

Union Villa Quality Improvement Report

April 2024 – March 2025

Overview

Each year, Health Quality Ontario (HQO) invites healthcare providers across the province to submit a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), identifying key performance indicators related to service delivery. These plans support benchmarking, knowledge sharing, and sector-wide quality improvement.

In 2024–2025, the focus areas for long-term care homes included:

- Reducing potentially avoidable emergency department visits
- Minimizing the use of antipsychotic medications without a supporting diagnosis
- Improving resident satisfaction with communication

Key Quality Improvement Highlights

Emergency Department Transfers

We achieved a significant reduction in emergency room transfers after fall-related injuries due to improved monitoring and program enhancements.

Palliative and End-of-Life Care

Key initiatives included ongoing staff and family education, regular reviews of care planning, and collaboration with a Palliative Care Coach from Ontario Health to implement best practices.

Antipsychotic Medication Use

Efforts to reduce inappropriate antipsychotic medication use continue, led by a multidisciplinary team. The DementiAbility model supports non-pharmacological interventions, with monthly education and accessible activity carts in all home areas.

Communication Enhancements

Multilingual support has expanded through portable translation devices, translation apps on PSW iPads, and a partnership with Voyce, a professional interpretation service.

Resident and Family Satisfaction Survey

Our 2023–2024 satisfaction survey results were overwhelmingly positive:

- **93%** of residents rated the home as excellent/very good/good

- **86%** of residents would recommend Union Villa to others
- **96%** of family members rated the home positively
- **100%** of families would recommend Union Villa

Resident-Inspired Improvements

We responded to feedback with meaningful improvements:

- Bluetooth speakers were installed in dining areas for music at meals
- Flooring was replaced in all dining rooms
- Residents created floral centerpieces as part of the DementiAbility model
- Recreation staffing increased on weekends for better programming and one-on-one support
- Multicultural activities were introduced, including Italian and Chinese programming
- Library carts with books and magazines were made available
- Residents were invited to participate in care conferences and meet with physicians during weekly rounds

Resident and Family Councils

Residents' Council continues to meet monthly and remains active, with staff liaisons and follow-up from the Administrator. While Family Council participation declined and the Chair resigned, we are committed to reviving interest and engagement in this important forum.

Program and Technology Enhancements

- Virtual Reality (VR) headsets are being introduced to enhance engagement
- A new family communication portal allows online access to care information and updates
- The DementiAbility model has been rolled out in all home areas
- Clinical improvements span falls prevention, wound care, infection control, and medication safety
- Point-of-care documentation by PSWs using iPads has improved accuracy and efficiency

Volunteer Engagement

Our volunteer program is thriving:

- Over **100 volunteers** contributed more than **2,500 hours**
- Recruitment and orientation efforts are ongoing

Staff Recruitment and Orientation

As we continue active recruitment across multiple departments, staff orientation remains a key priority to ensure that all team members are equipped with the knowledge and tools they need to succeed.

All staff receive a general orientation followed by department-specific training. Based on feedback from staff, residents, and families, orientation was extended for new hires, agency staff, and students. This ensures staff understand their responsibilities before beginning independent work. The Clinical Quality Educator also provides additional skill-building support where needed.

Union Villa also continues its partnership with the Ontario Centres for Learning, Research and Innovation in Long-Term Care (CLRI) through the PREP LTC program. Over **12,000 student placement hours** were hosted in the past year across multiple academic institutions.

Partnerships

We have continued to strengthen our academic and advocacy partnerships:

- Unionville Home Society (UHS) became a **non-academic partner with York University**, positioning our organization at the forefront of community-based research in long-term care
- Our President & CEO, **Abby Katz Starr**, continues to serve on the **AdvantAge Ontario Board of Directors**, bringing a voice to sector-wide policy development
- UHS contributes to multi-sector collaboration tables focused on innovation in seniors' care

Quality Priorities for 2024–2025

This year, we are refreshing our strategic plan with a focus on four pillars:

- **Innovative seniors' care**
- **Strong partnerships**
- **A sustainable organization**
- **A healthy organizational culture**

These priorities align with internal quality initiatives and our QIP commitments. Ongoing work will continue in:

- Collecting and refining clinical care data
- Enhancing programs based on resident and family feedback
- Exploring staffing levels to meet the government's target of 4 hours of daily care per resident
- Upgrading technology and facilities as funding allows

Access and Flow

We are committed to ensuring residents receive timely care in the right setting—ideally in the comfort of their home. With increasing resident acuity and complex mental health needs, we are evolving our models of care to avoid unnecessary hospital visits.

Recent initiatives include:

- Staff education on early recognition of health changes
- Expanded wound and falls management programs
- A clinical lead dedicated to policy development and surveillance protocols
- Partnerships with Nurse-Led Outreach Teams, geriatricians, BSO, and mobile diagnostics

Almost 100 staff have received **DementiAbility training**, now being piloted in two home areas. Our Palliative Care Team is also working closely with families to support end-of-life care within Union Villa, ensuring compassionate, familiar, and coordinated support.

