

Hamilton Health Sciences Accessible Impact Report 2023-24

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Homepage

A message from our Board Chair & CEO

We're excited to present Hamilton Health Sciences' 2023-24 Impact Report, highlighting our teams' significant contributions across patients, people, sustainability, and research and innovation.

This year, our teams worked tirelessly to improve patient care, with notable enhancements in safety, accessibility, and equity. Through substantial investments from our hospital, the provincial government, and generous donors, we've expanded services and quality across multiple programs. Collaborating with community partners, we've launched impactful initiatives to promote community wellness and reduce hospital visits. As a testament to this work, Hamilton Health Sciences was accredited with Exemplary Standing in 2023 – the highest ranking of quality and safety by Accreditation Canada.

As our people work hard to care for our patients, it's our organization's responsibility to care for them. As a leading employer, we've introduced progressive workplace programs and policies that prioritize the safety and wellness of our workforce. We've also taken bold approaches to recruitment to build a stable workforce, so we can continue to meet the needs of our community.

Sustainability is another core element of our strategy. With significant reductions in emissions and ongoing facility redevelopment projects, we're ensuring environmentally responsible operations and modern facilities for generations to come.

As one of Canada's top ten research hospitals, our relentless pursuit of research and innovation continues to elevate health care standards. In 2023-24, our teams achieved groundbreaking discoveries and launched innovative programs that impacted patient care globally. We also remain committed to teaching future health care professionals in collaboration with our academic partners, including McMaster University and Mohawk College.

It's been another incredible year at Hamilton Health Sciences. Thank you to our people, patients, partners, and communities for your continued support. We embark on 2024-25 with optimism that our hospital is poised for continued growth and success.

Keith Monrose, Board of Directors Chair

Tracey MacArthur, President & CEO

Highlights

Accreditation

In 2023 HHS was accredited with [Exemplary Standing by Accreditation Canada](#) for the fourth consecutive time.

“Exemplary Standing” is the highest level of accreditation possible. It means we have succeeded in meeting Accreditation Canada's very rigorous standards of excellence.

Top Employer

This year, HHS was again recognized for being an exceptional place to work, taking honours as a [Top Employer for Young People in Canada](#), and a [Top Employer in the Hamilton-Niagara region](#).

EDI Progress Report

In 2023, we released our first [five-year Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion \(EDI\) Plan](#). The plan outlines the practical steps we've committed to taking to make our organization safer and more inclusive for everyone.

One year later, our first EDI Progress Report highlights our lessons learned and the progress we made in 2023-24.

HHS by the numbers

- Serving a region of 2.3M
- 182,024 emergency visits
- 2,127 physicians
- 330,000+ patients served
- 4,182 babies born
- 793 volunteers
- 181,405 virtual visits
- 14,292 employees

Thank you for continuing to make a vital difference. [Read the latest donor report](#) for Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation.

Patients

Our patients and their families are at the heart of everything we do. In 2023-24, we focused on making care more safe, equitable, and accessible for the patients we serve. We also invested in programs aimed at the prevention and early detection of health complications and disease, helping patients stay well in their own communities.

Scroll down to read some of the many ways Hamilton Health Sciences teams, enabled by the support and collaboration of the provincial government and community partners, made a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of our patients.

Keeping patients healthier in the community

As a hospital, we feel it's not just our job to respond when people become very sick. Our teams are actively working to support the health of patients before they require hospital care. In 2023-24, they made an impact through a number of initiatives including:

Socks Off! Saving limbs

The launch of the innovative [Socks Off!](#) initiative, which aims to reduce the need for lower limb amputation among patients living with diabetes and vascular disease. The initiative is in partnership with the [Greater Hamilton Health Network \(GHHN\)](#), one of Ontario's Health Teams.

Training paramedics in palliative care

HHS, our Centre for Paramedic Education and Research (CPER), and regional emergency medical services partners have collaborated to provide better support for patients who are at their end of life. As of 2023-24, CPER has [trained more than 1500 paramedics](#) in the Hamilton region to provide a tailored approach to patients with palliative care needs. This unique program has helped more than 60% of palliative patients to comfortably remain at home, where they prefer to stay. The program has strong support from patients, families and paramedics.

Expanding Indigenous eye care

Dr. Kourosh Sabri, an ophthalmologist at McMaster Children's Hospital, spearheads an [innovative outreach program](#) to provide eye exams to Indigenous children in remote Northern Ontario. In 2023 this initiative, aimed at enhancing access to routine eye care and glasses, has now expanded into Saskatchewan. With this expansion, more children will receive vital vision care, contributing not only to their improved eyesight but to their overall health and wellbeing.

