

CHIEF OF MEDICAL STAFF

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

This report reviews the activities of the Office of the Chief of Medical Staff at Yukon Hospital Corporation (YHC) to the end of fiscal year (March 31, 2020). The report includes information on YHC initiatives aimed at providing safe and excellent hospital care for all Yukoners and others who visit our territory. To this end, the report also provides an overview with respect to changes in YHC medical staff and visiting medical/surgical specialists as well as the opportunities and challenges for our territory's hospitals in the coming year.

The Chief of Medical Staff (COS) is the most senior medical administrative leader within YHC and is accountable directly to the CEO on all matters regarding the management and organization of the medical staff in Yukon's three hospitals: Whitehorse General Hospital (WGH) with 58 beds, Watson Lake Community Hospital (WLCH) and Dawson City Community Hospital (DCCH) with 6 beds each. The Office of the COS now includes the Chief of Staff, an Associate Chief of Staff for medical specialties and a newly appointed Chief of Staff for surgical specialties, COS Delegates for WLCH and DCCH, and a Medical Director of WGH's Emergency Department.

The COS oversees appointing and privileging of physicians and other professional staff members working at YHC facilities; ensures the medical staff remain accountable for the provision of safe and high quality medical care; implements and participates in auditing activities to ensure patient safety; recommends and/or enforces YHC policies aimed at improving patient safety, available resources and medical care; and responds to and assists in the resolution of complaints or incidents involving the medical staff. The COS administers the medical staff bylaws and rules, which define the privileging of physicians and other professional staff members, their activities and accountabilities when practicing in the hospitals and processes for resolution of disputes and complaints.

Yukon Bureau of Statistics Demographic Highlights:

The estimated population of Yukon on March 31, 2020 was 42,152; an increase of 1,190, or 2.9%, over the previous year. Specifically, Whitehorse's population is estimated at 33,119, Dawson City at 2,297 and Watson Lake at 1,515.

Comparing March 31, 2020 to March 31, 2010, Yukon's population increased by 7,363, or 21.2%. During the same period, the population of the Whitehorse area increased by 6,457, or 24.2%; Dawson City increased by 402, or 21.2%; and Watson Lake decreased by 62, or 3.9%. Of specific note here is high growth within the 0-14 age group and groups 60 and older. These are of note due to their relatively high use of services and implications related to access to health system services.

Hospital Bed Status

With the opening of the Whistle Bend continuing care facility in October 2018, WGH has since experienced a reduction in the number of Alternate Level of Care (ALC) patients (slightly below our

target of 10%) occupying acute beds within WGH at any one time. ALC patients no longer require hospital care, and may require another type of care such as continuing care or home care. WGH continues to ensure focus remains on safe and timely discharge planning. WGH does expect some periods where bed occupancy presents challenges and there is a need us for all health system partners to remain diligent in ensuring Yukoners receive the right care, in the right place and at the right time. WGH now has the ability to rely on a refined and renewed overcapacity protocol, which will enhance communication and processes for all stakeholders (physicians, nurses, therapies and government partners) in any such situation. Transitioning ALC patients to an appropriate and safe setting remains a priority, which can only be achieved with collaboration with various government agencies and substantial work and effort from YHC staff. In this context, a multidisciplinary discharge team (Clinical Nurse Leaders, assigned nurses, Therapies, Social Workers, First Nations Health and Continuing Care representatives) now meets five days a week on the hospital units to review the status of all WGH admitted patients. I believe this team has greatly contributed to the improved situation and remains fully committed to respond to inevitable bed surge and/or a sudden shift in needs.

Both Community Hospitals continue to see appropriate and stable rate of occupancy.

Operating Room (OR) Hub and Lab new facilities

Over the last two years, we have completed some facility redevelopment work in the old, vacated ED site located off of the main hospital atrium, transforming the space into an OR Hub as it is collocated next to our two operating rooms. The new hub houses the Flex OR room (for scope examinations and related procedures), the scope reprocessing area, Surgical Day Care, OR booking office, the Pre-Anesthetic Consult Room, the Minor Procedure Room (MPR), the renovated Post-Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU), the Cast Clinic and spaces for surgical equipment. The Medical Day Care clinic was moved to an area along the visiting specialist corridor in order to provide potential temporary additional beds/space in the OR Hub area during high bed occupancy periods. Expansion and improvement of the oncology (chemotherapy) suite has been completed.

Lab services have also relocated to a larger area within the WGH atrium and are fully operational. The new space allows for all services related to blood and specimen collection to be located together for better patient flow, enhanced infection control and improved technical efficiencies.

