yukon hospitals
hôpitaux du yukon
whitehorse
dawson city
watson lake

Question & Answer
2025 Annual Public Meeting
October 29, 2025
Yukon Hospital Corporation

Q: Nurse Practitioners support health systems across Canada, and NPs practice in community settings in the Yukon. Can you share more about work being done to explore Nurse Practitioners within Yukon's hospitals?

A: Great question! We are very excited to share news on NPs. YHC has engaged two Nurse Practitioners – one local NPs and one from an acute care hospital in Ontario. They have been working to consult and engage with our teams and will provide recommendations on how we can deploy NPs within our hospitals. Their report will guide us going forward as we want to introduce NPs into our services in a planned and appropriate way to ensure success over the long term.

We are also excited to share that NPs are now considered as members of our medical staff, which also includes physicians and midwives. This is an important step forward in creating an environment where NPs can practice to their full abilities within our hospitals.

Q: "Burn out and staff morale are key factors in the functioning of the hospital, and yet staff do not feel they can openly talk about what is working and not working nor are they being heard or actions being put in place on how things can be improved. What plans do you have in the next 3,6,9 months to change this? We have excellent caregivers who deserve to be valued with an action plan for change."

A: Thank you for the question. We cannot agree more, staff health and wellness are key factors in everything we do within the hospital. Supporting staff continues to be top-of-mind and is a key priority for us as an organization.

We've consistently heard from our people that they are overstretched and they do want an environment where they can speak openly and share ideas. This is very much our goal – as staff wellness, safety, engagement and morale are directly connected to quality, safe care.

- Our priority for this year is very much focused on our people with a number of actions from opportunities to learn and grow, and forums for open communication and sharing to looking at systems, tools or processes that

reduce burden or facilitate better work/life balance.

- Some concrete examples are:

  - We've increased frontline clinical resources in our emergency department and cancer care areas specifically to address pressures from growing demand. Recently, we also added additional security resources to help maintain a safe environment for patients and staff.
  - We debrief with our teams after critical incidents so they can share the impact in a safe space but also provide ideas on how we can do better. We've very intentionally deployed this after recent infrastructure failures to support our teams who maintain services during these times.
  - We are focused on ways to grow our team whether its support for LPN to RN bridging, mentorships or youth internships and providing specific training in sub specialized clinical areas such as Rheumatology & Mammography). We also provide new and emerging leaders with education supports so they can facilitate safe work environments with open communication.
  - In the coming months, we'll work to implement a scheduling system to reduce errors that often lead to frustration and inefficiencies.
  - We continue to hold regular staff town halls and ensure we keep our teams informed.
  - We have feedback channels for people and teams to share their ideas and concerns. This helps (and has helped) to inform our annual operating plan.

Our 2025-27 operating plan (available on our website at yukonhospitals.ca) provides more details on specific actions we identified for the next 12-18 months.

Q: A visit to the lab services feels like roulette (will it be a 20 minute or 2 hour wait?) when client decisions could be better informed by real time information based on the ticket/counter system or weekly/monthly trends. Can the WGH commit to having information on the website where clients can go to check how busy it is currently, or where they can see average trends?

A: We appreciate this question as it is often quite busy with our walk-in lab and imaging services. The outpatient laboratory sees approximately 3,000 patient visits each month. We understand that folks are looking for information to make decisions or come prepared. As with any walk-in service, wait times can vary throughout the day. Our lab has

established a walk-in wait time target of 30 minutes or less. Over the past year, we have been able to reduce that time from 69 to 33 minutes (getting closer to the target!).

To answer the question: Trending wait time (and other key performance metrics) are posted quarterly on our website. WGH can commit to better communication about where this information is located. We've also implemented a "traffic light" system in the Outpatient Lab, so when you arrive you will have a sense of how long the wait is at that time. A Green light means the wait is less than 30 minutes, Yellow 30-60 minutes and Red 60 minutes or longer.

Because wait time accounts for a significant part of how patients feel about their care – we've recently implemented an instant feedback system, "Happy or Not" terminal, in the outpatient lab so you can share whether you were happy (or not) with your wait during your visit. We will use this information for continuous quality improvement.