Improving the quality and safety of care

Our hospital's vision is to provide the Best Care for All. This means ensuring that the care we provide is safe, informed by the best available evidence, and that it aims to ensure patients have the best possible health outcome. There are endless stories to tell about how our teams advanced quality and safety in 2023-24. Here are just a few:

Extensive needs program launch

In 2023 we launched the [Extensive Needs Program](#) at McMaster Children's Hospital, which applies a team-based approach to support the physical, mental, behavioural, developmental, and social needs of children with multiple, complex diagnoses. The program was launched in conjunction with Holland Bloorview Hospital, the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, and several local partners and saw more than 300 children enrolled in 2023-24.

Right medication. Right dose.

In 2023-24 we increased our use of patient armband barcode technology to validate medication administration. In addition to the barcode technology, this system is supported by a robust network of pharmacists who help ensure that every patient gets the right medication at the right dose, reducing the risk of medication errors.

Reducing ambulance offload time

We've partnered with regional emergency medical services to significantly reduce the amount of time paramedics spend in our emergency departments (EDs) while they wait to transfer a patient into our hospital's care. By implementing new and innovative practices in our Juravinski Hospital and Hamilton General Hospital EDs, we're able to facilitate a quicker transfer of care so that paramedics can get back on the road sooner.

Creating equitable care for everyone

Health equity means striving for equitable access to health care for all people. Guided by our [Five-Year Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Plan](#), launched in Summer 2023, we've made strides in reducing health inequities in our hospital and community. For example:

Understanding our patients better

In 2023 we piloted [CARE Data](#), an initiative to collect patient demographic information like Indigenous identity, race, ethnicity, and language preference. This helps us better understand our patient populations and the barriers they face to receiving equitable, quality care. The program is currently in place in select areas of our hospital with the goal of making it standard practice across our organization, informed by the feedback of patients and health care providers.

Indigenous Health Plan

HHS has prioritized Indigenous Health and Truth and Reconciliation, acknowledging constitutionally protected Indigenous rights. With guidance from an Indigenous Strategic Advisor, we're co-designing an Indigenous Health Plan based on community input. This plan will align with Indigenous rights, treaties, and frameworks like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action.

Black Health

At McMaster Children's Hospital (MCH), we're implementing Black Health initiatives to address significant needs in Hamilton. This includes aligning our own EDI Plan with Ontario Health's Black Health Plan. We're collaborating with Black health leaders and connecting with Black communities to understand their unique health care needs, so that we can equip our health care providers to deliver safer, more equitable care. Our goal is to advance health promotion and disease prevention efforts within Black communities in Hamilton.

Improving access to care

In 2023-24 we successfully reduced diagnostic, surgical, and procedural wait times across several of our sites and programs. In fact, by the end of the year we were performing nearly as many surgeries as before the COVID-19 pandemic. This means patients get the diagnosis and treatment they need sooner, improving the likelihood of a successful outcome. For example:

More critical care beds

In 2023-24 HHS was grateful to receive funding from the provincial government to add seven critical care beds at our Hamilton General Hospital site. The beds enable HGH teams to help more patients requiring intensive care in the most appropriate setting, improving patient flow across the site including through the emergency department, which sees some of our region's most serious medical cases.

Additional pediatric ICU care

Enabled by a [historic investment](#) by the provincial government, we added more beds in our pediatric intensive care unit (PICU) at McMaster Children's Hospital. These beds allowed us to provide critical care to more kids during the viral season, and to reduce the amount of time they spent in the emergency department waiting for a PICU bed to become available.

Medical imaging education

We partnered with St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton, Mohawk College, and McMaster University to open the [Centre for Integrated and Advanced Medical Imaging](#) (CIAMI) where education, clinical care, and research intersect to reduce diagnostic imaging wait times, advance best practices, and educate new generations of health care providers.

Celebrations

Cancer Care Recognition

Two leading-edge HHS [cancer care programs were recognized](#) at the 16th annual Quality and Innovation Awards. Both programs focus on having supportive conversations with patients or their children about cancer.

Cancer Coach celebrates 10 years

Our [Mobile Cancer Screening Coach](#), a unique program offering free, mobile cancer screening and smoking cessation support on a 45-foot-long bus, celebrated its 10-year anniversary in 2023. The coach routinely visits over 60 locations across Hamilton, Six Nations of the Grand River, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and beyond, increasing access to screening services.

50 years of NICU care

McMaster Children's Hospital is home to the country's largest neonatal intensive care unit. In 2023 it celebrated its 50th year of caring for our youngest, most fragile patients.

Supporting patients with pain for 50 years

Our Michael G. DeGroote Pain Clinic at McMaster University Medical Centre [celebrated 50 years](#) of supporting patients living with chronic pain. What began in 1973 as one of the first pain clinics in Canada has evolved into the largest academic, university-affiliated pain clinic in the country.

More MRIs, shorter wait times

At McMaster Children's Hospital a [new MRI machine and software](#) has enabled our team to perform MRI imaging on 20 per cent more patients per day, meaning more kids can get the diagnosis and treatment they need sooner.

