



Report to Our Communities

# PROGRESS ON HORIZON'S CRITICAL ACTION PLAN

Quarterly Report

March 2025

# BUILDING A PATIENT-CENTRED SYSTEM THROUGH COLLABORATION AND TRANSFORMATION

## Message from Horizon's President and CEO

While transformation is the focus of our shared work at Horizon, people – patients and families, and our staff and physicians – will always be our reason for it.

Horizon's primary care team is working with providers and communities to significantly improve access to care across our province. We are transforming our approach to primary care to ensure access to health care providers and services, close to home.

We're also transforming our workplace culture thanks to, and for, the extraordinary people who work here. Horizon is a special place, and I'm proud to be part of an exceptional team that values one another and the communities we serve. Horizon was named one of Atlantic Canada's Top Employers for the second year in a row – an accomplishment only possible thanks to our dedicated staff and physicians.

*Our Promise*, our comprehensive retention strategy, is changing how we support, develop, listen to, and celebrate our staff and physicians. A robust recruitment strategy has shown results with an overall stabilization of staffing levels, and our focus will continue to bolster harder to recruit areas.

Our team is steadfast in our commitment to providing excellent patient experiences and meaningful innovations to health service delivery. I'm proud of the work we've done together so far and am excited about all that is to come.



**Margaret Melanson**  
President and CEO



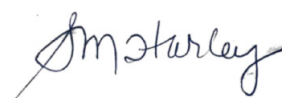
## Message from Horizon's Board Chair

As the largest regional health authority in the province, with over 14,000 staff and physicians serving our communities, we know meaningful collaboration, focused attention, and significant investment are required to deliver long-term, strategic improvements to patient care in New Brunswick's evolving landscape.

We know Horizon continues to experience extremely high levels of patients who no longer require acute care but, by no fault of their own, remain in our hospitals as they await placement in a community setting. Horizon will continue to work with government and community partners to strongly advocate for solutions to provide appropriate care in nursing homes, at home with increased services, or in settings outside of hospital.

Horizon will soon release our 2025-2030 Strategic Plan, *Transforming Health Care Through Innovation*, which will define our priorities, reinforce our commitment to exceptional care, and set the course for a sustainable, high-performing, and transformational health care system. This plan will build upon our previous work and will outline how we will achieve our vision of providing exceptional care, every day.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I'd like to recognize the dedication of Horizon's staff, physicians, nurses, and other health care professionals to providing people-centred care, and for their investment and engagement in identifying and implementing innovative solutions to improve health care delivery. Horizon's Board will continue to advocate for resources to improve access to health care for New Brunswickers and to support those who deliver it.



**Susan Harley**  
Board Chair



# OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



## Horizon is named one of Atlantic Canada's Top Employers for the second consecutive year!

We are honoured to be among the employers recognized as one of the best places to work in Atlantic Canada for the second year in a row. This accomplishment is only possible because of our dedicated team of staff and physicians. It is their compassion and commitment to providing exceptional care that makes Horizon a great place to work!

It is important to care for those who care for New Brunswickers, which is why we continue to introduce new 🌟 **Our Promise initiatives** to support their health, safety and wellbeing, create opportunities for learning and development, and to recognize the incredible work they do each and every day. We are listening to and acting on the feedback from employees and physicians and are seeking innovative ways to make positive changes.



There are thousands of exceptional people working at Horizon and this designation demonstrates the impact of our shared efforts in creating an organization where people want to work and choose to stay.



## PATIENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY

**We want to hear from you!**

Have you visited a Horizon Emergency Department, Urgent Care Centre, or been discharged after staying at least one night in hospital or the Stan Cassidy Centre for Rehabilitation?

Complete Horizon's Patient Experience Survey here! 🌟

# INNOVATION HIGHLIGHTS

## Innovative robotic suit is helping patients walk again

The EksoNR Robotic Exoskeleton purchased by the Chalmers Foundation is allowing patients at Stan Cassidy Centre for Rehabilitation (SCCR) to walk again, aiding them in their rehabilitation. This innovative, wearable suit allows individuals with lower extremity weakness or paralysis to stand and walk on level surfaces by powering or assisting movement at the hips and knees. The suit is one of only two in Atlantic Canada.