Understanding that wait times contribute to overall patient experience, we are taking a closer look at how we can determine the actual wait time and communicate more "real time" information on our website in the future.

Q: Any plan for creating a pediatric inpatient ward? It's a big need for Yukon children and youth.

A: Great question. Pediatric care is provided by all inpatient and outpatient areas across our hospitals. Where pediatric patients are cared for depends on their needs and the most appropriate teams to support. More complex, specialized needs may still require medical travel.

We now have a team of pediatricians available 24/7 to support patients and other clinicians. We are also planning for the future, and part of this work is determining how many inpatient beds are required and what inpatient services are required.

Q: We received a question about hospital gowns and pajamas.

A: We are looking into the issue and will provide a response soon.

Q: I've noticed in recent visits that the hand sanitizer stations do not hold any hand sanitizer in most locations in the hospital - emergency, lab area waiting rooms, etc. Is there a reason for this?

A: Thank you for the question. Our teams have noticed that hand sanitizer is being mis-

used and is causing harm. We've decided not to replace in certain locations while we look at a safe solution.

In the meantime, hand sanitizer is available at main entrances for when you come and go from hospital as well as other select locations accessible to staff.

Q: What are you doing to Indigenize employee policies?

A: The hospitals have a wide range of policies (such as corporate policy including code of ethics, human resources, emergency response, etc. as well as clinical policy). The process to keep them current is ongoing.

As part of a policy development process, we do ensure that the appropriate 'lived experience', subject matter expertise, and/or 'lens' is applied to our policies. This includes ensuring we've appropriately considered and embedded Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing and being as part of our policies.

A policy is one component we consider. We also look at the 'procedure' in terms of how the policy will be applied, carried out or followed. For example, within our HR team, we are working to Indigenize routine HR processes related to our recruitment policy, such as job postings, interview questions, etc.

Finally, providing appropriate education and awareness to support policies and procedures is a significant component. This ensures that we provide the appropriate knowledge to create a safe environment for patients and staff and continue to provide quality care.

Q: I would like to know if the emergency department has access to patient records from private clinics (for example, to better assess mental health emergencies or other urgent care needs). If not, is this something the hospitals and clinics can cooperate on to improve urgent patient care?

A: In short, the hospital's information system (also called an electronic health record or EMR) contains a full picture of care that you've received in hospital. It is not currently integrated with physician clinics or all other parts of the system.

We have coordinated care plans for some of our more complex patients developed with individual practitioners and also supporting outside agencies. In these cases, having information upfront helps support a more seamless transition to acute care.

Our understanding is that government in partnership with Yukon Medical Association is looking at future options for a clinical EMR. Work would then need to take place to integrate with the hospital system to ensure privacy and security of information. A Digital Health Steering Committee was established collaboratively between YHC, YG, and YMA, with a focus on digital health improvements through a coordinated approach. The hospital fully supports the concept of a fully integrated record, so no matter where you receive care in the health system, your provider has access to the information they need to keep you safe and well.

Q: Related to this, I've seen ads for pocket health, a patient records management system at the hospital, but I don't know if this is something that the hospital is a part of or what it is doing to support better patient access to their own medical records. Can you please discuss what you feel are the needs or priorities for secure public management (not private) of patient records that are accessible to when they are needed for assessing and treating patient health care needs?

A: Thank you for the question. YHC has processes for patients to request/access copies of their medical records of care received in the hospital system. These can be requested at any time through our Health Records department. Our team firmly believes that patients should be able to access copies of their records in a timely manner.

With respect to diagnostics, such as lab and imaging, any time a test or procedure is complete, the results are sent directly to the requesting healthcare provider, with the original reports and images remaining within YHCs Electronic Medical Record.

PocketHealth is a secure, online platform that provides patients with access to their medical imaging records. The service offers both free basic access to images and paid subscriptions options for additional features. This tool is specifically to access copies of records related to medical imaging.

Any questions or concerns about the hospital or your experience in the hospital, please contact our Quality Improvement team at feedback@yukonhospitals.ca.