

## NEWS RELEASE

July 13, 2016

### **HQCA releases follow up report to 2013 *Continuity of Patient Care Study***

(Calgary, AB) - The Health Quality Council of Alberta (HQCA) today released a follow up report outlining the status of implementation of recommendations made in its 2013 *Continuity of Patient Care Study*. In October 2015 Alberta Health requested the HQCA provide an assessment of progress made towards implementation of the recommendations, and to provide insight into bringing the recommendations to a conclusion.

The HQCA found that considerable effort has been made by many stakeholders towards implementing the recommendations in the 2013 report. The review also highlighted the need to continue to address some of the challenges that exist with improving continuity of care in a complex healthcare delivery system.

The new report released today identifies opportunities that would have the most impact on continuity of care for the greatest number of patients.

“Continuity of care has been one of our Panel’s top priorities for the past several years,” says Geralyn L’Heureux, Chair, HQCA Patient/Family Safety Advisory Panel. “We were very pleased with the Ministry’s request for this follow-up review, and are encouraged that some of the HQCA’s recommendations have been implemented. However we are anxious to see additional progress on these key initiatives so that their full intentions can be realized. Patients play an important role as advocates in their own healthcare. When we have access to health records across providers, can view test results through a personal health portal, and see the status of referrals through an electronic referral system, for example, we then have greater participation in our own care and the ability to help prevent breaks in continuity.”

“The report was completed and submitted to government on April 29, 2016. We have heard from many of our partners in healthcare that progress has already been made on many of the recommendations since the time of our review,” says Andrew Neuner, Chief Executive Officer, Health Quality Council of Alberta.

“We have provided advice for Alberta Health that is focused on making the best use of proven tools to create reliable systems and processes that support ideal patient care, which will facilitate greater participation of patients in their own care.”

The report includes the following key opportunities and related advice that are intended to accelerate the progress on recommendations from the 2013 *Continuity of Patient Care Study* and that will contribute to improving the continuity of care for Albertans.

- Continue work to implement a province-wide, integrated clinical information system (CIS).
- Implement a single, province-wide electronic referral system, integrated with the provincial clinical information system.
- Develop a personal health portal to provide Albertans with full access to all their health information to ensure they are true partners in their healthcare, able to advocate for care to maintain or restore their health, as well as help monitor when their care continuity may be at risk of breaking.

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- Implement a critical test results management system integrated with the provincial CIS to ensure timely communication of critical test results.
- Ensure that providers have access to a continuously updated, reliable, provincial provider registry housing contact information for all providers to assure that the right provider can be contacted to initiate the next steps of a patient's care.
- Determine if further improvements to existing physician practice standards in Alberta need to be made regarding management continuity of patient care.

This new report [Improving Continuity of Care: Key Opportunities and a Status Report on Recommendations from the 2013 Continuity of Patient Care Study](#) as well as the initial 2013 report [Continuity of Patient Care Study](#) can be found online at [www.hqca.ca/studies-and-reviews](http://www.hqca.ca/studies-and-reviews).

The Health Quality Council of Alberta is a provincial agency that pursues opportunities to improve patient safety and health service quality for Albertans.

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**Media inquiries:**

Lisa Brake, Director, Communications  
Health Quality Council of Alberta  
office (403) 297-4091  
cell (403) 875-0359  
[lisa.brake@hqca.ca](mailto:lisa.brake@hqca.ca)