accreditation Canada's Qmentum Long-Term Care™ accreditation program.

As part of this ongoing process of quality improvement, the organization participated in continuous quality improvement activities and assessments, including a virtual assessment on November 24 and 25, 2023.

Information from the cycle assessments, as well as other data obtained from the Organization, was used to produce this Report. Accreditation Canada is reliant on the correctness and accuracy of the information provided by the Organization to plan and conduct the virtual assessment to produce this Report. It is the Organization's responsibility to promptly disclose any and all incidents to Accreditation Canada that could impact its accreditation decision for the Organization.

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Overview of the Virtual Assessment

The virtual assessment is conducted through a series of virtual (remote) meetings, facilitated by Accreditation Canada surveyor(s) to assess an organization's conformity against identified assessment criteria classified as "virtual" in QLTC Program Manual

During these meetings, the surveyor will interact with the leadership team, governing bodies, staff, residents and families, and community partners to gather evidence about the quality and safety of care and services in specific service areas.

The results of the virtual assessment contribute to the final accreditation award, determined upon the completion of Phase 4 and the onsite assessment.

Overall Summary

Leadership and governance meetings

Met with 15 members of the Leadership team:

There was good representation from senior leadership, divisional leadership, and each of the eight long-term care homes. The team was well prepared and highly engaged through the virtual survey process. Seniors Services utilizes its mission, vision, and values to motivate teams and align with this shared goal to effectively drive results across all homes.

Seniors Services has a 2020-2023 strategic plan with five strategic priorities which guides their activities. Annually, Seniors Services creates an operational plan that identifies specific initiatives to support the attainment of their plan. There are comprehensive project charters, and mechanisms for tracking and reporting of the project's progress by project leads. A quarterly status update on the progress on the operational plan is created, this includes high level action items, measure of progress to date and the outcomes achieved. This summary report is utilized for a variety of audiences, including reporting to governance through Public Health and Social Services Committee (PHSSC), quality councils, resident and family councils and assorted division and home-based teams.

The Seniors Services 2024-2027 strategic plan has been created. It utilizes the same five strategic priorities with different actions to support the roadmap for next three years. There was extensive consultation in the creation of the 2024-2027 strategic plan, including front line staff, leadership, residents, families, governance, and community stakeholders. The videotaping of the strategic planning process, including testimonials from community partners, is an excellent way to engage new staff hires to gain a comprehensive understanding of mission, vision, values, and the strategic plan. The strategic planning process was productive, adaptable, and tied to municipal goals.

There is a robust quality and risk management focus, including investment in resources and the creation of comprehensive quality, safety, and risk management plans to guide the homes' activities.

Seniors Services is committed to creating a culture that supports person-centered care where residents and families are equal partners in planning, developing, and monitoring care to meet their needs. Residents and families are seen as experts, working alongside the interdisciplinary teams to secure the best outcome.

There were numerous examples of how this achieved, including the Resident and Family Engagement Committee, the Prevention of Error Based Transfer (PoET) program, Emotional Journey of LTC Support Group and others. Residents and families are involved as committee members on the Physician Advisory Committee and Quality Committee. Residents and families can provide key insights to support the homes in their quality and risk management strategies.

There are excellent community partnerships with Seniors Services that support the delivery of care and services. There are local, regional, and provincial partnerships that Seniors Services avail themselves to. Seniors Services is highly visible with its provincial association; Advantage Ontario as well as, assuming the lead for several regional initiatives including Emergency Planning (Solar Eclipse Preparedness Plan), Niagara Recreation Revolution, Registered Nurses of Ontario Best Practice Guidelines, and others. Seniors Services completes jurisdictional scans to explore activities underway in other municipalities and regions to learn from, adopt and adapt leading practices. In turn, Seniors Services readily shares with others within its region, across all 33 long-term care homes, as well provincially, nationally, and internationally. The commitment to advancing the long-term care agenda through shared practice and learning is commendable.

There are strong ties with educational institutions that support student placements for a variety of staff classifications. Additionally, there are several student placements for graduate and post graduate students, several of whom have worked on quality projects and research. Representatives from Seniors Services have presented at several provincial conferences and has co-authored several recent research articles in collaboration with its educational partners. The commitment and investments of required resources to support research projects is commendable and serves the long-term care sector well.