People

Our staff, physicians, learners, and volunteers are our hospital's greatest assets. Through our 2018-2023 People Plan we delivered new and better programs in support of workforce experience, safety, and wellbeing. Now, work on a renewed People Plan has begun and it will continue to help us attract, retain, and train the skilled and stable workforce needed to support the evolving health needs of our community and region.

We're proud that, in 2023-24, our efforts to prioritize our workforce landed HHS several top employer awards, reinforcing our employee value proposition employee which positions our hospital as an exceptional place to work, learn, and grow.

Creating a safe and healthy workplace

In 2023-24 we launched various initiatives to support the health, safety, and wellness of everyone who works, practices, and learns in our hospitals. From programs aimed at reducing workplace-related injuries and illness to the creation of we continue to emphasize work that makes HHS a safer, more inclusive place to be. Other examples include:

Anti-Racism & Anti-Discrimination

In June 2023, we introduced HHS' first Anti-Racism Policy and revised our Workplace Violence and Workplace Harassment and Discrimination protocols to promote inclusivity and help ensure a safer work environment. Throughout 2023, HHS leaders participated in training sessions to understand these. We conducted 17 leader training sessions in collaboration with the Workplace Investigations team, achieving a completion rate of 100% for physician leaders and 94% for operational leaders. In summer 2024, we will provide a follow-up anti-racism education micro-session for leaders to ensure they understand their responsibilities and receive implementation support.

K9 Assist Program

Recognizing the proven benefits of therapy animals in promoting emotional support and stress relief, HHS introduced the [K9 Assist program](#) to its workforce in spring 2024. The program aims to reduce stress and burnout, increase socialization, and improve overall well-being among staff, physicians, residents, and learners through animal-assisted therapy. Hank, HHS' very first facility dog, can be requested to attend critical incident debriefs, provide bereavement support, attend team meetings and huddles, and more.

Staff & Physician Wellness

In 2023, we opened the newest HHS staff & physician wellness centre at our Urgent Care Centre. Wellness centres provide dedicated space for members of our workforce to engage in fitness and wellness activities, both self-guided and instructor-led. Two more centres are in development at our Satellite Health Facility and West Lincoln Memorial Hospital sites.

Attracting, retaining, and supporting top talent

A strong and sustainable workforce is key to providing exceptional care. In the face of an ongoing global health-care worker shortage, we're more focused than ever on positioning HHS as the hospital of choice for those who want to establish and grow a fulfilling career in health care. This includes taking bold approaches to recruiting, investing in our staff scheduling technology and processes, and creating more sustainable team models.

Imagine Recruitment Campaign

In 2023 we launched a nation-wide [recruitment marketing campaign](#) to attract more skilled health-care workers from across Canada. As the only hospital in Ontario that cares for all ages and the Greater Hamilton region's largest employer, the campaign positions HHS as a place to develop skills, learn from world-leading experts, and advance careers. The campaign has driven significant increases to overall applicant volumes, as well as to priority positions such as nursing.

Models of Care

Health-care worker shortages and evolving patient needs have led us to rethink how our clinical teams are designed. In 2023-24 we explored how unique team models of care can support workforce sustainability while allowing teams to continue providing safe, high-quality care. This work continues in 2024-25 through our Care Transformation strategic initiative, but early work to leverage the skills and capacity of learners, internationally-educated nurses, and health-care aides in the circle of care has proven promising.

Volunteer growth

HHS now has 800 [volunteers](#), who have returned in person across all our sites. We are steadily progressing towards our pre-pandemic numbers. In 2023, we introduced new [volunteer roles](#) supporting child and youth services, wellness initiatives, and specialized care programs. Our partnership with Shine Wellness has been a notable addition, where volunteers assist with staff stretch breaks, special projects, and wellness initiatives. Additionally, we launched two significant programs aimed at supporting families in the NICU, and expanded volunteer roles in patient support and care surveys.

Sustainability

As a key pillar of our strategic plan, sustainability calls on all of us to be responsible users of our organization's and community's resources. This includes reducing our environmental footprint, being good stewards of our financial resources, and planning for the future so that we can anticipate and meet the needs of our growing region for generations to come.

Building a healthier future

Every day our teams provide care for thousands of people who have immediate health care needs. While we work to respond to the needs of our community today, we must also plan for the needs of tomorrow. This year we made significant progress on several major projects to expand and modernize our sites and services so that we can provide high quality care for the people who needs us today as well as five, ten, and twenty years from now.

In partnership with the provincial government, Hamilton Health Sciences is on a journey to [build a healthier future](#) for our region by replacing our oldest hospital buildings with modern facilities designed to support the health care of today and tomorrow. This includes:

Rebuilding WLMH

The [West Lincoln Memorial Hospital redevelopment project](#) in Grimsby is currently in the construction phase. Crews broke ground on the new hospital in 2022, which is being built directly behind the existing building to provide continuity for patient care during construction. In 2023-24 the new hospital quickly took shape and is set to open in 2025.

