

Summary Status Table in Response to the Report of the Auditor General of Ontario

[Chronic Kidney Disease Management] [Section 3.03, 2019 Annual Report of the Auditor General]

[Ontario Renal Network, a division of Ontario Health]

Auditor's Recommendation		Completed Undertaking	Outstanding undertaking (including timeline)
Rec 1	To help patients receive timely referrals to a nephrologist and slow down the progression of their chronic kidney disease, we recommend that the Ontario Renal Network: work with the Ministry of Health to share lab data from the Ontario Laboratory Information System with the Regional Renal Programs to help them identify and follow up on patients who are eligible for referral to a nephrologist;		The Ontario Renal Network agrees that timely referral to nephrology is important to slow and delay the progression of chronic kidney disease. Currently, the Ontario Renal Network reports to the Regional Renal Programs the early CKD referral rate to nephrology on an annual basis. In order to better understand the trends and opportunities for improved referrals, the Ontario Renal Network is conducting an in-depth analysis of the available information. The analysis explores regional variation and identifies potential barriers and reasons for no or late referrals, including demographic variances and primary care patient enrollment models. The results of this analysis will be shared with the Regional Renal Programs to ensure that local initiatives are focused on these patients and their physicians. In collaboration with the Ministry of Health and other partners, the Ontario Renal Network will explore mechanisms to use the OLIS database to identify eligible patients so that Regional Renal Programs and primary care physicians can ensure timely and appropriate referrals. This exploration would include privacy considerations related to personal health information for direct communication with patients and primary care providers. <i>Note: This work will take time to do an in-depth exploration of options as well as working with the Ministry, eHealth Ontario, and other partners.</i> Expected Timeline: December 2021

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	work with the Regional Renal Programs to investigate cases where patients are not being referred to see nephrologists on a timely basis to ensure these patients are referred for assessment.		The Ontario Renal Network will continue to work with the Regional Renal Programs to increase awareness among primary care providers of the KidneyWise Clinical Toolkit, which includes guidelines on how to identify patients at high risk of CKD, diagnose and manage patients with CKD in a primary care setting and refer patients at high risk of progression to nephrology. <i>Note: Knowledge translation and improvements to the Toolkit will happen throughout the Ontario Renal Plan 3 (ORP 3). A simplified version will be rolled out, and will be accompanied by ongoing education by Regional Renal Programs to partners in primary care.</i> Expected Timeline: December 2021
Rec 2	To help patients with advanced stages of chronic kidney disease obtain access to equitable and consistent services across the province, we recommend that the Ontario Renal Network: collect information on the composition and staffing level of the multidisciplinary team at each Multi-Care Kidney Clinic from the Regional Renal Programs on an annual basis to identify teams that do not meet best practices and make changes accordingly;		The Ontario Renal Network agrees that access to equitable and consistent services within Multi-Care Kidney Clinics is a key service for patients with high-risk chronic kidney disease. In 2019, the Ontario Renal Network released a best practices document that establishes the quality and type of care to be delivered in Multi-Care Kidney Clinics. The Ontario Renal Network will continue to monitor access and quality indicators related to Multi-Care Kidney Clinics. The Ontario Renal Network will regularly conduct on-site quality-focused assessments of Regional Renal Programs and also continue to request annual reporting from all Regional Renal Programs to ensure compliance with the Multi-Care Kidney Clinic best practices, including collecting information on access and composition of multidisciplinary teams.
	review the composition and practices of each multidisciplinary team to identify whether to implement minimum patient-to-staff ratios.		<i>Note: Key activities supporting this work will be:</i> <i>Launching the Multi-Care Kidney Clinic insights report</i> <i>Launching site visits to Regional Renal Programs' Multi-Care Kidney Clinics</i> <i>Regular reporting on meeting best practices</i> Expected Timeline: December 2021