There are two long-term care home redevelopments underway, and a planned closure of one of its homes in Niagara on the Lake. There is extensive collaboration underway in collaboration with home and community care to support the safe placement of residents to their new homes. Residents, families and staff have been highly engaged in the redevelopment process, including consideration for fixtures, finishes and equipment. This is a significant investment by the Regional Municipality of Niagara, and they are to be commended for their commitment to the redevelopment and addition of new long-term care beds to the Niagara Region.

Met with 2 members for the Governance Focus Group

The Public Health and Social Services Committee (PHSSC) meets on a monthly basis, with a membership of near 18 people. There are established processes for governance oversight of the functions of audit and finance, quality, and talent management. There is a list of standing agenda items for PHSSC, including quality, a quarterly operational plan update and sharing of key performance indicators on the Seniors Services Report card. Additionally, there are more detailed updates on several quality projects of interest, including key partnership initiatives, provincial directives, advancements in technology and innovation, and other initiatives.

There is a comprehensive orientation process for new members of PHSSC to support them in fulfilling their governance duties. The Director of Seniors Services and Divisional Leaders prepare reports, provide presentations, and respond to questions of the PHSSC. Additionally, there are presentations by community members on specific topics of interest. There are excellent working relationships between Seniors Services and PHSSC, including timely communication of any high risk or time sensitive requirements. The Director of Seniors Services and the Divisional Leaders work with PHSSC on advocacy efforts for seniors through a number of provincial (Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and Niagara Week) and federal (Federation of Canadian Municipalities).

The PHSSC is highly committed to person-centered care, and continue to support Seniors Services on quality, safety, and risk mitigation initiatives, to support dignity for older adults living in their long-term care homes. Members of PHSSC are invited to tour the long-term care homes, to attend recognition and celebratory events and bring forward any feedback that they may receive from their local constituents on long-term care and services. The PHSSC has initiated a process to hear about quality and safety incidents from the residents, families and/or caregivers that experience them. They are encouraged to continue this work, and spread information about this opportunity and any resulting feedback to the homes' Resident and Family Councils.

The commitment to redevelop two of their long-term care homes is commendable. It is recognized that the conditions for redevelopment have been challenging for many operators, despite this the Municipality of Niagara has remained committed to create state of the art homes for its residents. The teams, residents, families and community partners are very excited about the forthcoming openings and opportunity for operations in their new surroundings.

Community Partner Focus Group

Met with 7 community partner representatives

The relationship between Seniors Services and its community partners is highly collaborative. There are a number of long-standing partnerships, as well as newer ones that support initiatives to advance care for older adults, improve staff opportunities and contribute to the long-term care sector. The community partners described the people at Seniors Services as "strong leaders, promoters of shared knowledge, innovative, and excellent collaborators". They shared that Seniors Services is willing to pilot new ways and ideas, and this often results in the homes leading the way in the region to adopt new methodologies, programs, or technologies.

The community partners shared a number of examples where Seniors Services had partnered to share knowledge including the implementation of RNAO Clinical Pathways, with involvement in the design and building of clinical pathways to support workflow for program implementation. This opportunity also led to provincial association presentations, and shared experiential learning with other long-term care providers.

Other examples included partnering with Ontario Centres for Learning and Research Innovation (CLRI) on the Preparation LTC program to establish preceptors to support clinical placements for nursing students. This initiative further enhanced existing partnerships with local schools, colleges and universities to support clinical placements. They described the culture of Seniors Services as one that is welcoming, and a place where students feel supported to learn and practice their newly acquired skills. A number of educational partners were able to highlight clinical placements for post graduate programs, including clinical practicums and projects in quality improvement and research. These partnerships have had a number of positive spinoff effects including work experiences that resulted in subsequent hiring post-graduation as well as published research.

There are good working relationships with Fire and Safety, including partnerships to create and test emergency evacuation exercises. Seniors Services was described as open to learning, including participation in training exercises.

They shared how Seniors Services continues to seek opportunities to be able to provide closer to home for the residents where appropriate. Their request for funding for diagnostic and laboratory services will continue to be a request where they look for funding opportunities. Their investment in Nurse Practitioners for each home and a number of clinical pathways that they have implemented supports residents to receive care at home, or if a visit to acute care is required then

it can be at a time that is most expeditious for all parties. Initiatives like these reinforce Seniors Services commitment to person-centered care.

There is excellent communication with community partners, including regular updates on Seniors Services and home specific initiatives. They shared how they are pleased with the ongoing work and commitment to equity, diversion and inclusion. A number of community partners could speak to their engagement in the strategic planning process, and how a number of the partnership activities that are underway align with strategic priorities.

