

# Patient experience at the heart of hospital's focus

**"Dr. Rozario, thank you very much, but I hope I never see you again!"**

This is a common refrain heard in my office after I see a post-operative patient. No one wants to have surgery, but when you need it, you want high quality care and a wonderful patient experience. But is that what happens in healthcare all the time? The title of our latest paper in the Canadian Journal of Surgery, "How well do we do what we do, and how do we know it" really delves deeper into that very question. Our vision statement, as you will hear our CEO Denise Hardenne repeat often is, "Exemplary patient experiences, always". Despite being in practice for over two decades, I didn't quite appreciate its profound meaning until a long discussion with our VP Strategy, Performance and Partnership, Mark Walton, enlightened me. As caregivers, we all have different functions but we all have the same purpose, and that is clearly defined in our vision statement.

Is it better to receive excellent care, or believe that you did? Most patients will not see the meticulous work done by their surgeon in the operating room, but they do understand emotional connection and caring, respect and courtesy. As healthcare providers we need to understand that these are proxies for quality of care. It has been clearly demonstrated that patient expectations affect their outcomes. A patient's experience of care should be a focus of what we do as healthcare providers because it's the right thing to do; it's how we would want to be treated, and it's how patients perceive quality. Maya Angelou said, "At the end of the day, people won't remember what you said or did, they will remember how you made them feel."

The godfather of quality improvement in surgery, Dr. Ernest Codman, said "If you can't measure

it, you can't improve it." No one wants a complication after surgery, but hundreds of thousands of Canadians each year sustain a complication such as surgical site infection, pneumonia or blood clots after surgery. This can increase the length of stay, reduce quality of life, and can even be fatal. Complications also cost the Canadian healthcare system hundreds of millions of dollars per year, which is funding not going into providing your healthcare. We joined the National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (NSQIP) in 2015, and through teamwork, protocols, best practices, and implementing lots of small improvements, we ensure we provide high quality surgical care and our complication rates are less than our peers.

What are we doing to provide you with the best possible care and experience? We are hiring 10 new surgeons, additional nursing staff, and opening new operating rooms to enhance access to surgical care and the best new surgical procedures. The new operating rooms will have the most advanced equipment and technology, thanks to the generous donations of the members of the community. We have instituted a central intake model to provide seamless access to hip and knee replacements and are making wait times for surgery a key priority. We are developing a telemedicine program to allow our physicians to communicate with you, where you want it and how you want it. Access to medical care is filled with a variety of barriers, such as the need for transportation and parking, time off work, and the need for childcare. Imagine being able to securely video chat with your surgeon on your smart phone or computer after surgery to discuss what happened during the operation and address any concerns you may have.



Dr. Duncan Rozario is the Chief of Surgery at the Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital, which prides itself on providing patients with the best possible care and experience. PHOTO CREDIT: ROGER YIP

To assess our patients' experience of care, we have started surveying almost all patients who come through the surgical program to measure their patient experience so that we can change our practices and processes to do better. In the United States, patient experience scores are so important that Medicare has set up a Value Based Purchasing (VBP) Program where a portion of funding each year is based on performance measures, currently at \$1.9 billion. A hospital's results on their patient experience scores determine 25% of their VBP funding each year. We are enhancing the access to our surgical staff and information about our entire surgical program through a Departmental website, [www.oakvillesurgery.com](http://www.oakvillesurgery.com). This allows family physicians and caregivers who refer to us to get complete information about all of the surgeons in Oakville, and an understanding of the comprehensive initiatives and programs we have in place and under development. Providing safe and effective

healthcare also requires frontline staff who are engaged in their work and feel supported. We are embarking on a campaign to institute multidisciplinary team training, enhance resilience and reduce burnout through teaching sessions, peer support networks, and enhancing awareness. These are complex problems with no simple solutions, and we need to create local strategies and a sense of community based on the needs of our local culture. As our Surgical Program Director Julie McBrien says, "We are healthcare, both care providers and patients, and we need to work on the system collaboratively and by really connecting, make the system better for all of us."

There are numerous demands on our time and resources. When we invest in either, we expect a return on that investment. The Alberta Health Authority clearly demonstrated that for every \$1 one spent on NSQIP, it saves \$4.30 due to reduced costs associated with complications. An investment in healthcare is an investment in

your future, and the health of your family, friends, and neighbours. Very little is as certain as our need for good high quality healthcare in the future. We understand that you want to be a part of your healthcare, and as we organize the healthcare system around patients, you will inevitably and rightly become the center of everything that we do.

I believe that we all have the right to high quality healthcare, where we need it, when we need it, and how we need it so that we can live life to our greatest potential. It is an honour to serve you, and we thank you for the privilege of your trust.

— Duncan Rozario, Chief of Surgery  
Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital

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BELOW: The Campbell family has been recognized for their generous support of the Surgical Program. David and Judy Campbell along with their family and hundreds of individuals and businesses generously supported Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital in 2018 with gifts benefitting the expansion of the hospital's surgical program. "The Surgical Program at OTMH is tremendously grateful to the Campbell family and to everyone in our community," said Dr. Duncan Rozario, Chief of Surgery at Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital. "Everyone will require medical care at some point in their lives. By helping to fund the care of those in our community, our generous supporters are investing in their own future and in the future of their loved ones." In recognition of their generosity, the Surgical Services/Ambulatory Procedures Unit in the hospital is named in honour of David and Judy Campbell and Family. PHOTO CREDIT: TRACEY TOMPKINS



## "Our donors have the power to transform..."

In response to the increasing need for services and new technologies that are rapidly changing the way hospital care is delivered, fundraising efforts are more essential than ever. Every year, the Oakville Hospital Foundation appeals to the community to support the priority needs of Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital. As government funding does not cover the cost of hospital equipment and technology, donations enable the purchase of the life-saving tools health care workers rely on to care for patients. Gifts from individuals, businesses, and groups provide the hospital with crucial medical equipment and technology. These generous financial contributions ensure caregivers can provide exemplary patient experiences, always.

In recognition of a donor's generosity, rooms can be named to honour the individual or group that made the contribution. "Recognizing our donors with naming opportunities underscores the important connection between our community and Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital," said Mary McPherson, CEO of the Oakville Hospital Foundation. "Our donors have the power to transform the community hospital experience in Oakville and for that we are grateful."

To learn more about how you can make a difference and support the Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital, please contact the Oakville Hospital Foundation at 905-338-4642 or visit [oakvillehospitalfoundation.com](http://oakvillehospitalfoundation.com)



The Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital is a full-service acute care community hospital located in Oakville, Ontario.