



calgary health region

Board Chair requests Health Quality Council of Alberta review of resources, systems and processes impacting Emergency and Urgent Care Services

The Chair of the Calgary Health Region, David Tuer, has requested the Health Quality Council of Alberta work in partnership with the Region to undertake a comprehensive review of the entire spectrum of emergency and urgent care services in the Region.

“The Calgary Health Region is committed to providing safe, quality health care services. However, the rapid growth in Calgary in recent years has led to increased pressure on the Region’s ability to provide timely treatment for patients visiting our emergency and urgent care facilities,” said Tuer. “It’s important to note that health regions across Alberta, indeed across Canada, are facing similar challenges.”

Last year alone, 250,000 patients visited Region emergency departments and another 100,000 sought treatment at urgent care centres.

The Health Quality Council of Alberta (HQCA) review will begin next month and will conclude in May 2007; at which time the HQCA will report its findings to the Region. Following presentation to the Board, the review’s findings and recommendations will be publicly released.

Tuer noted that excessive wait times and other problems related to emergency and urgent care in the Region are complex and have multiple contributing causes, most of which are related to challenges external to the Region’s emergency departments and urgent care facilities.

“This review will identify and address all of the contributing factors impacting our health care system,” Tuer said, who added the Region is continually looking at ways to improve how health care services are delivered, such as by making adjustments to patient flow throughout the system and through recent innovations, such as the creation of the two urgent care centres in south Calgary and in Okotoks.

“The Board of Directors wants to assure all residents of the Region that the intention of this review is to determine where potential system changes or improvements could be made to our processes and resources,” said Tuer. “We know that despite high patient volumes, the Region’s front-line staff do an exemplary job delivering care each and every day.”

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"We are very pleased that the Calgary Health Region has approached the Health Quality Council of Alberta to conduct this important independent quality review," says Dr. John Cowell, Chief Executive Officer. "Our legislated mandate charges us with helping to create a higher-quality and safer health care system for all Albertans. As we move forward, our review will be guided by the Alberta Quality Matrix for Health, which provides a common lens for viewing the health care system across the following dimensions of quality: acceptability, accessibility, appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency and safety."

The Region will work collaboratively with the HQCA throughout the review process; both through direct representation on the review team and through its existing relationship with the Region's Quality, Safety & Health Information portfolio.

Additionally, the review team will receive input from the Region's Patient Experience Advisory Council. Representation on the review team will be determined by Dr. Cowell.

The Calgary Health Region is committed to providing safe, quality health care to the more than one million people it serves.

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