Equity and Indigenous Health

Union Villa serves a culturally rich population of 160 residents. We are proud to have a staff team that mirrors this diversity, which supports more meaningful communication and care. We offer:

- Culturally specific recreation and spiritual programs
- Recognition of diverse holidays and celebrations
- On-demand medical interpretation services
- Cue cards and portable translation devices
- Adaptive equipment including hands-free pull cords, bath trolleys, and specialized beds

Our approach is grounded in the values of **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB)**—which influence how we deliver care, support one another, and engage with community stakeholders. We understand that care is never one-size-fits-all, and our commitment is to make every person feel seen, heard, and valued.

Resident and Family Experience

Every fall, Union Villa conducts a **Resident and Family Satisfaction Survey** to gather feedback and guide quality improvement initiatives. Survey results are shared with both the **Residents' Council** and **Family Council**, and are used to shape priorities through their input and ongoing discussions.

As part of a **Community of Practice** with 27 not-for-profit long-term care homes, we also benchmark our performance to identify opportunities for improvement.

Quality initiatives and updates are communicated through:

- **The Villa Vibe** – Monthly resident newsletter with events and updates
- **Administrator Updates** – Monthly digital newsletter for residents, families, staff, and campus clients
- **Administrator Bulletins** – Ad hoc updates on important matters
- **In the Loop** – Weekly staff newsletter with key updates and success stories
- **The Society Scoop** – Quarterly corporate newsletter
- **Annual Report** – Published every June

We've launched several new programs to enhance the resident and family experience:

- **Aging Mindfully** – A new social work initiative that offers residents a safe space for connection, reflection, and conversation. The program is well-attended and helping to foster meaningful friendships.
- **Reading Buddies** – A renewed partnership with the Markham Public Library to support intergenerational engagement.
- **Themed Meals** – Recreation and Dietary teams collaborate to host special themed dining experiences for residents and families who may not be able to enjoy meals in restaurants.

Provider Experience

Long-term care is becoming more complex, with increasing resident acuity, evolving IPAC standards, and legislative changes. At Union Villa, we are committed to supporting our staff and promoting long-term care as a career of choice. Our initiatives include:

- **Onboarding & Orientation** – Structured programs for students and new staff to ensure safe and confident practice
- **Weekly Communication** – “In the Loop” newsletter keeps staff informed and connected
- **Education & Development** – A mix of online, in-person, and external learning opportunities; bursary support for staff and their children

- **Staff Recognition** – Celebrations, treats, and themed department days throughout the year
- **Employee Wellness** – Time-off policies (including remote work and disconnecting from work), and access to external support through our Employee Assistance Program
- **Staff Engagement** – “The Crew” leads staff social events and activities; regular team huddles, committees, and cross-department collaboration

We continue to invest in technology and equipment to support staff and improve care:

- **New Documentation Tools** – Electronic modules for wound care and medication management (e.g., Taper MD)
- **Improved Infrastructure** – Renovated spa rooms designed for comfort and efficiency; upgraded call bell and camera systems for safety
- **Enhanced Clinical Tools** – Devices for point-of-care documentation and modernized equipment to support daily care delivery

Resident Safety

Safety remains a cornerstone of our care philosophy. Our approach integrates clinical excellence, physical environment enhancements, and staff training:

- **Process Mapping & Huddles** – Staff use clinical flowcharts and team huddles to investigate incidents and improve outcomes
- **Medication Stewardship** – Collaboration with pharmacy to reduce unnecessary use of psychotropic drugs
- **Environmental Improvements** – Renovated spa rooms, upgraded dining room flooring for mobility, and new longer/wider beds for resident comfort
- **Technology for Safety** – New call bell and camera systems enhance building-wide security
- **Staff Training** – Ongoing education in *Gentle Persuasive Approaches* and *DementiAbility* helps staff understand and respond effectively to resident behaviours
- **Clinical Software** –
 - *Skin and Wound App* for wound staging and treatment planning
 - *IPAC module* to support infection control and antibiotic stewardship
 - *Taper MD* to help monitor and manage drug interactions

These collective efforts build a safer, more responsive environment for our residents, families, and staff.

Palliative Care

Union Villa is committed to providing compassionate, person-centered palliative care that supports residents and families through the end-of-life journey. In collaboration with our Ontario Health Team (OHT) partners, we began a review of our **Palliative Care Program** in October 2024, led by a Palliative Care Clinical Coach. This included the completion of the **Community Organization Assessment Tool (COAT)** to evaluate our program against best practice standards.

Key improvement initiatives include:

- **Staff, resident, and family education** on palliative care principles and support
- **Early identification** of residents who may benefit from palliative care
- **Goals of care discussions** at admission and throughout the resident's journey
- **Bereavement and emotional support** for families before, during, and after end of life

Training is supported by **Pallium Canada**, including LEAP Core and LEAP LTC courses for our Palliative Care Committee Champions. Monthly in-person education sessions, delivered by our Clinical Coach, cover core topics such as:

- Introduction to palliative care
- Early identification strategies
- Communication at end of life

Union Villa is adopting the **RESPECT (Risk Evaluation for Support: Prediction for Elder-Life in the Community) Tool**, a validated assessment that helps estimate life expectancy and guide care planning. The tool will be used during:

- **Admission Care Conferences**
- **Annual care planning** or as clinical needs change
- **End-of-life care discussions**

We continue to offer **ad hoc End-of-Life Care Conferences**, and are exploring additional partnerships with organizations such as **Evergreen Hospice** to enhance emotional and bereavement support for residents, families, and staff.