Watch this 📺 video to hear directly from a patient about what it's like to use this device!



*"Innovative technology, such as this, is an important part of health care in New Brunswick. Robotics and other applied technologies are increasingly being used in rehabilitation medicine and Horizon is proud to be able to offer state-of-the-art technology to our patients while they're embarking on their rehabilitation journey."*

**Dr. Colleen O'Connell**

SCCR Medical Director and Research Chief



## Simulation program creates hands on learning opportunities

Multidisciplinary teams from Miramichi Regional Hospital are learning together in their new simulation lab. With equipment funded by the Miramichi Regional Hospital Foundation, health care professionals are practicing skills in a structured, collaborative environment through Horizon's first hospital-wide simulation program. Simulations provide an opportunity to evaluate how teams, systems, spaces, and technology interact, creating a safe environment for health care workers to improve confidence, teamwork, and communication, ultimately enhancing patient care.

## 3D printing technology

Horizon's partnership with PolyUnity provided an opportunity for staff and physicians to submit innovative ideas to improve patient care by leveraging the 3D printing technology at the Imaging Enhancement Centre at the Saint John Regional Hospital. You can read more about this partnership here. 📄



## Horizon's commitment to improving access to primary care

Horizon is continuing to work closely with the Government of New Brunswick, health care providers, and community partners to ensure that New Brunswickers have access to primary health care from the right provider, at the right time, and across our communities.

Since our last *Report to Our Communities*, Horizon has made significant strides to improve and modernize the way primary care is delivered using a collaborative care approach. We are shifting to a best-practice Family Health Team model where communities will have access to multi-disciplinary primary care teams. At the same time, Horizon's existing 46 Community Health Centres are undergoing improvements and transformations to enhance access to primary care.



## Horizon is making meaningful progress to enhance access to primary care services and improve the overall patient experience. Recent progress highlights include:

### Fredericton Northside Community Health Centre

Starting this summer, the centre will expand to accommodate an estimated additional **1,600 patients** from the Fredericton Northside community. The expansion will enhance patient care by incorporating two additional nurses and two part-time physicians, who are expected to join the team in June 2025. In addition to physician and nurse practitioner providers, the centre has an interdisciplinary team that includes nurses, administrative support, a licensed counselling therapist, a social worker, a dietitian, a respiratory therapist, a pharmacist and a diabetes educator.

### Tantramar Primary Health Care Clinic

Over the past six months, **800 individuals** have been added to the clinic's patient roster. The team is on target to attach all of the registered unattached patients in the Tantramar community by the end of the 2025 calendar year.

### Fundy Health Centre

Over the past six months, **3,600 patients** have received same-day access to primary care services at this location.

### Saint John Uptown Health Centre

This clinic has taken steps to accommodate more than **800 visits** from patients who are not currently attached to the health centre's roster, providing support for those who would not otherwise have access to primary care services. The access clinic, provided by a primary care provider is offered 1-2 times per week, utilizing the centre's administrative, nursing and allied health support.

### Charlotte County Collaborative Wellness Centre

This open-access clinic in St. Stephen offers same-day appointments for non-urgent medical issues as part of a pilot program. Within the first three weeks of operation, **146 patients** have been seen, providing a timely and effective option for care, especially for patients without a primary care provider.

### Neguac Health Centre

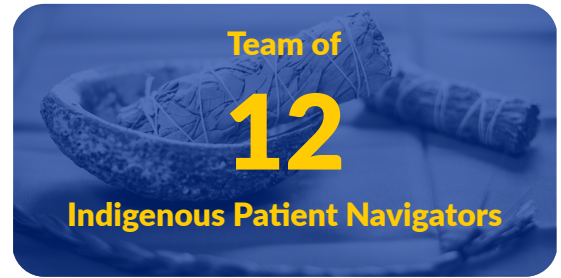
Primary care social work support services are now available **four days a week** by appointment to residents of Neguac and Alnwick. Services include therapy and counselling, guidance during life transitions, and assistance in navigating the health system and social or community programs.