Rebuilding Juravinski Hospital

The [redevelopment of the aging parts of our Juravinski Hospital](#) (JH) on Hamilton Mountain is the single-largest health infrastructure investment in our organization's history and will also make JH the largest acute inpatient hospital in our region. We continue to work with our provincial and municipal

government partners to advance planning for this project. Construction is targeted to start in 2028 and will take approximately a decade to complete.

Growing McMaster Children's Hospital

In 2023-24 McMaster Children's Hospital (MCH) received [over \\$48 million](#) from the provincial government to expand pediatric services so that we can care for more kids in our region. This investment – the largest in MCH's history – has supported the growth of 24 services and is already leading to reduced wait times across several services including surgeries and procedures, diagnostic imaging, mental health treatment, and child development and rehabilitation. This investment was part of a historic \$330M provincial investment in pediatric health care across Ontario.

Delivering sustainable operations

Beyond bricks and mortar, we're always working to remain responsive to the ever-evolving health care needs of our community and region. This includes embracing innovative approaches to care, such as:

Expanding hospitalist program

We expanded our [hospitalist program](#) at Juravinski Hospital to help streamline patient care. Hospitalists, specializing in internal or family medicine, provide direct care from admission to discharge, ensuring workflow efficiency and continuity of care. Hamilton Health Sciences boasts one of Canada's few comprehensive hospitalist programs.

Enhancing capacity for non-acute care

HHS staff and physicians continue to care for 120 non-acute patients in our [Satellite Health Facility](#), housed within a converted historic hotel, while they await discharge to a community setting. This preserves hospital beds for patients with the most urgent needs in the midst of ongoing bed shortages in post-discharge destinations, such as long-term care facilities.

Caring for the environment

Given that hospitals are a significant contributor to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and waste production in Canada, we have an obligation to reduce our environmental impact which, in turn, supports the health of people living across our community and region.

We are reducing emissions, diverting waste, and optimizing energy consumption across our sites and have a plan to reach Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050. Creating an Environmental Management Plan is a priority within our [2024 Strategic Plan](#).

View a [snapshot of our environmental performance in 2023-24](#), or scroll down to learn more.

Our goal: Net Zero 2050

We have an ambitious goal to achieve Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050. At HHS, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are primarily created by burning natural gas to generate electricity (cogeneration). In the last three years we've [invested \\$57-million](#) to upgrade to more efficient cogeneration infrastructure. Combined with a new strategy of how and when cogeneration is used, we've significantly reduced our GHG emissions by half, one year ahead of our goal.

Reducing waste

Amidst a significant rise in the number of patients we treat each day, we've drastically reduced the volume of waste we send to landfill. This includes paper, food, surgical, and pharmaceutical waste, much of which is recycled or reprocessed to be used again, safely. Overall, we generate 50% less waste each day (by volume) compared to our peers.

Greening HHS

We've long invested in creating green space across our sites to support patient and workforce wellness, as well as to contribute to the wellbeing of our local environment. In 2023-24, after a pause due to the pandemic, we resumed operation of our community vegetable garden at our Hamilton General Hospital site, which generates produce for local food banks. We also partnered with Trees for Health Ontario to [plant many new trees](#) at HGH and St. Peter's Hospital.

Being responsible financial stewards

As a hospital, our community and funding partners entrust us with funds to ensure the delivery of high quality, efficient care and service. Despite ever-increasing demands for hospital care in our region, we continue to find innovative ways to reduce costs while growing our workforce and maintaining the highest standard of care. We've also realized more benefits resulting from some of our major investments, including implementation our new hospital information system, Epic, such as increased patient safety and reduced operational costs.

- 2023/24 Investments | Over \$80M allocated to projects completed in fiscal 2023
- \$42 Million: Facilities investments that maintain or enhance the performance of critical systems and infrastructure
- \$29.1 Million: Medical Equipment/MES – an article, instrument, apparatus, or machine that is used in the prevention, diagnosis, or treatment of illness or disease
- \$ 5.2 Million: Health Information System – This is year 3 of our 5-year payment for our Epic license
- \$ 4.3 Million: Computer Technology software applications, servers, and operating systems (telephones, other telecommunications products, video equipment)

Research, Innovation & Learning

As a leading academic health sciences centre, [research](#), [innovation](#) and [learning](#) are embedded in everything we do. We harness the curiosity and expertise of our more than 18,000 staff, physicians, and learners to advance health and health care for people in our community, country, and around the globe.

World-leading clinical research, here

In 2023-24 we ranked among the [top 10 research hospitals in Canada](#) for the eighth consistent year. Through our academic partnerships with McMaster University and Mohawk College and six research institutes, we lead medical discovery across a variety of fields including [cancer](#), [abnormal bleeding and blot clots](#), [children's health](#), [aging](#), and [worldwide population health](#). We're known for our expertise in translating research from the lab to the patient's bedside, turning today's science into tomorrow's

lifesaving health care. These examples below are just tip of the iceberg in terms of our research impact. Be sure to read our full [2023-24 Research Impact Report](#).

