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Canadian Healthcare Excellence in Quality Award (CHEQA)

CECIL LEUNG



The Quality Healthcare Network (QHN) in collaboration with rL Solutions, awarded the inaugural Canadian Healthcare Excellence in Quality Award (CHEQA) at a cocktail reception, closing September's QHN Fall Leading Forum.

CHEQA was created by QHN to promote and recognize Canadian healthcare organizations that have demonstrated excellence in the areas of patient safety and overall quality of care.

rL Solutions is a provider of healthcare-related incident and complaint reporting systems.

Submissions were open to any organization delivering healthcare in Canada in the hospital, and/or long-term or community care. Applicants were invited to submit a project or initiative that showed key attributes of sustainable performance improvement. The submissions were judged by a distinguished panel of judges. Five finalists were selected to attend the final cocktail ceremony at the Fall Leading Forum, where the winner was announced.

The goals of CHEQA are three-fold:

- To inspire positive change – Help in motivating organizations to share and develop innovative ways to raise the quality of care and the patient experience in our communities.
- To recognize excellence – Reward organizations that show dedication to the improvement of methods that lead to better outcomes.
- To promote best practices – Build awareness of effective real-world efforts that improve outcomes in patient safety and service excellence.

The applicants were judged, in part, on the following criteria:

- Setting the Aim – The impact on the clinical condition, population, or problem as defined by high volumes, problematic quality or outcomes, high costs, or other indications.
- System Improvement – Demonstration of improved clinical outcome or improved quality of life as shown by significant reductions in risk, complications, mortality, patient/client/resident errors, or a noteworthy increase in safety, improved function or independence.
- Use of Benchmarks – The degree to which the applicant used benchmarking data (national, regional or internal data) to identify improvement opportunities and establish targets.
- Value to the Individual – Safety, well-being or satisfaction of the patient/client/resident in the overall project development, objective, or results.
- Replicability – The extent to which the improvement can be replicated as demonstrated by the clarity of the project as a roadmap for others.

Several exciting proposals were submitted from throughout the country. In the end, five finalists stood out as exceptional.

The City of Toronto Homes for the Aged effectively reduced the incidence and morbidity of falls by implementing a falls reduction program.

Another group from the City of Toronto Homes for the Aged submitted an entry titled *Sustaining a Restraint-Free Environment in a Long-Term Care Home*. The focus of the initiative was supporting and enabling residents to achieve the highest quality of life possible, emphasizing the philosophy of least restraint.

South Shore Health from Nova Scotia developed and implemented a strategy to inventory and inspect all

Electromechanical (EM) patient care equipment, and also developed and implemented a replacement forecasting process for all portable assets.

Sunnybrook & Women's College Health Science Centre in Toronto instituted a drug safety initiative, ensuring pharmacy notification of patients' medication allergy status within 48 hours of admission.

The winning submission came from the Rehabilitation Centre of the Ottawa Hospital for its submission: *Outpatient Service Delivery Project: Matching Capacity to Demand*. This initiative aimed to improve the access and flow of outpatients through effective client-centred care, resulting in decreased physician clinic and therapy waiting times for first appointment, while improving clinical processes to accommodate changing patient volumes.

Throughout a two-phase project, success was measured using criteria that included: average and actual wait times for physician clinic from referral to first appointment; average and actual wait times from referral to first therapy appointment; physiotherapy patient volumes; and patient and, staff satisfaction.

Representing the team from the Rehabilitation Centre of the Ottawa Hospital was Clara Ballantine. Ballantine describes what winning the CHEQA award has meant to her and her colleagues: "It is an honour to be chosen as the first CHEQA recipients and we thank QHN, rL Solutions and our peers for this recognition. Most importantly, it has affirmed the quality and value of the project work – that our improvement methods



The inaugural award winners from the Rehabilitation Centre of the Ottawa Hospital accept a cheque and trophy from Sanjay Malaviya, President & CEO, rL Solutions.

are sound and lead to significant improvement that is recognized by both the expert panel and by our QHN peers. I think it has also reinforced the natural "fit" between our organizational values – particularly client-centred care and collaboration – and the cornerstones of quality improvement – customer focus and teamwork combined with use of data."

The team received a cash award of \$15,000, as well as a trophy. In addition, the team is also invited to exhibit at the 2006 rL Solutions Annual User Group conference in September.

Sanjay Malaviya, President and CEO of rL Solutions, describes why rL Solutions was interested in collaborating and supporting the award: "We focus on enhancing healthcare in our society and that's why we partner with organizations and work with them to achieve this common goal. We feel that introducing CHEQA this year, reflects our ongoing commitment."

Clara Ballantine adds: "The reception was a memorable event and the award is proudly displayed in a public area of the Rehabilitation Centre. I am hopeful that the award will accomplish its aim of motivating excellence in improvement work. I am sure the competition will grow each year. I hope that our project will provide a model and encouragement for others to invest in 'the art and science' of improvement methodology."

For more information e-mail: info@cheqa.ca or call 416.410.8456 ext.246.



Five exceptional finalists stood out from the many exciting proposals received. Representatives of these teams pose with Sanjay Malaviya, President & CEO, rL Solutions and Cynthia Majewski, Executive Director, Quality Healthcare Network

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