Long-Term Planning for OR Redevelopment

YHC has long recognized the challenges associated with Yukon's changing demographics and practices, leading to increased volumes in the Emergency Department, inpatient (admitted patients) and ambulatory (non-admitted patients) diagnostic areas. A more comprehensive approach will be necessary to ensure that any expansion of service meets future need, improves efficiency of service delivery and enhances patient safety. YHC conducted long-term planning for surgical services at Whitehorse General Hospital with a goal to expand and improve surgical services over the next 10 years and beyond.

Secure Medical Unit (SMU)

Planning has been completed (and endorsed by the Board of Trustees in April 2019) for the enhanced Secure Medical Unit to be located in the shelled, second floor space above the current Emergency

Department. The proposal for this project has been presented to the government. There is a pressing need to improve the location, space and services provided for patients with acute mental health needs within the hospital, and improve transitioning of this vulnerable population to well-defined community programs and follow-up. These needs have been clearly articulated and further demonstrated as WGH now has three full-time psychiatrists providing 24/7 on call coverage. Relocation of the SMU will also allow the creation of up to 8 more acute beds within the vacated area.

Yukon Midwifery Project

Following a public consultation process by government in the fall of 2018, draft legislation and regulations along with a proposed funding model were developed. We anticipate that midwifery will be introduced as an option for birthing in Yukon by 2021. YHC has undertaken significant planning in order to establish an overall framework, governance structure, any bylaw modifications or other changes that are required to support the introduction of midwifery practice into the hospital.

There is some significant work to be done for our organization related to the credentialing/privileges process and required modifications to YHC policies and procedures. A number of amendments to the present hospital bylaws and rules will be required. We are committed to undertaking the work that needs to be done and supporting our midwives and physicians in the provision of safe and excellent hospital care.

Watson Lake and Dawson City Community Hospitals

Both community hospitals have become true health care hubs and work is ongoing to increase lab services. This year, we started offering general ultrasound services at the community hospitals for patients from Dawson City, Watson Lake and surrounding communities. Based on historical trends, we estimate that we will provide just over 400 ultrasound exams in the communities in the next year. Our clinical team continues to meet on a regular basis with our hospital community partners to discuss programs, services and other issues with our community hospitals to ensure we are able to continue to meet community health needs.

MORE^{OB} program

MORE^{OB} is a name that stands for Managing Obstetrical Risk Efficiently. This is an important initiative for WGH in advancing the quality and safe care provided to maternity patients. This is a three-year program involving all health providers in maternity care, including midwives once regulations are in place. More than 300 hospitals (16,000 participants) in North America have participated or are actively participating in the program, drawing experience from more than a million births.

Overall, the MORE^{OB} program has demonstrated since its inception 14 years ago significant clinical outcomes in reducing infant mortality and morbidity, improve teamwork, communication and culture change, decrease catastrophic infant claims and increase workplace satisfaction. It provides the participants with a well-structured yet flexible development plan in response to the identified needs of the participating hospital.

The program was launched in September 2019 with funding support from government and has been extremely well received and attended by physicians and nurses involved in obstetrical care.

Medical Staff and Visiting Specialists

As of March 31, 2020, YHC clinical activities are supported by a group of 73 physicians with hospital privileges (including 4 GPs located in Dawson City and 4 in Watson Lake). 9 out of the 73 physicians across various specialties are under provisional privileges status, a six-month requirement before moving to the active privilege status. A number of physicians have specialized expertise in ER and ICU services (22), obstetrics (15), anesthesia (6), oncology (3), palliative medicine (2), sport medicine (1), ob./gyn ultrasound (1). Our resident specialists group now includes 4 surgeons, 2 obstetrician-gynecologists, 1 certified anesthetist, 2 orthopedic surgeons, 3 psychiatrists and 3 pediatricians.

Additionally, under the category of other health professional, 6 Nurse Practitioners are privileged and have access to lab, imaging studies and services/programs provided by the hospital. Nine dentists are also privileged with access to the operating room.

The medical community is also well served by a large contingent of locum physicians, who often return to provide clinical work coverage and/or eventually settle in the community. YHC emphasizes that physician recruitment remains a priority both at the GP and specialist level, as a number of our present medical staff is near retirement or beginning to reduce clinical activity.

YHC also participates in a robust post-graduate training process with Canadian medical universities, bringing residents (also known as post-graduates) within the territory for elective rotation in a variety of specialties.

YHC through the WGH's Visiting Specialist Clinic has a contingent of 14 medical specialties, which provide consultation services at the WGH on a defined rotational basis. These include Internal Medicine, Rheumatology, child Psychiatry, Dermatology, adult and child Cardiology, Nephrology, Otorhinolaryngology, Ophthalmology, Physiatry, Gastroenterology, Orthopedics, Radiology and Neurology.

The Access to Specialties Services Committee, comprised of representatives from the government (HSS), Yukon Medical Association (YMA) and YHC, is involved in the recruitment process and meets regularly to discuss a range of issues, including service needs, wait times, travel costs and telehealth among others.