Multiple Myeloma

[Dr. Hira Mian](#), oncology hematologist at HHS, is leading our hospital and Canada toward becoming international leaders in research into the treatment of multiple myeloma, a rare blood cancer. Dr. Mian is the national chair of a study taking place at 30 sites across the country that holds the potential to improve the quality of life of people living with multiple myeloma while saving the Canadian health-care system millions of dollars.

Researching unmet social needs

Challenges faced by many families include access to healthy food and having enough of it. [Gita Wahi](#), pediatrician at McMaster Children's Hospital (MCH) and member of HHS' Corporate EDI Steering Committee, is involved in two studies focused on supporting young patients and their families facing socio-economic challenges. Dr. Wahi's research focuses on health promotion and health equity, including identifying and addressing unmet social needs of children and families. Her research informed the creation of a [food pantry program](#) at MCH as a resource for families in need.

Breaking the Newfoundland curse

Leading-edge research by [Dr. Jason Roberts](#), cardiac electrophysiologist at HHS, has the potential to revolutionize care for patients with arrhythmogenic right ventricular cardiomyopathy (ARVC), a potentially fatal genetic condition affecting the heart's muscle tissue, through a new drug treatment.

- \$138M research revenue
- 508 clinical research projects
- 10,541 clinical trial participants
- 853 active clinical trials

Improving patient outcomes through clinical innovation

At HHS, we're bringing health innovation to life. Through our commitment to continuous quality improvement and unique national and global partnerships, and by embracing new and emerging technology including artificial intelligence (AI), we're advancing health care in our community and around the world.

Drawing the roadmap for AI

In 2023-24 we continued to advance work focused on leveraging AI to improve patient outcomes. For example, we're designing and testing AI algorithms that have the power to drive better outcomes for patients with [breast cancer](#) as well as [cardiac disease](#). HHS is also leading the way in [defining how AI should be used](#) in health care globally.

A Voyce for our patients

In 2023 we piloted a unique technology-based translation solution that helps patients and care providers overcome language barriers. [Voyce](#) provides access to real-time interpreters in less than 30 seconds who are trained in medical terminology. It ensures patients and the care team understand each

other and the medical situation, helping to build trust, reduce frustration, and improve the timeliness of care. In 2023 the service was accessed more than 9,000 times across our hospitals.

Remote monitoring innovation

HHS has emerged as a national leader in remote monitoring innovation which helps surgical patients recover safely at home, reducing the amount of time they spend in hospital and their risk of complications after surgery. In partnership with McMaster University, HHS received an \$800,000 grant through the [Canadian Foundation for Innovation](#) to establish a unique lab at our Juravinski Hospital and Cancer Centre that will serve as the clinical and research hub for remote monitoring operations at HHS.

Developing new and established health practitioners

As a teaching hospital, learning is in our DNA. Whether by teaching new generations of health care providers or helping our existing staff and physicians advance their skills, we're committed to developing skilled health care providers who are at the leading edge of their field while creating a more diverse and sustainable workforce.

Medical learners 2023/2024:

- 316 undergraduate medical learners
- 954 residents
- 291 clinical fellows

Staff learners 2023/2024

- 102 nursing graduate guarantee - registered nurses
- 41 nursing graduate guarantee – registered practical nurses
- 241 clinical externs - nursing
- 22 clinical externs – respiratory therapist
- 17 clinical externs – paramedic
- 26 clinical externs – occupational therapy
- 13 clinical externs – physiotherapy
- 73 nurse learners (SPEP)

Environmental, Social & Governance

At Hamilton Health Sciences we understand the significant role that environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors play in promoting healthy communities. Because of this, we are deeply committed to implementing sustainable and socially responsible practices throughout our organization.

Environmental management

From waste generation to greenhouse gas emissions, we recognize that our operations directly impact the health of our environment which, in turn, directly affects the health of our community.

We stand firm in our commitment to reducing our environmental impact and have prioritized the work required to make HHS a leader in this regard. Much of this work happens “behind the scenes,” especially

in managing the energy that powers our hospital, which is a significant part of our carbon footprint. We also continue to address operations that generate visible environmental impacts like waste management, drug disposal, transportation, construction, and linen and food services.

We are proud to say that we continue to consistently meet or exceed all required governmental environmental standards, and in many ways we're leading in our sector. But we're committed to doing more, and so we've made the development of a comprehensive Environmental Management Plan a key priority within our 2024 Strategic Plan. This plan will focus on three priority areas to set us on a path towards Net-Zero emissions by 2050 and support the health of the environment and, in turn, our community.