Population Health Management

Union Villa aims to be recognized not only as a preferred place to live and work, but also as a trusted partner in our local health system. As part of a larger **senior-focused campus**—which includes housing, an Adult Day Program, Geriatric Outreach Team, and Seniors

Community Centre—we work closely with community providers to enhance resident care and service delivery.

Our involvement includes:

- Active participation on Ontario Health Team (OHT) committees
- Collaboration on health system planning (e.g., regional palliative care strategy)
- Partnerships with academic institutions for research and learning initiatives
- Support for student placements across nursing, social work, and recreation
- Participation in the **Supervised Practice Experience Partnership (SPEP)** to support internationally educated nurses

We view Union Villa as a **learning organization**. Staff are encouraged to attend conferences, workshops, and professional meetings. Learnings are shared across teams and integrated into practice. We also consult with external experts and organizations to help shape policies and maintain current, evidence-based practices.

Unionville Home Society is a proud **member of AdvantAge Ontario**, and our CEO plays a leadership role on its Board, contributing to provincial advocacy and sector advancement.

Building Improvements

Now over 20 years old, Union Villa's infrastructure is undergoing planned upgrades to support safety, comfort, and accessibility. Key projects for 2025 include:

- **Exterior brickwork repairs**
- **Spa renovation** on the Union Mills unit
- **Upgrades to safety systems**, including:
 - Nurse call system
 - Building security cameras
 - Door access systems

We are also **exploring future renovations** to portions of the older building to expand services and support evolving community needs.

Quality Improvement Planning Cycle & Identification of Priorities

At Union Villa, our commitment to excellence is grounded in **policies and procedures based on best practices and sound operational standards**. These form the foundation of our care and services and support our mission to not only meet—but exceed—the expectations of residents, families, and staff.

We take a **proactive approach to improvement**, recognizing that evolving needs and challenges require constant reflection and refinement.

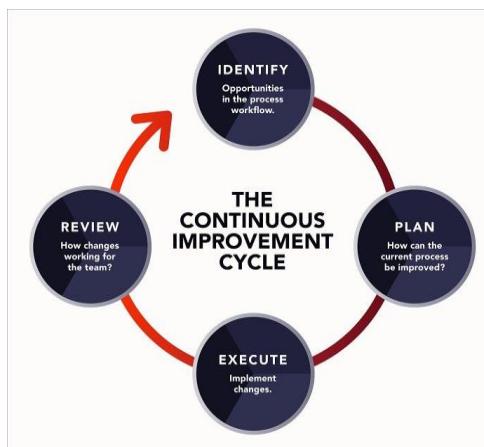
Measuring Quality

We use a combination of **quantitative and qualitative data** to evaluate performance and guide decision-making:

- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** are tracked monthly to identify trends and areas for improvement. KPIs are grouped into six categories:
 - Physical Function
 - Psychosocial Function
 - Safety
 - Clinical Issues
 - Resident Programs
 - Risk Management
- **Resident, family, and staff feedback** plays a critical role. Annual satisfaction surveys, suggestions, and complaints all inform our improvement efforts.

The Union Villa Quality Improvement Cycle

We follow a structured, four-step Quality Improvement (QI) cycle to identify, plan, execute, and evaluate improvement initiatives:



1. Identify

Opportunities for improvement are explored through workflow assessments, gap analyses, and comparisons to best practices. Task forces or QI teams are formed to address priority issues.

2. Plan

Once the root cause is determined, teams develop an Aim Statement and set a **SMART goal** (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-bound) to guide the improvement strategy.

3. Execute

Implementation begins, often using **Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA)** cycles to test, refine, and adjust interventions. Iteration is expected and welcomed.

4. Review

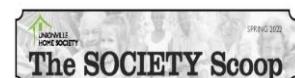
Results are evaluated to determine if goals have been met and whether changes are sustainable. Successful initiatives may be scaled across departments, while those requiring more work re-enter the improvement cycle.

Communication Strategies

We believe transparent communication is essential to the success of our quality initiatives. Our **Residents' Council** and **Family Council** are essential partners in our quality journey, providing meaningful insights and helping shape our priorities through regular feedback and discussion.

We ensure residents, families, staff, and stakeholders are kept informed through a variety of channels:

- Weekly digital staff newsletter – In the Loop
- Monthly digital newsletter (residents, families, staff, campus clients) – Administrator Updates
- As needed bulletins – Campus Bulletin / Important Updates All clients and stakeholders
- Corporate Newsletter – The Society Scoop Published on a quarterly basis.



- Annual Report - Published annually in June

Questions

We welcome your questions or comments on our quality initiatives so please reach out to Olga Gluchovsky, Clinical Quality Educator at ogluchovsky@uhs.on.ca or Kevin McKay, Administrator at kmckay@uhs.on.ca for more information.