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Rec 3	To provide enough multidisciplinary care to patients with advanced stages of chronic kidney disease, we recommend that the Ontario Renal Network work with the Regional Renal Programs to fully investigate the reasons for late referrals to the Multi-Care Kidney Clinics and implement practices to allow for timely referral.		The Ontario Renal Network agrees with this recommendation and will continue to work with Regional Renal Programs to investigate the reasons for late referral to Multi-Care Kidney Clinics and implement initiatives as appropriate. The Ontario Renal Network reviews Regional Renal Program performance on a quarterly basis; indicators include the proportion of Multi-Care Kidney Clinic referrals and time spent in Multi-Care Kidney Clinic prior to dialysis. The Ontario Renal Network will set provincial targets for both and will continue to monitor Regional Renal Program performance against these targets. The Ontario Renal Network has developed criteria to provide guidance to nephrologists on timing of referral. Ultimately, however, nephrologists, who may or may not be affiliated with a Regional Renal Program, use clinical judgment to determine if/when it is appropriate for a patient to be referred to a Multi-Care Kidney Clinic, considering patient preference and patient prognosis. <i>Note: Key activities supporting this work will be:</i> • <i>Investigation for the reasons of late referral</i> • <i>Quarterly reviews of Regional Renal Program performance</i> • <i>Establishing targets for time spent in a Multi-Care Kidney Clinic and Multi-Care Kidney Clinic referral</i> Expected Timeline: December 2020
Rec 4	To help the Multi-Care Kidney Clinics (Clinics) admit the right patients who would benefit from multidisciplinary care at the right time, we recommend that the Ontario Renal Network: • collect further information and feedback regarding the revised eligibility criteria for Clinics from health-care providers at the Regional Renal Programs as well as experts in the field of renal care;		The Ontario Renal Network agrees it is important for patients who would benefit from multidisciplinary care to access Multi-Care Kidney Clinics at the right time. The Ontario Renal Network completed an evaluation of the new funding eligibility criteria. Responses from Multi-Care Kidney Clinic staff indicated: patients had a neutral or positive response to the change; most administrators and health care providers believed the primary driver of the criteria change was to focus care on the right patients; and, critically, the change in criteria resulted in no negative outcomes for patients.

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	update the revised eligibility criteria if needed, based on information and feedback.		The Ontario Renal Network will continue to review relevant clinical literature and will update the Multi-Care Kidney Clinic Best Practices document, including the Multi-Care Kidney Clinic eligibility criteria, to reflect the latest evidence as needed. The Ontario Renal Network will continue to evaluate any changes that are implemented. <i>Note: Key activities to support this work will be:</i> <i>Reviewing Multi-Care Kidney Clinic Best Practices and updating the Best Practices document (as needed)</i> <i>Evaluation of the current Multi-Care Kidney Clinic best practices</i> Expected Timeline: December 2021

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Rec 5	To better align the capacity for in-centre dialysis with regional needs, we recommend that the Ontario Renal Network conduct a province-wide capacity analysis and realign the supply of in-centre dialysis spots to alleviate high-demand situations in some Regional Renal Programs and reduce the amount of under-used capacity at others.		The Ontario Renal Network agrees with this recommendation. Recognizing that patient choice is a critical factor in where people receive dialysis, the Ontario Renal Network will continue its efforts to optimize system capacity to support the efficient use of resources. Since 2011, the Ontario Renal Network has conducted biannual provincial in-centre Dialysis Capacity Assessments, which forecast the capacity required to meet patients' needs over the next 10 years. The 2019 assessment is being finalized and will be used to work with the Regional Renal Programs to develop a multi-year provincial Dialysis Capital Investment Strategy that reflects regional and local needs. This strategy will be used to inform the prioritization, location, size and timing of investments required to create additional capacity where necessary, and to optimize the utilization of existing resources. This strategy will be updated regularly, based on changes in demand over time. As part of this work, the Ontario Renal Network will work with Regional Renal Programs to conduct collaborative capacity planning across regions and to monitor patient referral patterns to ensure alignment with future planned capacity, making adjustments to these plans where necessary. <i>Note: The 2019-2029 regional and provincial capacity assessments, as well as the provincial Dialysis Capital Investment Strategy, will be completed within the next year and will be refreshed every two years. In addition, the Ontario Renal Network's efforts to support collaborative capacity planning across regions are ongoing.</i> Expected Timeline: December 2020