Read on to learn more about our environmental management efforts in 2023-24, or get an [overview in this visual snapshot](#).

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

At HHS, we've committed to reducing our carbon footprint and aiming for Net Zero emissions by 2050. We're proud to say we've already cut our emissions in half, a year ahead of schedule, which has been primarily driven by investing \$57 million to upgrade our power systems, making them cleaner and more efficient. By swapping out old generators for newer, greener models and installing better emission control systems, we've cut down on harmful gases like CO2 and nitrous oxide. Not only does this help the planet, but it also saves us money by reducing our reliance on the grid.

Environmental Stewardship

We're developing our first five-year Environmental Stewardship Plan (ESP) to refocus our waste management efforts and establish targets related to managing waste reduction, waste diversion, and reuse. In 2023 work began to develop a robust ESP which involves identifying focus areas, engaging key internal and external stakeholders, conducting greenhouse gas inventories, and developing tools for ongoing monitoring and performance. A vendor has been selected and work has begun, with the goal to release the plan in late 2024.

2023-24 highlights:

- 1,458 metric tonnes of plastic, paper, cardboard, and metals recycled
- Reduced paper waste by 70 metric tonnes

Building greener, cleaner hospitals

We began construction on our brand new West Lincoln Memorial Hospital in Grimsby in 2022, and once built it will be among Ontario's greenest hospitals. The new hospital will produce about 390 tonnes less CO2 annually, a 50% reduction compared to the current facility. Key features will include:

- High-efficiency heat pumps
- High-performance building envelope with electrochromic windows to help preserve energy
- Water-cooled heat recovery chiller
- Rooftop solar panels providing 5% of the building's energy

Social responsibility

Equity, diversity, and inclusion

In June 2023, Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS) released its first five-year [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion \(EDI\) Plan](#). Based on the input of our workforce and community, the plan outlines the practical steps we've committed to taking to make our organization safer and more inclusive for everyone. One year later, our first [EDI Progress Report](#) highlights our lessons learned and the progress we made in 2023-24, including:

- Investing in our EDI team to guide our organization's day-to-day and long-term EDI work;
- Beginning to collect patient health equity data to better understand and address barriers and factors that impact health outcomes;
- Aligning 223 of our policies with EDI principles, and introducing HHS' first Anti-Racism policy;
- Completion of EDI training by HHS' board of directors and executive leadership team to improve their capacity to lead equitably and inclusively;
- Launching Black health initiatives focused on improving health conditions in Black communities;
- Creating an EDI governance structure to ensure EDI remains a priority within all that we do;
- Expanding EDI training and resources for our workforce, including practical guidance for integrating EDI into daily work at HHS; and
- Attaining a five-point increase in the EDI dimensions of our My Voice Matters annual workforce engagement survey, which is four points above the benchmark for health-care providers.

[Read the full 2023-24 EDI Progress Report.](#)

While we reflect on the many achievements over the past year, we must also acknowledge that our journey is far from complete. Guided by our EDI Plan, we'll continue to hold ourselves and our organization accountable, challenging each other to do better and be better every single day for the patients and communities who rely on us for health care.

Staff & physician safety and wellbeing

Our staff, physicians, learners, and volunteers are paramount to our hospital's success. Guided by our 2018-2023 People Plan, we implemented innovative programs prioritizing workforce experience, safety, and wellbeing. Looking ahead, we continue to prioritize the safety and wellbeing of our people as a strategic imperative.

In 2023-24, HHS received a number of employer awards, reinforcing our commitment to being an exceptional workplace.

- Canada's Top Employers for Young People
- Hamilton-Niagara's Top Employers

In 2023-24 we launched a number of initiatives aimed at creating a healthy and safe workplace, including:

- The introduction of HHS' first Anti-Racism Policy, and updates to our Workplace Violence and Workplace Harassment & Discrimination protocols
- Leader training sessions to ensure understanding and implementation of the above policies & protocols, with a 97% completion rate including physician leaders.

- The introduction of the unique K9 Assist program, which uses animal therapy to reduce stress and burnout among staff and physicians.
- The expansion of our Shine staff & physician wellness centres to our Urgent Care Centre site, offering dedicated space for fitness and wellness activities.

Read more about our work to create a healthier, safer workplace in 2023-24.

Population health & health equity

Hamilton Health Sciences prioritizes patient-centred care, striving to make it safer, more equitable, and accessible for all. In 2023-24, we maintained our focus on enhancing patient outcomes and the health of our community through initiatives focused on improving access to care, and supporting patients directly in the community.

Read more about our efforts to advance population and health equity.

Governance

Our organization's governance is based on its purpose, performance, principles, and structure. At the top of our Board of Directors, guiding decisions and strategy for health care quality and fiscal responsibility. Executive leaders, frontline leaders, and other key stakeholders also play key roles.

Ontario hospitals must follow the Public Hospitals Act, which sets the minimum legal standards for governance, including having a Board, administrator/CEO, committees, along with reporting requirements and other regulations.

