

Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

Narrative for Health Care Organizations in Ontario

March 26, 2026

OVERVIEW

Victoria Gardens Long Term Care is a 76-bed home in central Hamilton with a proud 50-year legacy of providing resident-centred care that nurtures both the human spirit and body. Guided by the values of respect, honesty, integrity, trust, and teamwork, the Home delivers services aligned with resident preferences, best practice guidelines, and the requirements of the Fixing Long Term Care Act, 2021.

Victoria Gardens is committed to continuous quality improvement through a comprehensive Quality Improvement Plan that guides the monitoring, evaluation, and enhancement of care, services, programs, and operations. This plan provides a structured framework for identifying and addressing operational challenges. Key performance indicators are reviewed on a regular basis to monitor performance and support quality improvement initiatives. An incident monitoring system is also in place to identify adverse events and guide preventative and corrective actions aimed at enhancing quality.

All programs and services are subject to ongoing review, audit, and evaluation to strengthen accountability and improve outcomes. Each year, Victoria Gardens reviews its Quality Improvement Plan as part of strategic planning, establishing targeted goals that align with organizational priorities. Victoria Gardens remains committed to strengthening quality, transparency, and outcomes by utilizing input from residents, families, staff, caregivers, stakeholders, and community partners. This commitment to excellence has been recognized through the Home's receipt of the Dr. Tony Kerigan Award for Leadership in Integrating Palliative Care in a Long-Term Care Home from McMaster University.

ACCESS AND FLOW

Victoria Gardens is committed to ensuring that residents receive the right care in the right place at the right time by strengthening in-home clinical capacity, enhancing staff skills, and reducing avoidable hospital transfers. In 2025, the Home expanded its interdisciplinary team by contracting a Nurse Practitioner (NP). The NP supports health promotion, early intervention, clinical assessment and staff education, helping to ensure timely diagnosis and treatment within the Home and help prevent unnecessary transfers to hospital.

Collaboration with the Nurse-Led Outreach Team supports specialized procedures such as IV initiation and advanced wound care. These services allow residents to receive complex treatments safely within the Home rather than requiring hospital visits.

Ongoing staff education continues to play an important role in strengthening in-home clinical care. Recent initiatives include IV therapy education for Registered Staff, skin and wound care education for both Personal Support Workers and Registered Staff, Gentle Persuasive Approaches training for all staff and care providers, and continued education on delirium recognition and management. Additional education is planned for 2026, including wound care training and clinical in-services delivered by the Nurse Practitioner.

Several initiatives have also been implemented to help prevent unnecessary emergency department visits and reduce pressure on hospitals. These include the use of the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario Pain and Falls Clinical Pathways to support early identification, monitoring, and treatment of changes in

residents' conditions. The Home has also invested in specialized bariatric equipment, including beds, mattresses, and a lift to safely support residents with complex physical care needs. Access to on-site diagnostics, including mobile x-ray, lab services, and the GeneXpert machine, further supports timely assessment and treatment without requiring hospital transfer.

Hospital transfers are regularly reviewed through interdisciplinary huddles to identify trends, support continuous improvement, and provide targeted education to staff. In 2026, the Home will participate in the McMaster Fracture Study led by McMaster University to strengthen fracture risk prediction and prevention. These initiatives support residents to remain safely in their Home while receiving appropriate and timely care.

EQUITY AND INDIGENOUS HEALTH

Victoria Gardens is committed to advancing health equity and supporting the wellbeing of all residents by fostering a culturally safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment. Equity begins at admission, where resident and family centred assessments help the team understand cultural identity, language needs, traditions, and preferences. This information guides individualized care planning and ensures that residents feel respected and supported from the moment they arrive.

To strengthen cultural competency across the Home, all staff complete mandatory education through Surge Learning upon orientation and annually thereafter, achieving a 100% completion rate. Courses completed in 2025 focused on cultural safety, antiracism, Indigenous history, and inclusive communication. In collaboration with Indigenous partners such as the Hamilton

Regional Indian Centre, some staff have attended a full day cultural workshop with plans of more staff attending in this upcoming year. These learning opportunities deepen staff understanding of Indigenous experiences and enhance their ability to provide culturally safe care. Inclusive hiring practices align with Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) requirements to help recruit, retain, and advance a diverse workforce that reflects the community.

The Home also maintains partnerships with local organizations to strengthen cultural connections and ensures residents have equitable access to community-based supports. In addition, the Home utilizes tools that support equitable communication, including access to translators, the use of language cue cards, communication boards, and translation applications. These initiatives help reduce barriers to care and support equitable access, experiences, and outcomes for residents from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Cultural safety is supported through recognition of important cultural and Indigenous observances, including the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Diwali. Cultural food preferences are accommodated in meal planning, and recreation programming incorporates culturally meaningful activities that support residents' identity, belonging, and emotional wellbeing. Through these ongoing efforts, the Home continues to build an environment where diversity is welcomed; residents feel seen and valued, and culturally safe care is embedded in everyday practice.