In exploring opportunities for growth, Community Partners shared that the scale and spread of the expertise RJ Adams and the Step-Down Unit in neuropsychology would be beneficial throughout the Niagara Region. Overall, the community partners were complimentary and appreciative of the working relationships that they have with the homes, the Divisional leaders and the Director of Long-Term Care Services.

Resident and Family Engagement Focus Group

Met with 9 resident and family members

Residents and family members shared that the Seniors Services homes are great homes. They are most appreciative that they or their loved one was able to secure a spot in their respective home. There were a number of residents that shared how appreciative they were that their spouse was able to join them in the home. Additionally, there were a number of family members that had worked for Seniors Services or had a connection within the community and had selected the home for their loved on as they feel they are well run and trust that their loved one would receive excellent care.

The residents and families shared that staff are caring, responsive and they feel safe. The homes were described as a community within the community. Residents spoke about opportunities to be engaged in a host of recreational activities, with a particular appreciation for special meals, exercise programs and musical entertainment. They shared that all staff are very attentive, and focused on getting to know them as a person.

Residents and families shared that there is excellent communication, in particular around changes in condition, safety and infection control matters. They noted that there are good infection control practices, including regular encouragement and tools for them to clean their hands regularly. They note that staff are very vigilant in their infection control techniques, and they are appreciative of the efforts and resources to keep them safe, both during the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing. Residents and families shared that if there are concerns, they know whom to bring them to and they are promptly addressed to a satisfactory resolve.

There are a number of committee forums for residents and families, including Resident and Family Councils, and Family Councils, Physician Advisory Committee and Quality in each home. Not all residents and families were familiar with resident and family involvement in Physician Advisory and Quality Committee hence there may be an opportunity for consistent spread of this message. Residents and families have also served on a number of other committees or focus groups, they are appreciative of the opportunity to attend and include their perspectives to shape policy, process or design. Residents and families in the homes that are currently being redeveloped are excited about the upcoming move, and appreciative of the opportunity to inform the process.

The residents and families were able to speak to quality initiatives underway to improve food quality in a number of locations and could speak to the positive changes. Additionally, residents

were appreciative of the safe return of a number of recreational programs post COVID. There were a number of residents that really enjoy the exercise programs, and provided feedback on how they had observed a significant decline in themselves and others post COVID illness and proposed focused exercise for residents, if desired, post recovery

Overall, residents and families are very pleased with care and services by Niagara Senior Services homes and were appreciative of the opportunity to represent their homes at the focus group.

Workforce Focus Group

Met with 16 members of interdisciplinary teams

The interdisciplinary teams were highly professional and engaged in the discussions. There is an excellent use of leading practices, and the teams were readily able to identify how policy, process and training was consistent with these practices. There are regular forums for teams to advance programs and initiatives that enhance quality outcomes for residents. The team shared examples of a number of key partnerships, including RNAO Best Practices, Infection Control resources and technologies that are assisting the homes to further standardize policies, including clinical pathway workflows and access to best practice guidelines.

Virtual health criteria are met. Seniors Services is encouraged to review their virtual policy, including virtual session checklists and partner agreements as they prepare for on-site survey. The homes are able to virtually access services that are not readily available in the homes, and have capitalized on the ability to have secure conversations with healthcare practitioners utilizing a module available on their electronic resident record platform. There are future plans for computerized provider order entry work underway by the pharmacy provider, electronic resident record provider and Seniors Services. One of the Seniors Services homes has been involved in the AMPLIFI project for exchange of resident information on transfer between long-term care and the acute care environment. The goal will be to introduce this opportunity to all homes once their regional hospitals introduce their required electronic patient record.

Infection prevention and control partnerships with public health, Niagara Region and their Infection Prevention and Control hubs are well established. The homes have access to additional resources through practice hubs for exchange of infection control practices and resources. Seniors Services have been updated based on leading practices. There are established inventory and ordering processes for personal protective equipment (PPE), and expiry dates are monitored. There is a forthcoming investment in technology that will streamline PPE inventory management across all homes. There are outbreak protocols, including a debrief following an outbreak to document, share and action ideas. Lessons learned are shared across all homes.

There have been a number of quality initiatives to support medication management practices. The homes utilize the resources of the Institute for Safe Medication Practices to advocate for resident safety, and promote safe medication practices. There is a comprehensive orientation process for new registered staff, including an honoring of equity and diversity in skills and knowledge for new hires to Canada. There is excellent collaboration with the homes' pharmacy provider, and each home has a medication management committee. Medication incidents are reviewed, analyzed and reported on through Physician Advisory Committee and nursing practice committees to promote shared learnings and a just culture.