Key governance factors at HHS include Board structure, financial transparency, procurement, ethics, Accreditation, quality improvement, and data security.

Board structure

Hamilton Health Sciences' [Board of Directors](#) has 18 members (including voting and non-voting). The Board meets regularly between September and June of each year. Members of the public are invited to attend the open portion of board meetings.

Board Committees:

- Audit & Resource Committee
- Executive Committee
- Governance Committee
- Compensation
- HR Committee
- Quality Committee
- Research and Innovation Committee

Financial transparency

At HHS, we prioritize financial integrity through internal audits, enhancing efficiency and controls. These independent reviews identify improvements, optimizing our financial performance. Annually, external auditors conduct a comprehensive audit, ensuring reliability and accountability to stakeholders. Our

commitment to fiscal responsibility is evident through transparent practices, surpassing Broader Public Sector (BPS) standards. We adhere to the BPS Accountability Act, providing clear financial information to the public. This includes audit reports, financial statements, and compliance attestations. Our practices ensure efficient resource allocation, delivering quality health care while maintaining stakeholder trust.

HHS publicly discloses the following information for its stakeholders:

- Annual Audit Reports
- Annual Audited Financial Statements
- Travel & Expense Policy
- Executive Expenses as defined by the Ministry of Health
- Attestations to Procurement compliance and use of consultants
- Hospital Accountability Reports
- Business documents that contain information on performance and results
- Public Sector Salary disclosure

HHS also submits financial data to the Province of Ontario and to the Canadian Institute for Health Information ([CIHI](#)) that is captured in the Canadian MIS Database ([CMDB](#)). This information informs publicly available [dashboards](#) on hospital spending, cost of a standard hospital stay, and the corporate service expense ratio.

Hospital funding uncertainties require us to constantly strive to find creative and innovative ways to improve fiscal performance without compromising care quality. For example, we devote resources to projects, initiatives, and partnerships aimed at improving population health and reducing the number of preventable hospital visits.

Procurement

Supply chain management is crucial in health care due to the complex and fragmented nature of procuring essential items. The pandemic, inflation, and global geo-political unrest have exposed significant challenges with supply disruptions and shortages, complicating efforts to deliver high-quality, affordable care. To tackle these issues, health care providers must enhance supply chain efficiency. Streamlining processes, optimizing inventory, and fostering supplier collaboration can yield substantial cost reductions and supply continuity. Leveraging data analytics provides better visibility, highlights inefficiencies, and supports cost-reduction strategies. Additionally, collaboration and knowledge-sharing within the industry are vital. Participation in group purchasing organizations, sharing best practices, collaboration with peer hospital organizations, and benchmarking has helped us overcome supply challenges, mitigate shortages, and ensure the availability of necessary items for effective patient care.

In 2023-24, we also advanced our procurement practices through:

- Benchmarking of vendor base to determine alignment with HHS Values-Based initiatives
- Expansion of Sustainable Procurement Coalition from provincial to Canada-wide
- Continued engagement of Procurement Leaders ESG-EDI Working Group (provincial, hospital procurement leaders)
- Vendor meetings to discuss sustainability initiatives related to clinical categories

- Products available via our SSO/GPO, Mohawk Medbuy Corporation (MMC), have been identified and are currently undergoing financial and clinical evaluations on feasibility. Results will be reported to Leadership for decision
- Policy revisions to support HHS' Values-Based Procurement model and recent legislature such as Bill S-211 (Fighting Against Forced Labour and Child Labour in Supply Chains Act) and recent changes to the Broader Public Sector (BPS) Directives

Ethics

Using an ethical framework, the following offices, along with key stakeholders, participate in the Integrated Ethics Committee that addresses organizational ethics issues, reviews policies and supports ethical practice:

- The Office of Ethics addresses ethical issues from bedside to boardroom, and builds ethics capacity through education and resources, across HHS and the region (regionalethicsnetwork.com).
- The Office of Patient Experience addresses patient complaints and concerns and promotes the integration of patient/family voice in care planning and delivery.
- The Privacy and Freedom of Information Office is committed to patient privacy and the respectful care of the personal health information (PHI) in our custody and control.
- The Research Ethics Board Office ensures compliance with research ethics best practices, and addresses concerns and questions related to research ethics and issues.

Highlights

- The Ethics Consultation Service supports conflict resolution and reflective practice re: patient care planning through coaching and mediation.
- Whistleblowing Protocol supports reporting through HHS' independent, external service provider, ClearView Connects. This anonymous process ensures the protection of whistleblowers.
- Values-based Code of Conduct (VBCC) focuses on promoting respectful workplaces. The VBCC will be refreshed in 2025 using an EDI lens to acknowledge that there are cultural differences that will impact what individuals perceive as appropriate and inappropriate conduct. The refresh includes training on our VBCC and EDI-related topics such as micro-aggressions.