This led to the implementation of a two-year ophthalmology project to significantly reduce the wait list for Cataracts surgery. 547 cataracts were completed in 2019 from the previous 240 completed in 2018. 312 are expected to be completed in 2020. Other priorities have been identified, in particular addressing the wait times for consultations in Neurology, supporting the Multiple Sclerosis clinic's needs and maintaining the Cataracts and other ophthalmology consultations wait times to a reasonable level.

1Health

With the support and commitment from the Government of Yukon, YHC and YMA, we are collaborating in a major undertaking with the goal of creating one electronic health record for Yukon through a major upgrade of the Meditech Information System to create a system-wide health information system. This project is 1Health. Physicians from all specialties are now actively involved at various levels, including the steering committee and a number of working committees. Physicians are a key partner in this initiative and remain firmly engaged.

This project will enable more standardized, evidence-based, quality care, provide health care providers with rapid and reliable access to information needed for care decisions and significantly improve medication safety and reduce chances of errors. In the meantime, several initiatives have been put in

place to address medications safety issues, including the Medication Safety Improvement project. Many foundational elements of improvement have now been developed, including pre-printed order sets and a large number of medication safety policies, enhanced communications about medication safety, to name a few.

Continuous Quality Improvement and Patient Safety

YHC is dedicated to helping, healing and not harming patients. To this end, our patients, health care providers, support staff and leaders significantly benefit from a hospital environment, which continually fosters a culture of safety. This approach sees a collective commitment to quality improvement processes anchored in fairness and trust.

As we work diligently to prevent and reduce harm, we recognize that adverse events do occur and this may result in patient harm. YHC uses a number of auditing and assessment tools to improve our understanding of any incident that occurs in our hospitals, learn from each case, and implement improvements to enhance patient safety, and overall patient experience while in hospital.

Our diverse care teams – doctors, nurses and other allied health professionals – regularly meet to review adverse events and make recommendations on system changes.

While our hospitals have exceptional overall patient satisfaction, from time to time, we receive complaints which require further review or investigation by the COS and the Quality Improvement and Risks Management. As part of our improvement process, this includes conversations between patient and physician(s), so we can learn and take the appropriate actions. We address most concerns through improving communication and/or in addressing hospital processes or health system gaps. We also share learnings with our medical staff to help illustrate some of the issues our patients experience and suggest changes in practice that could result in better outcomes and increased patient satisfaction.

COVID-19

As we started 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic became an urgent, critical daily reality for our hospitals and communities.

Officially declared a pandemic by the World Organization on March 11, 2020 (with evidence of virus circulation in late December 2019), Canada started to report about 100 cases. Three weeks later, confirmed cases exceeded 10, 000.

Yukon reported its first two cases in late March. So far, the number of confirmed cases in the territory has remained very low. Several public health measures, including the introduction of the Civil Emergency Measures Act (CEMA) were in effect by April. YHC also responded with a rapid staff deployment and preparedness strategy, such as active screening, visitor restrictions and temporary suspension of some non-urgent hospital services. Most significantly, we introduced policies, training/education and other tools to support and reinforce appropriate use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), physical distancing, self-monitoring and hand hygiene. YHC is actively engaged in planning for the potential of a more significant outbreak, including scenarios where demand could exceed hospital resources. We worked closely with other Yukon health providers to monitor and secure critical resources such as our people and supplies. Working with the federal government, we were able to access the national stockpile of PPE as well as secure additional ventilators for the territory. We also regularly consult with Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of Health and medical experts as the COVID-19

situation will undoubtedly continue to evolve in order to ensure our response remains appropriate for the territory's risk level and adapt any practices or policies accordingly. YHC's medical staff was and remains actively involved, providing feedback, guidance and advice through our incident command and medical committees.

Conclusion

I strongly believe that YHC's strength and resilience comes from within, and I have been able to witness first-hand the unrelenting and unwavering dedication and engagement at all levels of this organization, made even more evident by the pandemic situation and our collective response. There is no question that COVID-19 will continue to evolve in uncertain, challenging and unpredictable ways over the coming months. It is imperative that we all maintain a high degree of engagement, commitment and diligence while recognizing the importance of our personal and collective wellness.

In closing, I also would like to acknowledge the tremendous support I receive on a daily basis from Dr. Huy Chau, associate Chief of staff for medical specialties and Dr. Sarah Saunders, Associate Chief of Staff for surgical specialties and Dr. Larry Brehmer, President of the Medical staff. Their expertise, historical knowledge and critical thinking are invaluable assets to this office.

I also want to thank our medical staff and entire hospital staff across all disciplines for working together towards safe and excellent hospital care for our patients each and every day.

Respectfully submitted,



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