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Rec 6	To further increase the rate of home dialysis in Ontario and meet the target, we recommend that the Ontario Renal Network work with the Ministry of Health to: • assess and address the challenges (such as staffing and resources issues) of increasing the home dialysis usage rate and take corrective action;		The Ontario Renal Network agrees that home dialysis is a priority and will continue to work with the Ministry of Health and Regional Renal Programs on this area. The Ontario Renal Network has made significant efforts to increase and sustain the home dialysis rate. The rate has increased from 22.2% to 25.8% since 2012, with the number of home dialysis patients increasing from 2,260 to 3,060. Since 2014, kidney transplantation has also increased by about 40%. Since patient demographics and medical characteristics of transplant and home dialysis candidates tend to be similar, the increase in kidney transplantation has influenced the ability to further improve home dialysis rates. The Ontario Renal Network will continue to focus on inadequate assistance for peritoneal dialysis (PD) patients and PD catheter complications, two common barriers. A home dialysis mentorship model will further support sharing best practices among Regional Renal Programs. <i>Note: Key activities include:</i> • <i>Analyzing PD Catheter complications</i> • <i>Implementing a Mentorship Model to share best practices</i> Expected Timeline: December 2021
	• collect information on home dialysis training from the Regional Renal Programs to determine the appropriate funding for training and adjust the current funding allocation if needed;		It is recognized that training is a key enabler for patients to successfully conduct home dialysis. The Ontario Renal Network will collect and analyze data on home dialysis training from Regional Renal Programs to determine whether adjustments to the funding model for home dialysis training and re-training are needed. <i>Note: Home dialysis training will be reviewed as part of the second phase of the Chronic Kidney Disease Quality-Based Procedure (QBP) refresh. It is anticipated that this review will be completed by year 2. Please note, given the Ministry requirement of six months' advance notice for funding model changes, implementation of updated funding rates may not occur until April 1st of the following calendar year.</i> Expected Timeline: December 2021

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	conduct a province-wide and cross-jurisdictional analysis to identify best practices for increasing home dialysis usage rates and implement those practices across the province.		As challenges to home dialysis vary based on unique program factors, the Ontario Renal Network has worked with individual Regional Renal Programs to identify areas of opportunity. Additionally, applicable practices have been identified from comparable jurisdictions, including British Columbia and Australia. Despite continuing efforts to address challenges to home dialysis, patient choice remains a critical factor. <i>Note: A jurisdictional scan has already been completed, and the Ontario Renal Network will continue to do this through various existing forums/methods (e.g., quarterly reviews of program performance, mentorship, site visits as needed)</i> Expected Timeline: December 2020
Rec 7	To provide eligible patients with timely access to kidney transplants in Ontario and appropriate pre-transplant care, we recommend that Trillium Gift of Life Network, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Ontario Renal Network: study transplant policies and initiatives in other jurisdictions to identify best practices that would help increase organ donations and shorten wait times in Ontario; and,		The Ontario Renal Network agrees with this recommendation and will continue to work with Regional Renal Programs to optimize pre-transplant care for patients with chronic kidney disease. The Ontario Renal Network is partnered with Trillium Gift of Life Network to implement a provincial Access to Kidney Transplant and Living Donation Strategy based on practices in place in other jurisdictions. As part of this strategy, Regional Renal Programs have introduced several initiatives to promote and improve the rate of kidney transplantation, including quality improvement, education for healthcare providers, patients and potential living donors, and the development of peer support networks focused on kidney transplantation. In 2021, this strategy will be expanded to all 27 Regional Renal Programs. Expected Timeline: December 2021

