

Headwaters earns Using Blood Wisely designation, renews EQI accreditation

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Headwaters Health Care Centre's Laboratory department has earned a national Using Blood Wisely designation, while its Diagnostic Imaging team has renewed its Echocardiography Quality Improvement (EQI) accreditation.

The Using Blood Wisely designation is awarded by Choosing Wisely Canada and Canadian Blood Services to hospitals that demonstrate appropriate blood transfusion practices. The EQI Program assesses a facility's ability to perform high-quality echocardiography testing and supports quality improvement, standardization and patient safety.

"We are incredibly proud to be recognized through both the Using Blood Wisely program and EQI Accreditation," said Kim Delahunt, Headwaters president and CEO. "These achievements reflect the dedication, expertise and compassion of our staff, physicians and volunteers, and their commitment to delivering safe, high-quality care for our patients and community."

The Using Blood Wisely program is intended to ensure blood transfusions are used when clinically necessary. Appropriate use of transfusions can improve patient outcomes while helping to preserve Canada's blood supply.

"Blood transfusions are often life-saving treatments but transfusing more blood than necessary is not beneficial and can sometimes cause harm," said Dr. Theodora Ruijs, director of Headwaters' Laboratory. "The Using Blood Wisely program helps hospitals compare their practices against national benchmarks and ensures patients receive the right care at the right time."

The designation places the hospital among nearly 200 hospitals across Canada that have demonstrated consistent, optimal and appropriate transfusion practices through the program, according to Headwaters.

"Using blood wisely is embedded in our daily practice, from careful inventory management and monitoring usage trends to ongoing education and review to ensure every transfusion is appropriate and patient-centred," said Colleen Hillier, manager of Laboratory Services. "For our team, this designation is an important acknowledgement of our expertise and commitment to providing high-quality care, and it reinforces how our behind-the-scenes work directly impacts patient safety and outcomes."

Headwaters transfused 972 units of blood to patients requiring transfusion support in 2025.

The hospital's Diagnostic Imaging program has also renewed its accreditation through Accreditation Canada's Echocardiography Quality Improvement (EQI) Program.

The renewed accreditation confirms that Headwaters continues to meet Accreditation Canada's requirements for high-quality echocardiography services. For patients, the accreditation provides reassurance that echocardiograms are performed by qualified professionals using nationally recognized standards, supporting safe, accurate and reliable cardiac diagnostic testing.

During the 2025-26 fiscal year, Headwaters' echocardiography team performed 1,775 echocardiograms, providing diagnostic information to support patient care and clinical decision-making.

"We are proud to receive EQI Accreditation at Headwaters," said Sherry Farrow, senior diagnostic imaging technician. "This achievement reflects the dedication of our echocardiography team to excellence, continuous quality improvement and delivering the highest standard of patient care. Most importantly, it provides reassurance to patients that they are receiving safe, high-quality care from a skilled and experienced team."

Headwaters first achieved EQI accreditation in 2021. The renewed accreditation is valid until November 2029.