We look forward to announcing additional details of our plan to further enhance primary care in the weeks and months ahead, with the ultimate goal of ensuring that all New Brunswickers have equal access to high-quality care, no matter where they live in the province.

## Ten Indigenous Patient Navigator roles to be added in 2025

Culturally safe, client-centred care will be provided by a team of 12 Indigenous Patient Navigators (IPNs) throughout Horizon in the coming months. In addition to filling current service gaps at The Moncton Hospital and Saint John Regional Hospital, Horizon has reallocated over \$1 million to introduce IPNs in Primary Care and Addiction and Mental Health programs in each of Horizon's four areas.



IPNs work collaboratively with other members of the clinical care teams and are an important resource and point of contact for Indigenous clients and their families, health care providers, and community members. They facilitate access to services including traditional healing approaches, foster greater cultural awareness, and enhance clinician competency and trauma-informed approaches to care.

## Licensing pathway for internationally trained physicians improves access to primary care

✨ The first cohort of family physicians have successfully completed the Practice Ready Assessment New Brunswick program and will enter practice in communities across the province as part of a family physician team. The program was created through a collaboration between the Department of Health and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of New Brunswick to help internationally trained physicians become licensed and work in the province. Candidates participated in a 12-week clinical field assessment, under the supervision of licensed New Brunswick physicians, to evaluate their readiness, skills, and suitability to provide safe patient care.



**+5**  
PHYSICIANS

are joining Horizon family physician teams in Moncton, Miramichi, St. Stephen, Tantramar and Woodstock. These physicians will make an immediate impact on access to primary care, moving thousands of New Brunswickers off the waiting list for a health care provider.

## ACCESS TO SERVICES

Significant upgrades to medical imaging equipment in recent weeks will improve access to essential imaging services, help reduce wait times, and provide timely and precise diagnostic services to New Brunswickers.

### **Innovative PET/CT scanner now available at Saint John Regional Hospital**

Saint John Regional Hospital (SJRH) is an early adopter of the state-of-the-art OMNI Legend PET/CT scanner. Enhancing well established PET/CT scanning services at SJRH, this innovative system helps create a more comfortable patient experience, improve operational efficiency, and increase diagnostic power. Horizon's Saint John Regional Hospital is the **first clinical site in Canada** to go live with the OMNI Legend PET/CT scanner!



### **Second CT scanner added at Miramichi Regional Hospital**

A second CT scanner is expected to increase the number of scans completed at the Miramichi Regional Hospital by **6,000 to 8,000 annually**, decreasing wait times. The new scanner offers several patient-friendly features to enhance comfort, an overhead 3D camera for faster patient positioning, and a modern workflow allowing technologists to spend more time with patients before scans begin. This addition was made possible with the generous support of Miramichi Regional Hospital Foundation donors, contributing \$293,000 toward the purchase.






## CT scanner now serving patients at Charlotte County Hospital

A CT scanner has been installed at Charlotte County Hospital in St. Stephen, providing essential imaging service to patients in this part of the province. Each year, more than 4,200 patients have had to travel over an hour to Saint John for a CT scan, many of whom will be able to receive service closer to home. This equipment was made possible thanks to Charlotte County Hospital Foundation donors, raising \$700,000 to fund the scanner.



We are committed to improving access for medical imaging across our facilities and post  **wait times** to provide clear and current information to help patients make informed decisions about their care options. Patients who are willing and able to travel to an alternate location for an appointment available sooner contribute significantly to reducing the wait times at their local facilities.

## Timely access to critical diagnostic care for patients experiencing stroke

Treatment administered for strokes to mitigate permanent damage must occur early, making early diagnosis critical. Process improvements resulted in establishing updated protocols for communication and readiness between Ambulance New Brunswick paramedics, emergency department (ED) teams and medical imaging staff.