Accreditation

In 2023 HHS was [accredited with Exemplary Standing](#) by Accreditation Canada for the fourth consecutive time.

“Exemplary Standing” is the highest level of accreditation possible. It means we have succeeded in meeting Accreditation Canada’s very rigorous standards of excellence.

Being accredited signals to all that HHS is committed to highest possible standard of quality and performance. During the accreditation process, HHS was assessed against 3,714 criteria across 25 sets of standards, which includes 452 tests of compliance for Required Organizational Practices. Hamilton Health Sciences met or exceeded more than 98 per cent of these standards.

Accreditation Canada surveyors acknowledged several strengths and accomplishments in their final report, including:

- HHS' resiliency and response through the COVID-19 pandemic
- Our continuous efforts to fulfill and balance our roles as a community and regional hospital, an academic teaching institution, and a leading research facility.
- The pride demonstrated by staff and physicians for the work they do and their support of each other.
- HHS' unique Continuous Quality Improvement Management System and our integrated approach to identify, measure, monitor and manage improvement priorities.
- The significant capital infrastructure investments being made across the sites to improve our facilities and equipment.
- Our commitment towards the wellness and professional growth of staff
- Our organization's investment in leadership and staff development and wellness.

This is a testament to the collective, continuous efforts of our teams to relentlessly pursue quality in all that we do. We continue to work through and implement the recommendations arising from our 2023 Accreditation assessment, which will drive further improvements.

Quality improvement

HHS has a long and successful history in Quality, Patient Safety and Risk, beginning in the early 2000s.

- HHS has been ahead of the curve in developing key models and frameworks to advance the Quality agenda
- During this history, HHS developed and/or uses several models/ frameworks in Patient Safety, Utilization, Patient Experience & Engagement and Quality

HHS has robust policy, governance and systems infrastructure that support the identification, assessment and action planning in response to quality and patient safety opportunities across the organization.

This includes responsive protocols for identification and investigation into root causes of critical incidents and regular reviews at the organizational leadership and board of directors on the overall trends related to quality performance, patient safety occurrences, patient experience results and critical incident reviews.

Patient story telling continues to be an important feature of HHS's quality, patient safety and patient experience discussions for several years at multiple levels of the organization. With these stories shared, important context is built around the successes and challenges across HHS in quality, safety and related issues.

- A daily culture around improvement has been advanced through the Continuous Quality Improvement Management System, CQI-MS, or simply CQI. CQI is our strategy to change culture into one where everyone is a problem-solver – achieving results by aligning key systems and tools with key behaviours.
- CQI is about building a culture of continuous quality improvement

- Quality touches on everything HHS does as a health-care system, from the administrative processes in the boardroom to the daily clinical tasks completed at the bedside

Our CQI approach began in September 2016 and has been implemented almost everywhere across the organization, resulting in several thousand improvement opportunities of various sizes and scales being implemented since the system was started.

- Working to grow the system to be more than just tools but also hard-wiring the necessary behaviours that build a culture of improvement
- CQI processes have helped teams with engaging our patients to partner in promoting safe patient care and responsiveness to patient care needs

Privacy & cybersecurity

With an increase in the threat level of cybersecurity attacks on public sector institutions in recent years, HHS has worked alongside regional partners to ensure we have sophisticated systems and practices in place to protect hospital and patient data. In 2023-24, we:

- Worked with partners at St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton and Niagara Health Services to strengthen 18 partner hospitals' ability to identify, protect, detect, and respond to cyber-attacks, securing patient care regionally. This includes an assessment of the respective hospitals' cybersecurity practices against an accepted security framework to help identify any gaps among regional hospitals.
- Onboarded a leading Managed Security Service Provider (MSSP) to monitor and protect our endpoints 24/7, responding to active threats as they happen to ensure maximum protection of patient and hospital data.

Highlights

- International Data Privacy Week educational content for staff education and learning
- Compliance Dashboard created and published to offer real-time staff privacy training compliance rates
- Success launch of the Privacy Awareness Campaign to drive staff and credentialed staff privacy training compliance
- Updated the public Patient Privacy Statement and delivered new Statement of Information Posters to all HHS sites
- Approximately 74 corporate, clinical and research projects supported by Privacy (e.g. ServiceNow, Stryker Robot, QIAGEN, AMPLIFI, Voyce)
- Achieved the highest compliance rates in HHS history, employees and physicians – 2023 holding pattern into 2024
- International Data Privacy Week educational content for staff education and learning
- Annual Privacy e-module LMS training updated
- De-Identification policy finalized and to be published
- On-demand virtual and in-person privacy training with departments
- New Physician Leadership Orientation in-person training
- Continuous privacy support on key corporate, research and clinical initiatives (CIAMI, M365, CARE data collection, and AI driven projects like DAX-CO-Pilot/Nebula/Cosmos)