Seniors Services have a comprehensive Resident Safety Plan, which includes infection control and medication management strategies.

There are a number of Seniors Services and home-specific initiatives to support staff wellness. The teams highlighted a number of resources including: Gyms- on site access or discounted local memberships, a comprehensive employee/family assistance program, a People Plan with a strong focus on creating a healthy and well workplace, and recognition programs that are meaningful for staff. There will be a number of Employee Wellness initiatives forthcoming in the 2024 Operational Plan based on recent staff feedback. Seniors Services is to be applauded on its work to create and sustain environments that support mental health and physical well-being of its people.

Organization's progress on their Quality Improvement Action Plan

Met with 15 representatives across the homes

There was extensive planning by Seniors Services to complete their self-assessment against national standards of excellence by chapter. This self-assessment presented a critical, introspection examination in consultation with teams. Seniors Services created two Quality Improvement Action Plans, one for Medication Management and a second for the remaining Chapters.

The team identified that they chose to create the two plans as there were a number of key activities occurring with work underway on Medication Management in collaboration with their pharmacy provider and a provincial pilot project, Trailblazers. In the remaining Chapters, there were fewer items action items to be completed in an effort to meet the accreditation criteria. The QIAPs were shared through Onboard QI and were readily available to the teams to identify the progress on key actions, and remaining activities to be addressed. The projects had established leads, and there were teams working on identified initiatives. There were regular meetings to review the progress on the QIAP action plans. Seniors Services is to be applauded on its coordinated efforts to create their homes and organizational QIAPs.

Team discussions explored how Seniors Services created a culture of quality and curiosity. The team shared how they collectively work to move the needle from red to green on key quality initiatives to support enhancements in care and services for residents and families and a healthy and safe work environment for staff. There are numerous quality initiatives underway, that include clear goals or aims, measurable targets, timelines and assigned responsibility. Seniors Services is working diligently at promoting efficient use of resources, harnessing technology and striving for consistency and sustainability across their eight long-term care homes. There are excellent resources at the Divisional Leadership level, and various partnerships that are well positioned to continue to advance the long-term care system.

There were discussions with the team on their communication with stakeholders on their quality initiatives. They shared that each home has a standardized Quality Improvement Board that is home to 14 standardized documents to communicate quality, safety and risk mitigation strategies that are underway, and to provide a status report on activities completed to date. Additionally, there is an Annual Report that provides an overview on the progress on the strategic plan, quality, safety and risk initiatives, as well as innovation and technology investments. This report is shared widely with stakeholders to communicate, recognize and celebrate the achievements of the various Seniors Services teams.

Key Opportunities and Areas of Excellence

Areas of Excellence

1. Employee Empowerment and Wellness Practices

A culture founded on person-centered care, empowerment, and relationship focused principles is in place. Seniors Services invests in employee empowerment practices through:

- Opportunities for engagement in strategic planning, quality initiatives and goal setting,
- Offering recognition based on performance through existing and planned initiatives,
- Providing work related knowledge and skills, including opportunities for further education, and access to forums to provide feedback on the work being performed.

Seniors Services continues to foster a sense of belonging, job satisfaction and well-being. Examples of how Seniors Services promotes an empowered healthy and competent work force, include, but are not limited to:

- Recruitment and hiring of internationally educated professionals, including enhanced hiring and retention strategies to improve experience.
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Action plan anchored in DEI Corporate Plan that includes a host of actions to create an environment that is more inclusive for staff, and includes key messages for staff, residents and families on activities and strategies.
- Healthcare Navigator Project to support inclusion and integration.
- Employee Wellness Program: Secured feedback from staff on what resources/services would be meaningful for them. Plans underway to include in the 2024 Operational Plan initiatives to further support staff health and well-being.
- Leadership Development Programs: Leaders Edge for all new leaders, Future Leaders for development opportunities as well leadership programs for senior leaders. There is support for continued staff development and learning.
- Staff Recruitment and Retention Efforts: The success that Seniors Services has to fill its staff vacancies based on a host of partnerships with local universities, colleges and partnership with the Ontario Centers for Learning and Innovation on Long-Term Care (CLRI) on Preceptor Resource and Education Program in Long-Term Care

2. Utilize a Co-Design approach in all efforts to advance its culture of resident safety and advance the long-term care sector.