Since launching at the Dr. Everett Chalmers Regional Hospital in 2023, the Door-to-CT project **expanded to the Saint John Regional Hospital** and **Upper River Valley Hospital** in 2024. This protocol will be implemented next at The Moncton Hospital and Miramichi Regional Hospital later in 2025.

### Median Door-To-CT Time

(Saint John Regional Hospital, Dr. Everett Chalmers Regional Hospital & Upper River Valley Hospital)

JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2025

**14**

MINUTES

NATIONAL BENCHMARK

**15**

MINUTES

## New provincial retinal surgery program completes first procedures

In the fall, the establishment of a provincial retinal surgery program at the Dr. Everett Chalmers Regional Hospital was announced to ensure New Brunswickers no longer need to travel out of province for this care. Capacity for the specialized staffing was achieved through investments in training and leveraging the expertise of staff with this experience from other jurisdictions. The first surgery occurred on January 24 and **51 cases** have been completed in the last eight weeks.



**Dr. Everett Chalmers Regional Hospital has the capacity to complete up to 700 cases per year.**



**21.7% ↓**

DECREASE

**in waitlists for elective surgeries since the beginning of the fiscal year**

Improvements in access to cataract surgeries continue thanks to partnerships with the Fredericton Cataract Surgical Centre and the Miramichi Cataract Surgical Centre.

**In the first 12 months of these new partnerships, there was an increase of 58.6% more cataract surgeries completed in Fredericton and an increase of 173.3% in Miramichi!**

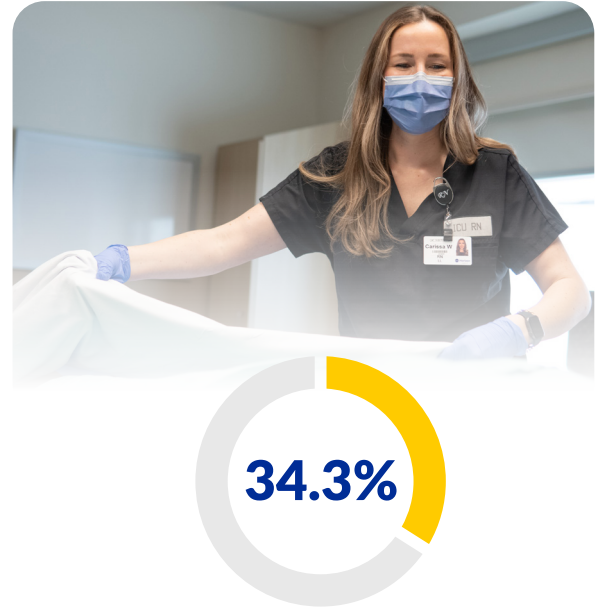
# PATIENT FLOW

## Collaboration and investment needed to address acute care occupancy pressures

Horizon continues to experience extremely high levels of patients who no longer require acute care hospital services remaining in our facilities, significantly impacting patient flow.

As of the end of February, **599 patients** were waiting for an alternate placement. This represents **34.3% of Horizon hospital beds** occupied by patients, who, at no fault of their own, are waiting for an alternate level of care outside of hospital. This represents a slight increase since our last report, up from 570 beds at the end of December 2024.

Horizon continues to strongly advocate for solutions to provide appropriate care in nursing homes, at home with increased services, or in settings outside of hospital. These improvements, achieved through collaboration with government and community partners, will have an immediate, positive impact to acute care service delivery, patients and families, and Horizon's team of staff and physicians.



## Patient flow improvement highlights

Late in 2023, the Patient Flow team at the **Saint John Regional Hospital** developed a tool to expedite safe patient discharge by identifying and collaboratively removing barriers. A Yellow Belt project was then undertaken in 2024 to streamline review and reporting, moving from a paper-based system to a new, digital process to provide centralized access and monitoring. Feedback about the new process has been positive and patients are getting home safely, sooner.

A project to improve identification of patients soon ready for discharge has been successfully rolled out to all participating inpatient units at **The Moncton Hospital**. Customized to the operations of each unit, the initiative empowers clinical teams to proactively identify barriers to discharge and encourages communication between health care teams to effectively coordinate the patient discharge process. This process has improved patient flow and alleviated high-occupancy pressures.



