

THE HOSPITAL'S REPUTATION FOR SAFETY IS AIDED BY ITS STATE-OF-THE-ART COMMAND CENTRE, PICTURED HERE WITH DR. SUSAN TORY, CHIEF OF MEDICINE AND MEDICAL DIRECTOR, COMMAND CENTRE

Humber River Health's culture of safety

Humber's safer care numbers are more than 60 per cent better than the average of all Ontario and Canadian hospitals

Humber River Health's Apotex Emergency Department (ED) serves almost 140,000 patients annually, making it the busiest in Ontario. Yet, despite this constant influx, Humber River Health (Humber) is widely regarded as one of Canada's safest hospitals. This reputation is not just anecdotal; it is supported by data including a 10 per cent year-over-year drop in sepsis cases, a 40 per cent decrease in medical emergencies like heart attacks and respiratory distress, and a medication error rate of just 0.009 per cent.

Moreover, this focus on patient safety is demonstrated through the reduction of patient harm, with new 2023-2024 data from the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) demonstrating Humber's safer care numbers at more than 60 per cent better than the average of all Ontario and Canadian hospitals. Humber has maintained this every year for the past six years. CIHI measures Hospital Harm, which looks at unintended occurrences of harm in acute care hospitals that could have been potentially prevented by implementing evidence-informed practices.

Humber's dedication to safety and excellence in patient care is further highlighted by its placement among the top five Ontario hospitals in the 2023 National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (NSQIP) by the American College of Surgeons. Humber is the only hospital in the province to earn this ranking across all key categories. The NSQIP, a global outcomes-based program, tracks critical surgical metrics such as complications, infections, and unplanned readmissions. Humber uses these insights to enhance the patient experience and refine their processes for better outcomes.

Humber's commitment to safety and patient care is reflected in the organization's broader vision for healthcare. Barbara Collins, president and CEO of Humber River Health, emphasized that safety is at the heart of the hospital's mission. "Our goal has always been to create an environment where safety and quality go hand-in-hand with innovation. We constantly push ourselves to not just meet but also exceed the standards of care. This is what allows us to serve our community with the highest level of excellence."

A culture of safety permeates through every level of Humber's operations. At Humber, safety begins from day one, with new staff undergoing rigorous simulations that prepare them for scenarios like responding to medical emergencies or managing complex patient interactions. These intensive training programs integrate all of the hospital's core safety practices, ensuring that staff are well-prepared before they begin work. In addition to onboarding simulations, the hospital offers ongoing professional development opportunities, including specialized certifications in various areas. These programs help ensure that staff remain current with best practices and are prepared for the evolving needs of patients. Leadership also plays a key role by reinforcing a culture of accountability and recognizing staff contributions to patient safety through awards and public acknowledgments.

The hospital's state-of-the-art Command Centre, a NASA-style 'Mission Control' room, located in the heart of the hospital, works behind the scenes to help make every patient's experience at Humber better, faster, and safer. The Command Centre plays a critical role in maintaining patient safety. It was the first of its kind in Canada, and uses real-time data and advanced algorithms to monitor patient flow, vital signs, and staffing levels. The Command Centre's early warning systems have dramatically reduced the incidence of critical events, fostering a safer environment for patients and staff alike. Frontline staff are provided with a bird's eye view of the entire hospital, accessible wherever they are, alerting them of real-time incidents and allowing for informed decision-making. Its overall impact has been remarkable, including a 34 per cent reduction in the average time a patient in the ED waits before being placed in a bed. It has also created operational efficiencies equivalent to opening up 35 new hospital beds without increasing physical capacity.



BARBARA COLLINS, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF HUMBER RIVER HEALTH

Decreased wait times also result in more time for staff and physicians to spend with their patients to implement a more personalized and compassionate care journey. Through greater one-to-one interactions, staff and physicians ensure that their patients always feel safe and supported through what can be a complex and challenging experience.

The Command Centre, however, is pivotal for more than just its analytical benefits, but is a warm and inviting space for frontline workers to drop in and see the breadth and scope of the hospital operations in real-time, sparking new ideas on what could be done to improve their own spheres of influence regarding patient safety and overall experience.

The hospital's surgical innovation also plays a pivotal role in maintaining Humber's safety record. The hospital's adoption of advanced technologies such as the da Vinci Xi, ROSA Knee System, and Intellijoint HIP allows for minimally invasive procedures, reduced complications, and faster recovery times.

