

News Release

July 7, 2009

Health Quality Council of Alberta releases its first annual *Measuring & Monitoring for Success* report

(Calgary, AB) – The Health Quality Council of Alberta (HQCA) released its first annual report examining quality measurement in Alberta's health care system. *Measuring & Monitoring for Success* showcases selected and proposed examples of the power of measurement and how it can be used successfully to inform both system-level and front-line improvements throughout Alberta.

The impetus for the report stems from a growing global movement and requirement towards improved measurement in health care. This movement acknowledges that improved clinical outcomes and system performance are driven by recognizing and measuring quality. Health care is in the midst of a shift that expands the responsibility for quality from professional competency alone towards professional competency supported by evidence-based practice, systems thinking, measurement and continuous quality improvement. The transition and the associated challenges are not unique to Alberta but are faced by health systems around the world.

"Quality measurement has been occurring in Alberta's health care system," says chief executive officer Dr. John Cowell. "However, the HQCA believes that Albertans deserve to have more comprehensive, comparable and actionable information about their health care system. Better information resources are called for to optimize the management of Alberta's health care services. We need to establish the necessary measures to track patient-level costs in more detail on one side of the equation, and the quality of care and outcomes obtained for those expenditures on the other."

At the system level, the *Measuring & Monitoring for Success* report provides economic indicators and new methods of presenting health service utilization indicators by health status as well as overall ratings of satisfaction with and access to health care services. At the clinical level, the report presents sentinel outcome and process indicators related to front-line quality improvement initiatives that are based on the six quality dimensions of acceptability, accessibility, appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency and safety identified in the *Alberta Quality Matrix for Health*. The report shows that innovations are already underway in pockets of excellence in Alberta and underscores the importance of measurement in guiding, evaluating and spreading innovation and quality improvement throughout the health care system. Throughout the report these local innovations and related quality measures are linked to system-level indicators to demonstrate how improved quality at the clinical level improves system-level performance and sustainability. The report also offers a discussion about the current status of health care measurement in Alberta and possible directions for the future.

– more –



“Our core mandate is to measure, monitor and assess the quality and safety of health care services in Alberta and to support improvement through collaboration with service-providing organizations, health professionals and Alberta Health and Wellness”, says Dr. John Cowell. “We believe that this report is an important step towards developing an overall quality improvement strategy in Alberta that will stimulate development of a measurement infrastructure that defines what measures are important and how these measures can be established and supported. In a \$13-billion per year health care system, understanding and measuring for quality supports and ensures sustainability. If we continuously measure and report on the quality of the health system, efficiency will improve, results will be sustained and individuals will have a safer and more effective health encounter.”

Measuring & Monitoring for Success offers information useful for the public, health care governance, administration, professionals and policy-makers alike seeking to further their efforts to improve the quality and safety of Alberta’s health care system.

The HQCA has briefed stakeholder groups on the report’s content.

As an independent organization legislated under the *Regional Health Authorities Act*, the Health Quality Council of Alberta gathers and analyzes information and collaborates with Alberta Health Services, professions and government to translate that knowledge into practical improvements to the quality and safety of the health care Albertans receive.

Measuring & Monitoring for Success is available at www.hqca.ca.

– 30 –

For more information, please contact:

Pam Brandt, Communications Lead
403.297.4091 Cell 403.850.5067