Since January, barriers to discharge were identified and addressed for approximately **65 patients**, **shortening their length of stay**.



Between September 2024 and January 2025, the average weekly **length of stay improved by almost 13%** compared to the same period the previous year, reflecting the significant progress in patient flow and efficiency.

## Making a difference one meal at a time

*“I have always left my shift with a new friendship, often with eye-opening perspectives and lessons attached, making me always excited to return the following week. The people I have the chance to interact with are why I love being a part of such a great program.”*

**Maryn**

Meal Mates volunteer

A partnership between Clinical Nutrition and Volunteer Resources is helping to overcome barriers to evening mealtime challenges for some patients in hospital. Meal Mates volunteers open packages and lids, help ensure everything is comfortably within reach, and provide companionship and encouragement to patients.

After being piloted at the Dr. Everett Chalmers Regional Hospital, the program recently expanded to the Upper River Valley Hospital and Miramichi Regional Hospital, with additional locations coming later in 2025.

More than 200 patients have been supported during more than 1,100 meals through Meal Mates, with 75% of these patients maintaining or exceeding a baseline nutritional intake of 50% or more. Improved nutrition supports better health outcomes, and the value of friendly social connections during mealtime is impactful for both patients and volunteers.



## Milestones reached in Horizon’s goal toward Baby-Friendly Initiative designation

Four Horizon locations recently participated in the Baby-Friendly Initiative (BFI) Recognition Program to acknowledge the steps taken to prepare for BFI designation.



**Upper River Valley Hospital**



**The Moncton Hospital**



**Public Health in Upper River Valley**



**Public Health in Fredericton**



The Platinum status achieved by Upper River Valley Hospital signifies it’s readiness for a full assessment from the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada, with the other locations reaching important milestones on their journey to designation.


Helping families get off to a good start in feeding and caring for their baby is the goal of the BFI program. Protecting, promoting, and supporting breastfeeding is a primary component, but all families are supported in their own unique situation, needs, and feeding methods through a multi-faceted, care-focused approach.



*“Everyone plays a part to implement BFI standards and support families. This could be a nurse, midwife or dietitian working directly with new parents to teach them about infant feeding, a supportive volunteer who helps find a visitor a comfortable chair for breastfeeding, or a health care worker in the emergency department who offers a breast pump to a parent who is separated from their baby.”*

**Christina Gallant**  
Horizon’s Baby-Friendly Initiative Coordinator

## SPOTLIGHT | Staying Healthy Clinic

Horizon’s Central Miramichi Community Centre in Doaktown was recently featured in a video update about their Staying Healthy Clinic, a service which contributes to better health outcomes for older adults in rural areas. Click here  to learn more and hear from a program participant!

*“The clinic referral was an excellent resource, and the follow-up care has been outstanding. It’s been such a relief to have access to care for things like physiotherapy and audiology without needing to find a private provider. This program has really helped me stay healthy at home.”*

**Leslie**  
Program participant



## Obstetrics and Newborn Unit at The Moncton Hospital opening soon!



The newly constructed Obstetrics and Newborn Unit at The Moncton Hospital will soon welcome our littlest patients and their families! This spacious facility with sophisticated technology will enhance the experience of the families before, during, and after pregnancy and birth. Clinical teams are familiarizing themselves with the modern, family-centred unit in advance of receiving their first patients in April.



The Friends of The Moncton Foundation has been an incredible partner in making this amazing facility a reality. If you'd like a sneak peek, visit their  **Facebook page** for a video tour.

## SeamlessMD patient support resource expands

A new group of patients now have access to the SeamlessMD app thanks to an expansion in February. Patients receiving treatment for heart failure through a Horizon Heart Function Clinic can now access the SeamlessMD app from their smartphones, tablets, or computers.