PATIENT/CLIENT/RESIDENT EXPERIENCE

Residents are central to shaping Victoria Gardens' priority planning,

serving as a vital source of insight that informs continuous quality improvement. Monthly Resident Council meetings provide structured opportunities to gather feedback and share important information on Home policies, including the Bill of Rights, whistleblowing, and disclosure practices. Efforts are underway to strengthen participation in the Family Council, which meets quarterly, and empower families to advocate for meaningful enhancements in care. Additional perspectives are gathered through annual care conferences, an open-door policy that encourages ongoing dialogue, and quarterly Quality Improvement Committee meetings that address emerging issues and drive system-level improvements. The annual satisfaction survey further identifies priority areas for action, ensuring that resident and family voices remain at the core of decision-making.

The 2025 Satisfaction Survey collected feedback from residents and family members to assess care quality, communication, services, and overall experience. A total of 34 surveys were completed, 16 resident and 18 family, consistent with 2024 response levels. Surveys were approved by Resident and Family Councils, with a key update adding a timeframe to the abuse-related question to ensure responses reflected experiences specifically in 2025.

Overall satisfaction was very strong. All respondents indicated they would recommend Victoria Gardens, an improvement from 97% in 2024. Residents and families expressed high confidence in communication and infection prevention, and residents gave perfect scores for privacy, inclusivity, equity, and inclusion. Food services were positively rated, though some family responses suggested a need for education around dietary recommendations.

Support services such as housekeeping, laundry, and maintenance averaged 4.7 out of 5, and care quality was consistently rated positively with no reports of delays or unmet needs. All responses in the abuse section were positive.

Discrepancies were noted in visiting patterns, with families reporting more frequent visits than residents. Key improvement areas include standardizing survey response options, clarifying visiting related questions, increasing response rates, and enhancing family education on dietary autonomy.

PROVIDER EXPERIENCE

Victoria Gardens is committed to fostering a supportive, engaging, and stable work environment that strengthens recruitment, enhances retention, and promotes a positive workplace culture. The Home has built strong partnerships with local colleges and training programs, regularly accepting students from PSW, nursing, recreation, and dietary programs. Student placements have increased significantly, supported by a designated Nursing Clinical Placement Coordinator who ensures a well-rounded educational experience. Staff provide structured feedback on student performance, helping identify strong candidates for future hiring. This approach, supported by the Preceptor Resource and Education Program in Long-Term Care (PREP LTC) funding and opportunities such as the Supervised Practice Experience Partnership (SPEP), has contributed to a strong pipeline of new talent and a consistently low vacancy rate.

Victoria Gardens has also strengthened onboarding and staff development through an improved orientation checklist, ongoing training opportunities, and internally developed resources and

evaluation tools. Continuous learning remains a priority, with staff encouraged to pursue education that supports career advancement. Staff wellbeing remains a priority for the Home and Leadership provides a supportive work environment where staff feel comfortable sharing feedback contributing to improvement initiatives.

Workplace culture is strengthened through regular recognition and team-building activities. Spirit days, holiday events, and Nursing Week celebrations help foster a sense of community and belonging. Staff are also recognized annually for their years of service, with many contributing 20, 30, 40, and even 50 years to the Home. Events such as the Home's 50th anniversary celebration provide opportunities for staff to connect and celebrate together, while support for cultural traditions and personal milestones reinforces an inclusive and respectful workplace environment.

These combined efforts have contributed to a low turnover rate and a stable, experienced workforce. Looking ahead, Victoria Gardens will continue to invest in staff development, student mentorship, and inclusive workplace practices to ensure that employees feel supported, appreciated, and empowered to grow within the organization.

SAFETY

Victoria Gardens places resident safety at the forefront of all care decisions and continues to strengthen a proactive, resilience-based safety culture. Rather than focusing solely on past incidents, the Home uses interdisciplinary communication, regular review of near misses and safety trends, real-time monitoring, early intervention, and prevention strategies to identify emerging risks early and

develop prevention strategies and adapt care practices that reduce risk and support resident wellbeing.

A key component of this approach includes ongoing efforts to reduce antipsychotic medication and prioritize non-pharmacological interventions, including aromatherapy and Gentle Persuasive Approaches (GPA). All new and existing staff and contractors have completed GPA training, supported by in-house coaches who provide ongoing education and orientation. Despite these efforts, the Home continues to care for a clinically complex resident population, and some residents require antipsychotic medication as part of their individualized care plans. Antipsychotic medications are administered only when prescribed by the resident's physician and with the informed support of the resident's family or substitute decision-maker.