Humber also ensures safety through the hospital's closed-loop medication management system, meaning that orders and prescriptions only need to be entered once, and are never written out in sometimes difficult to read handwriting. This greatly reduces the opportunities for medication errors and enhances patient safety and oversight.

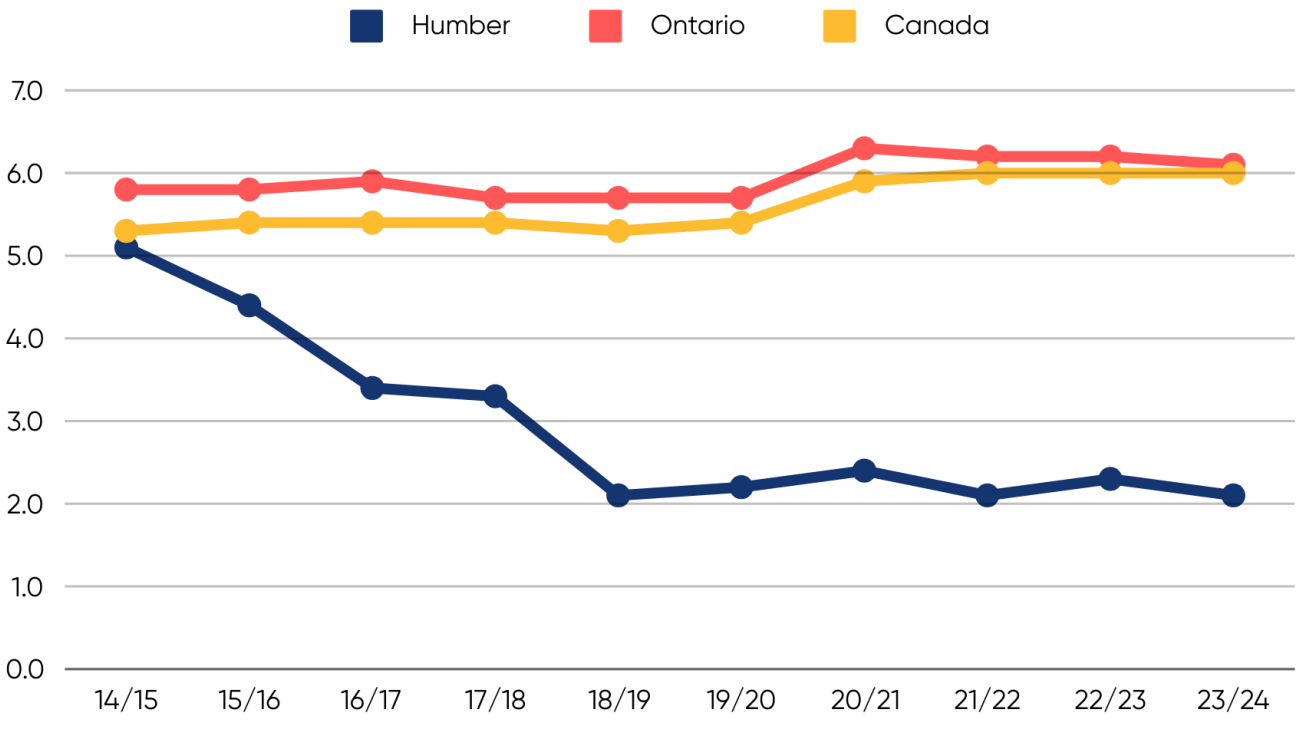
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>
> - Barbara Collins

Humber's success extends even beyond its team, incorporating a unique volunteer group of former and current patients and family members, who serve as Patient and Family Advisors (PFAs). This group provides invaluable feedback on patient care and works closely with hospital leaders to identify and address any gaps in quality or service. The PFAs' insights are integral to Humber's quality improvement initiatives, particularly in shaping hospital policies that directly impact patient care. The Corporate Patient and Family Advisory Committee has been especially effective in driving policy changes, with an engagement rate that stands out among similar initiatives.

"The public may not always see the extensive efforts behind Humber's safety initiatives, but the impact is clear," said Collins. "As Canadian Patient Safety Week 2024 comes to a close, we will continue to focus on safety, innovation and high-reliability care."

At Humber River Health, we're finding a cure for healthcare. Learn more at HealthcareLives.ca.

Hospital Harm Rates



SOURCE: CANADIAN INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH INFORMATION