The app provides users with reminders, evidence-based education, symptom-tracking surveys and videos to help them follow the care plan prescribed by their care team. A digital and secure self-management tool, this innovative solution gives patients increased autonomy with their heart failure management while allowing the clinic team to monitor many elements including the effectiveness of the medical, dietary, and physical therapies implemented.

Thank you to the Saint John Regional Hospital Foundation for funding this valuable support to Heart Function Clinic patients!



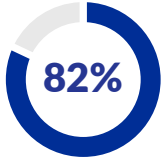
**Based on patient uptake of SeamlessMD in other programs, it's anticipated at least 65% of patients and/or family members will participate within the first year.**

*SeamlessMD is also available to patients undergoing hip or knee replacement surgery and patients undergoing cardiac surgery at Saint John Regional Hospital.*



# RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

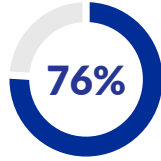
Horizon's Talent Acquisition team continues to actively engage with top talent provincially, nationally, and internationally, making significant strides in meeting recruitment targets. Staffing levels are stabilizing overall, with targeted approaches to bolster harder-to-recruit areas underway.



**total employee recruitment target**



**total physician recruitment target**



**total RN recruitment target**

*(To date in the 2024-2025 fiscal year)*



Visit Horizon's [Nursing Recruitment dashboard](#) to learn more about our progress toward Registered Nurse, Licensed Practical Nurse, and Patient Care Attendant recruitment targets.

**36**  
RECRUITMENT EVENTS  
in January and February!

## Did you know Horizon's Talent Acquisition team also connects with New Brunswick students?

Horizon has partnered with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's Centres of Excellence program, helping to reimagine how students in kindergarten to Grade 12 learn about health care careers in the province through career exploration events and initiatives.

In the fall of 2024, Horizon joined the network of Atlantic Association of Registrars and Admissions Officers (AARAO) post-secondary education opportunities fairs, increasing visibility to the more than 150 careers available at Horizon to the health care employees of the future.



People who have joined the Horizon team are invited to share their feedback about their candidate experience. **91% of respondents** say they would be likely to refer someone to work at Horizon based on their candidate experience!



## RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

### Nursing Mentorship Program supports growth and success for Horizon’s new nursing team members

Horizon’s Nursing Mentorship Program works to embed mentoring values and behaviours in daily practice, fostering a supportive working environment while building nursing capacity and retaining valuable staff. Nurse Mentor Coordinators provide support, advocacy and education to new and transitioning nursing team members and to those who mentor them.

The team connects with each new nursing team member, providing formal and informal support throughout their first year. Sharing knowledge is foundational to safe, competent practice, and the Nursing Mentorship team provides education and resources for the nursing mentors who provide invaluable guidance to new team members. Horizon’s Retired RN Mentorship Program provides additional support to new or transitioning nursing staff in developing clinical skills, adapting to the work area, and nursing team collaboration.



IN 2024

**1,080**

in-person mentoring visits

**400**

nursing staff completed the Mentorship Development program

**837**

mentoring touchpoints offered by 21 Retired RN/NP Mentors in 2024

### 🌟 Beal University and Horizon celebrate grand opening of new nursing program at Sackville Memorial Hospital

It was a celebratory day at Sackville Memorial Hospital (SMH) as Beal University Canada celebrated the official launch of its Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program. The onsite clinical learning at SMH will help to create the meaningful community connections needed to strengthen health care in New Brunswick.







## Horizon’s Welcome Team provides personalized support

Horizon’s Welcome Team has supported more than 25 international hires joining the Horizon team since launching in October. The team plays an essential role in helping these employees settle into their lives in New Brunswick as well as their new roles at Horizon.

The comprehensive framework was crafted to provide structured, intentional support while addressing the individualized needs of the employee at every stage of their journey. Personalized support ranges from airport pickups, connecting people with key community partners to help them integrate into their new community, and providing a comprehensive and warm welcome to Horizon as they begin their jobs.