Proactive safety monitoring is further supported through a comprehensive risk management framework that includes a violence flagging policy, workplace violence prevention strategies, and robust infection prevention and control (IPAC) practices. Staff receive monthly IPAC training, in addition to annual, orientation, and just-in-time education, ensuring they are prepared to respond quickly to emerging risks. Realtime responsiveness has also been enhanced through the implementation of a new falls alarm system, which improves reaction time and helps staff identify resident location immediately when assistance is needed.

Victoria Gardens fosters a culture of openness and psychological safety, encouraging staff to speak frankly about concerns, near misses, and potential hazards. Near miss reporting allows the team to identify risks and implement improvements before harm occurs.

This transparency strengthens the Home's ability to adapt and respond to emerging concerns. Through ongoing education, interdisciplinary collaboration, and initiatives such as Alzheimer's awareness activities, the Home continues to strengthen a safety culture that prioritizes prevention, responsiveness, and resident-centred care.

PALLIATIVE CARE

Victoria Gardens integrates a palliative approach to care to support quality of life, symptom management, dignity, and family engagement. Care follows the Quality Standards for Palliative Care, with a focus on early identification of decline, advance care planning, interdisciplinary collaboration, and holistic support for residents and families. This process begins at admission and includes discussions with residents and families about goals of care, advance directives, and care plan interventions to ensure the resident's wishes are understood and documented.

The Home offers end-of-life dignity practices such as a dedicated palliative care room that gives residents and families privacy, comfort, and space for connection during the final stages of life. When a resident leaves the Home for the last time, we honour them with a Dignity Walk, during which staff and residents gather as music plays overhead, and the resident is draped in a hummingbird quilt. A vigil table with a candle and photo is placed on the resident's floor to acknowledge their passing and allow the community to grieve together. Each year, Victoria Gardens holds a memorial service led by a pastor, inviting families of deceased residents to return and remember their loved ones. These practices provide emotional and spiritual support, foster a sense of community, and honour the unique life of each resident.

Victoria Gardens' dedication to high-quality palliative care was recognized in 2025 when our Home was awarded the Dr. Tony Kerigan Award for Leadership in Integrating Palliative Care in a Long-Term Care Home from McMaster University's Division of Palliative Care. This award recognizes large scale integration of the palliative care approach in a long-term care home, demonstrated by training the majority of staff on the palliative care approach, regular access to a specialist palliative care team for support and quality improvement activities and policies that support the integration of early and timely palliative care.

In 2026, Victoria Gardens will further enhance its program through implementation of the RNAO Clinical Pathway for Palliative and End-of-Life Care. This pathway will standardize best practices across the Home and ensure that residents receive timely, coordinated, and holistic care as their needs evolve. Education for all Registered Staff is planned to support consistent use of the pathway for new and existing residents. The pathway includes application of the Palliative Performance Scale and Changes in Health, End-Stage Disease, and Signs and Symptoms scale (CHES). When a decline is noted, staff complete timely reassessments and update interventions to ensure that resident needs are proactively addressed. This approach strengthens early identification, supports symptom management and ensures that care plans remain aligned with resident goals and values.

POPULATION HEALTH MANAGEMENT

Victoria Gardens uses data, interdisciplinary collaboration, and external partnerships to better understand and respond to the health and social needs of residents. Through ongoing engagement

with health systems and community partners, the Home participates in planning processes that support integrated, equitable, and person-centered care.

A key example of this approach is the Home's collaboration with regional research and clinical partners, including participation in the McMaster University Fracture Prevention Study. This partnership allows the Home to use fracture risk data to identify trends, strengthen prevention strategies, and implement standardized risk assessment tools. By analyzing patterns in falls, injuries, and related hospital transfers, staff can adjust care plans, enhance mobility support, and provide targeted education for staff. This approach supports prevention, reduces avoidable hospital visits, and improves outcomes for residents at higher risk.

Victoria Gardens also collaborates with public health partners, behavioural health specialists, Ontario Health Teams and community service providers to support residents with complex clinical and social needs. These partnerships support shared case discussions, coordinated care planning, and access to specialized expertise such as infection prevention, psychogeriatric consultation, and mobile diagnostic services. Information shared across partners informs continuous quality improvement initiatives and supports timely interventions.

Equity is considered through culturally responsive education, accessible communication supports, and partnerships that improve access to services. Feedback from residents, families, and system partners is reviewed to identify emerging needs and guide improvements.

Through ongoing data review, collaboration across sectors, and proactive planning, Victoria Gardens continues to strengthen system integration and deliver coordinated, person-centered care.

CONTACT INFORMATION/DESIGNATED LEAD

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SIGN-OFF

It is recommended that the following individuals review and sign-off on your organization's Quality Improvement Plan (where applicable):

I have reviewed and approved our organization's Quality Improvement Plan on
March 26, 2026

Martin Sole, Board Chair / Licensee or delegate

Cindy Coyle, Administrator /Executive Director

Cindy Coyle, Quality Committee Chair or delegate

Maria Ambroszkiewicz, Other leadership as appropriate