The commitment to quality and a resident safety culture exists at multiple levels, from the resident home areas to Divisional Leadership and Governance. These shared values, beliefs and norms have resulted in resource investments to advance quality initiatives in the care of older adults in the Region of Niagara Homes and in turn, the long-term care sector.

The partnerships between Senior Services and its health, social services, educational, professional bodies and other community providers continue to drive quality and contribute to the reform of the long-term care sector. These connections with community programs and services have resulted in opportunities to be able to share with other long-term care providers through communities of practice, conference presentations and research publications.

There are a number of examples including, but not limited to:

- Emergency Department Avoidance: There has been a review of strategies, and actions to support residents to remain at home where safe and appropriate. The investment in Nurse Practitioner positions has offered opportunity to provide clinical expertise, and education to advance and support clinical competencies and skills of registered staff, support person-centered care conversations with residents and families and contribute to better utilization of health services for the system. Examples of this include: Enhanced use of technology for clinical assessments, temporary gastrostomy tube intervention, and support for core clinical programs contributing to better resident outcomes.
- Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre to support the placement of Healthcare Navigators for Internationally Educated Healthcare Professionals to cultivate a reservoir of trained newcomer professionals to support and advocate for newcomers to Canada requiring access to healthcare in Ontario.
- Partnership with Person-Centered Care Committee to implement recommendations on the Admissions Process and recreation Programs. Collaborative work with Residents and families on policy review, quality initiatives, program evaluations and other domains. Their engagement in Physician Advisory and Quality Committees.
- Partnership with Institute of Safe Medication Practices Canada (ISMP) on AMPLIFI to improve medication practices. One of the Senior Services homes is 1 of 10 champions in the province for this pilot.
- RNAO Best Practices Spotlight Organization: Long standing commitment to inform and implement best practices guidelines with RNAO.
- Re-development of two long-term care homes, Lindhaven and Gilmore Lodge, with an anticipated opening in the first half of 2024.

3. Utilize Technologies in a Way that Enables Person Centered Care and Improves Outcomes

Senior Services is committed to identify and coordinate existing innovation projects to support scale and spread, including the development of an innovation roadmap to improve care and service delivery across the long-term care sector. They are leaders in the implementation of technology, through careful research and consideration they have introduced numerous platforms that enables person-centered care and support in long-term care, contributes to enhanced resident outcomes, and enhances communication and efficiency. The technological advancements are also contributing to the “Green” strategy by reducing printing related materials and associated costs.

There are a number of initiatives including, but not limited to:

- Implementation of new technology to support system improvements, recreation support, communication and data driven decisions including, but not limited to:
 - Program Planning and Delivery Software (Welbi) across all homes. Introduction, and training for all homes with availability of a 3-month review for residents and families to review at Care Conferences.
 - Recreational sensory companions and interactive sensory activities
 - New modules in the electronic resident record: Infection Prevention and Control module to reduce duplicate tracking of infections, Skin and Wound application.
 - RNAO Clinical Pathways

- Food Services Technology to support communication and accuracy
- Integrated policy system that includes flags for policy renewal to the policy owner
- Communication using Cliniconex
- Data Analytics and PowerBI to support access and reliability of multiple data platforms
- In collaboration with St Joseph's Healthcare, Hamilton to trial AMPLIFI, an initiative to create a digital link between LTC and acute care to share resident's plan of care to promote enhanced communication and treatment.

Areas of Opportunity

1. Continued Standardization and Sustainability Efforts

Seniors Services has and continues to introduce many exciting initiatives. They are encouraged continue to:

- Reinforce and Sustain Change Management: Seniors Services is recognized for the significant work underway to support the homes, including the introduction of resources, tools and technologies. Continued processes to support, manage and sustain the changes will be important to meet their vision.
- Consider the impact of opening of two new home and the closure of an existing home. Recognizing the draw on resources to support these exciting opportunities, whilst continuing to advance and sustain planned initiatives.

2. Opportunities for Resident and Family Partnerships

Seniors Services is encouraged to consider:

- A regular schedule for the opportunity for the Governing Body to hear regularly about quality and safety incidents from residents, families and/or caregivers that experience them. There may be opportunity for shared learning and information sharing, dependent on content of information shared and any subsequent actions, that would be appropriate to communicate back to Resident and Family Councils across all homes.
- Broad communication with residents and families the opportunity for resident and family involvement in Physician Advisory and Quality Committee.