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	work with kidney transplant centres and Regional Renal Programs to review the transplant eligibility and annual pre-transplant assessment or work-up process in order to identify efficiencies and cost savings.		The Ontario Renal Network agrees with this recommendation. Consultations with Regional Renal Programs, patients and family members consistently highlight patient-borne costs as a barrier to kidney transplantation. The Ontario Renal Network will continue to work with Trillium Gift of Life Network, Transplant Centres and Regional Renal Programs to identify how to improve the transplant work-up process, recognizing that there are opportunities to make the process more efficient for the benefit of both patients and the healthcare system. The Ontario Renal Network is currently collecting information from Regional Renal Programs on their local models for supporting transplant work-up, understanding their local barriers and challenges. This information will be used to identify and promote more timely and efficient work-up processes within Regional Renal Programs. Expected Timeline: December 2021
Rec 8	To improve patient access to living-donor transplants in Ontario, we recommend that the Trillium Gift of Life Network, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Ontario Renal Network: conduct a review of the Program for Reimbursing Expenses of Living Organ Donors to determine if the reimbursement rate is reasonable and if any adjustment is needed; and		<i>No implementation activities for Ontario Renal Network</i>

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	study living-donor transplant policies and initiatives in other jurisdictions to identify best practices that would help increase the rate of living-donor transplants in Ontario.		The Ontario Renal Network agrees with this recommendation. Consultations with Regional Renal Programs, patients and family members consistently highlight patient-borne costs as a barrier to kidney transplantation. Many of the initiatives that have been introduced in Ontario as part of the Access to Kidney Transplant and Living Donation Strategy were based on studies completed in other jurisdictions. The Ontario Renal Network will continue to investigate and monitor how other jurisdictions have successfully implemented policy or program changes to improve the rate of living donor kidney transplantation. The Access to Kidney Transplant and Living Donation Strategy has focused on improving access to living kidney donation through education, quality improvement, peer support and data. A suite of resources to support and promote living donor kidney transplant will be available to all Regional Renal Programs by 2021, after which a comprehensive evaluation will be completed to inform future interventions. Expected Timeline: December 2021
Rec 9	To better reflect the volume and costs of services actually provided to patients in the funding amounts that are set based on the Quality-Based Procedure (QBP) method, we recommend that the Ontario Renal Network: conduct a review of the QBP funding per service to determine if the amount is reasonable and adjust if needed based on costing information from the Regional Renal Programs and best practices;		The Ontario Renal Network agrees with the need to review the Chronic Kidney Disease Quality-Based Procedure (CKD QBP) funding model and has begun work to refresh this model. Detailed costing information from Regional Renal Programs and current best practices will be used to review funding rates as well as the type and volume of services provided, and adjustments will be made where necessary. The CKD QBP refresh will be conducted so that future changes to costs or to best practices can be readily incorporated into the funding model. <i>Note: The QBP refresh will be completed in phases, with time spent on identifying current best practices and costs for each modality in the funding model. The current schedule for the refresh has the review of in-centre and acute hemodialysis in year 1, insertions and home dialysis in year 2, and Multi-Care Kidney Clinics and other unbundled services in year 3. Please note, given the Ministry requirement of six months' advance notice for funding model changes, implementation of updated funding rates may not occur until April 1st of the following calendar year.</i> Expected Timeline: December 2022 (with implementation in the following calendar year)

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	collect renal expenditures from Regional Renal Programs on an annual basis and use the information to inform changes in future funding allocation.		The Ontario Renal Network agrees with the recommendation to collect information on renal expenditures from Regional Renal Programs on an annual basis. The CKD QBP funding model is complex and includes patient care services provided within the dialysis unit as well as those provided by other hospital departments. The Ontario Renal Network will work with Regional Renal Programs to develop a reporting methodology to capture all appropriate expenses as accurately as possible. Expected Timeline: December 2020
Rec 10	To better reflect the actual costs incurred by the transplant centres for kidney transplants, we recommend that Trillium Gift of Life Network, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health: continue to collect and review cost information from the transplant centres; and		<i>No implementation activities for Ontario Renal Network</i>

