

Quality Improvement Review and Recommendations: March 2022

Background:

Pursuant to the Minister of Health and Wellness' delegation of authority to the Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care pursuant to subsection 3(2) of the *Quality-improvement Information Protection Act*, coupled with the Minister of Seniors and Long-term Care's authority over continuing care as set out in the Nova Scotia Order in Council #2021-214 and over the administration of the *Adult Protection Act*, R.S.N.S, 1989, c. 2, s. 1, as set out in subsection 4(1) of the *Adult Protection Act*, the Minister of Seniors and Long Term Care established on October 18, 2021 a Quality-Improvement Committee (the "Committee") for the purpose of engaging in Quality-Improvement Activities related to a review of Client #413763.

Quality Improvement Committee:

Dr. Doug Sinclair, VP Medicine, Quality & Safety, IWK Health

Ms. Jane Palmer, Director of Quality, Patient Safety, and Patient Experience, IWK Health

Introduction:

The Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care (DSLTC) is committed to continuous quality improvement across the home care and healthcare systems. DSLTC regularly seeks input and guidance from external professionals to help improve processes and guide our policy development.

In October 2021, the Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care established a Quality-Improvement Committee, under the authority of the *Quality-improvement Information Protection Act*, to conduct a Quality Review in relation to an incident involving Adult Protection and an individual receiving home care services.

The Quality-Improvement Committee was tasked with making recommendations on how a more responsive system can prevent similar incidents from recurring, including any system improvements to be communicated more broadly.

Recommendations:

As a result of the Quality Review, six recommendations have been made. The recommendations will begin to be implemented immediately and all recommendations are expected to be implemented by January 1, 2023. The recommendations are as follows:

1. When Adult Protection is in the inquiry stage of a review of adult abuse of a client in care, all stakeholders, including front line caregivers must be brought together in a case conference to consider all the available information to assist Adult Protection in their decision to proceed with an investigation.
2. When a medical report is required for Adult Protection, all pertinent information must be provided to the medical practitioner and a specific request made for competency assessment or other specific

assessment. Following this medical assessment, a written report must be reviewed by the care coordinator and Adult Protection to determine any further action or formal investigation.

3. When there are differences of opinion or conflict at a case conference level with respect to any client in care, where abuse is a consideration, all appropriate supervisors must be informed so further appropriate action can be taken.
4. An electronic health record for home care supervisors, Adult Protection, and contracted agencies should be developed and implemented to improve information sharing and care coordination.
5. Educational programs should be conducted by Adult Protection throughout the home care ecosystem so all care providers will understand the role and limitations of this service.
6. The Adult Protection service and Halifax Regional Police should review their roles and responsibilities with respect to frail elderly patients at risk for abuse and make any changes or adjustments as necessary.

Next Steps:

The recommendations provide excellent advice to help ensure Nova Scotia has robust processes in place to protect the safety of some of our most vulnerable individuals. DSLTC accepts the recommendations and will be meeting with all parties involved to further strengthen working relationships and identify opportunities for further collaboration that support our collective objectives and outcomes. DSLTC's work to implement the recommendations will begin immediately. The implementation will be on-going and strengthen our overall approach to protect vulnerable adults in Nova Scotia from significant risk of self-neglect, abuse, and neglect and to ensure timely and appropriate referrals, interventions and supports in the least intrusive manner possible in collaboration with health and social service partners.