*“Moving to a new country is an overwhelming experience, with a new home, new country, new experiences, and a new life. I am grateful for the guidance and support the Welcome Team at Horizon has provided. This has been a significant help in taking a step towards embracing my new life.”*

**Rema**

New Horizon employee

## Horizon recognized for efforts to welcome newcomers

Horizon was recently named a Newcomer Employment Champion by the YMCA of Southwestern New Brunswicker’s Newcomer Connections program. Presented with the Newcomer Employment Champion Advocacy Award for “outstanding community engagement, seamless integration practices, and strong settlement support for newcomer employees,” this recognition is reflective of Horizon’s mentorship programs, cultural competency training, and demonstrated leadership in our commitment to ensuring **everyone is welcome at Horizon.**





# RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Horizon’s Culture and Wellbeing team is dedicated to bringing meaningful events to staff and physicians. In January and February, employees had the opportunity to beat the January blues at comedy nights, enjoy some winter fun at Family Day skates, and celebrate International Women’s Day (IWD) with meaningful conversations about breaking barriers and leading with empathy.



## our promise ✨

### Employee feedback from Horizon’s Listening Strategy shapes improvement initiatives

Feedback received through surveys has resulted in multiple *Our Promise* initiatives making a difference in the experience of Horizon employees and physicians.



*“Horizon’s Listening Strategy supports the development of a workplace culture committed to intentional, frequent opportunities for feedback. Our strategy is responsive, based on the foundational principle of not simply listening to employee feedback, but acting on it.”*

**Angela Barkhouse**  
Regional Manager of Retention and Insights

# PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD

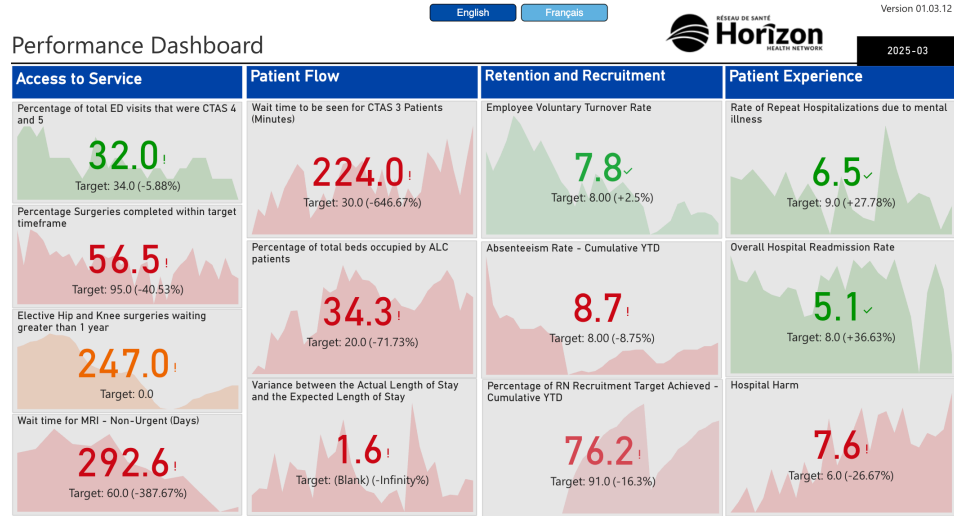
Horizon is committed to performance and accountability, ensuring transparency in delivering health care services in the communities we serve. Our public performance dashboard is updated monthly and provides a snapshot of our progress on key strategic priority areas.

**Green-**  
Met Target

**Orange-**  
Improving Performance

**Red-**  
Below Target

Visit [HorizonNB.ca](https://HorizonNB.ca) to view the dashboard.



## STAY CONNECTED

Join our vibrant social media community of over 74,800 + followers!



HorizonNB



horizonhealthnb



horizon-health-network



HorizonHealthNB



Horizon Health Network



### Did you know?

Since launching our on-going partnership with YouTube, Horizon's YouTube channel has received **5.1M views and 115.4K hours of watch time!**



### Visit Let's Talk Horizon

Our dedicated community engagement hub provides an opportunity to be involved and participate in important health care decisions.



Visit Horizon's website for the latest updates and information.

[HorizonNB.ca](https://HorizonNB.ca)