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	conduct a review of the current funding rates for both deceased-donor and living-donor transplants to confirm what adjustments are needed.		The Ontario Renal Network agrees that funding for kidney transplantation, including associated pre- and post-transplant activities, should reflect the actual costs incurred and is committed to working with the Ministry of Health and Trillium Gift of Life Network on this recommendation. Much pre-transplant care is provided by Regional Renal Programs. Regional Renal Programs educate patients and families about transplantation, support informed decision-making, support patients to find living kidney donors, and ensure that all testing is completed so a patient can be referred to a Transplant Centre for assessment. Currently, Regional Renal Programs are not funded for this important pre-transplant work-up. Regional Renal Programs also provide care to patients after they have had a kidney transplant. The Ontario Renal Network will work with the Ministry of Health to revise the existing funding model to address pre-transplant work-up and post-transplant care. <i>Note: Pre-transplant work-up and post-transplant care are subject to the same timelines and notice periods as other elements of the QBP refresh, as above. Review of this area to be completed by year 2.</i> Expected Timeline: December 2021

Auditor's Recommendation		Completed Undertaking	Outstanding undertaking (including timeline)
Rec 11	To help identify and achieve potential savings from the procurement of peritoneal dialysis equipment and supplies, we recommend that the Ontario Renal Network: collect cost information on peritoneal dialysis equipment and supplies from the Regional Renal Programs;		The Ontario Renal Network agrees with this recommendation and appreciates the Auditor General's acknowledgment of the savings realized from the implementation of the Ontario Renal Network's provincial procurement strategy for hemodialysis-related equipment, supplies and services. As the next phase of work in this domain, the Ontario Renal Network has identified the supplies and service offerings related to peritoneal dialysis as an opportunity to achieve additional savings and improve services for patients, and has begun planning for a provincial procurement. As one of the early steps of this initiative, the Ontario Renal Network is developing an approach to obtaining detailed information on the costs of peritoneal dialysis equipment and supplies from Regional Renal Programs. <i>Note: By December 2020, the Ontario Renal Network is anticipating to have completed the collection of cost information.</i> Expected Timeline: December 2020
	analyze whether a provincial procurement initiative (similar to the fixed-price agreements for hemodialysis equipment and supplies) would provide additional savings.		This information will be used to analyze variances in current pricing and to estimate the potential savings from a provincial procurement. Any savings realized may allow for reinvestment in the renal system for the benefit of patients. <i>Note: By December 2020, the Ontario Renal Network is anticipating to have completed the analysis of potential savings of conducting a provincial procurement initiative for peritoneal dialysis supplies and equipment.</i> Expected Timeline: December 2020

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Rec 12	To provide patients with equal access to quality dialysis services across the province, we recommend that the Ontario Renal Network (Renal Network) work with the Ministry of Health (Ministry) to: conduct a review of the oversight and funding of dialysis services provided at the Independent Health Facilities (Facilities) to identify opportunities to improve the co-ordination between the Facilities and the Regional Renal Programs and evaluate the benefits of transferring the Ministry's responsibility for the Facilities to the Renal Network;		The Ontario Renal Network agrees with this recommendation and the importance of providing patients with equal access to quality dialysis services across the province. The Ontario Renal Network will work with the Ministry of Health to identify opportunities for improved coordination between the Regional Renal Programs and Independent Health Facilities that provide dialysis services. This will include an investigation of the benefits and legislative considerations of transferring the responsibility for funding, quality improvement, as well as performance measurement and management, of these Independent Health Facilities from the Ministry of Health to the Ontario Renal Network. Expected Timeline: December 2021
	begin collecting information from the Facilities that is consistent with the information collected from Regional Renal Programs so that the data on all dialysis patients is complete for planning and performance measurement purposes.		Currently, Independent Health Facilities that provide dialysis services are not required to report data to the Ontario Renal Network; however, most do submit certain data elements to the Ontario Renal Reporting System on a voluntary basis. The Ontario Renal Network will work with the Ministry of Health to evaluate options for collecting data from these Independent Health Facilities that is further aligned with the information collected from Regional Renal Programs, where this is appropriate and applicable, based on the services provided to patients. <i>Note: This will follow the review of Ontario Renal Reporting System data elements, as per recommendation 14, to determine where items should be removed or modified to optimize data collection for the planning, funding and improvement of renal care.</i> Expected Timeline: December 2021

Auditor's Recommendation		Completed Undertaking	Outstanding undertaking (including timeline)
Rec 13	To collect accurate and complete transplant data for performance measurement and reporting purposes, we recommend that the Trillium Gift of Life Network, in collaboration with Ontario Renal Network: continue to work with transplant centres and Regional Renal Programs to identify and address the data issues, understand the underlying data flow, and explore potential options to support the data-validation process; and		The Ontario Renal Network agrees with this recommendation and will continue to work with Trillium Gift of Life Network to improve data quality for kidney transplantation. Consultations are underway with Regional Renal Programs and Transplant Centres to investigate the barriers to submitting timely and accurate transplant data. These consultations will be used to inform the implementation of short and long-term solutions to improve data quality, which will improve the Ontario Renal Network's ability to monitor and evaluate the impact of interventions to improve access to kidney transplantation. The Ontario Renal Network, in partnership with Trillium Gift of Life Network, will consult with Transplant Centres, Regional Renal Programs, patients and living donors to gather a more complete understanding of where post-transplant care can most appropriately be provided, taking into consideration clinical best practice, funding, patient preferences and Regional Renal Program and Transplant Centre capacity. Expected Timeline: December 2021
	continue to develop and improve performance measures related to post-transplant activities (such as transplant failure rate and frequency of follow-up visits).		The Ontario Renal Network will explore models of care for post-transplant patients and, with stakeholder consensus, define and implement performance indicators to monitor and evaluate post-transplant care activities. The Ontario Renal Network will work with partners to develop and report key process and outcome measures to monitor the effectiveness of the full kidney care system, including transplant, which is the optimal treatment option for CKD patients. <i>Note: Development and implementation of new models of care and performance metrics will require extensive engagement with transplant centres and Regional Renal Programs, in addition to an evaluation of data availability and methodology development.</i> Expected Timeline: December 2023

Auditor's Recommendation		Completed Undertaking	Outstanding undertaking (including timeline)
Rec 14	To better oversee and report on chronic kidney disease services across Ontario, we recommend that the Ontario Renal Network: conduct a comprehensive review of all data fields and determine what data must be reported by the Regional Renal Programs to effectively plan and measure the delivery of renal care;		The Ontario Renal Network agrees with this recommendation. The Ontario Renal Network recognizes that all data collected from the Regional Renal Programs should have a clear purpose and use, and has completed work to map all data elements in the Ontario Renal Reporting System to their current uses for reporting and disclosure. Building upon this work, the Ontario Renal Network will work with the Regional Renal Programs to conduct a review of all data elements to determine where items should be removed or modified to optimize data collection for the planning, funding, and improvement of renal care, and to reduce the overall burden of reporting for the Regional Renal Programs. <i>Note: It is anticipated that the review of data elements will be complete in the first year. The decommissioning of existing data elements will be done on a rolling basis, and it is expected this will be complete within 2 years. Ongoing monitoring and review will be conducted following that time.</i> Expected Timeline: December 2020
	publish the results of all performance measures related to the goals outlined in its strategic plans regularly (such as quarterly or annually).		The Ontario Renal Network will review its suite of performance measures and develop a plan to expand its public reporting. This will include a comprehensive set of measures that reflect the priorities outlined in the Ontario Renal Plan as well as the impact of the Ontario Renal Network's initiatives on the provincial renal system in order to deliver meaningful improvements in care for people affected by chronic kidney disease. <i>Note: The Ontario Renal Network will work to publicly report existing indicators within the next two years. New measures will be developed throughout ORP 3 and will be reported publicly once they are ready.</i> Expected Timeline: December 2021