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NEWS RELEASE

### Announcing the 2021 HQCA Patient Experience Awards recipients

(Calgary, AB) In a year filled with extraordinary healthcare demands and challenges because of the COVID-19 global pandemic, the Health Quality Council of Alberta (HQCA) today recognized four initiatives that positively impact Albertans' experiences accessing and receiving healthcare services.

"Improving patients' and their loved ones healthcare experiences and delivering truly person-centred care requires deliberate effort. It doesn't just happen. For me, common themes among this year's recipients are enquiry, responsiveness, and empowerment," says Sue Peters, Acting Chair of the HQCA Patient and Family Advisory Committee. "Each of these teams *asked and listened* to what matters to those they serve, *responded to and made improvements* based on those needs and preferences, and *empowered* their patients and families to guide their own care."

The Patient Experience Awards were established by the HQCA and its Patient and Family Advisory Committee to recognize and spread knowledge about initiatives that improve the patient's overall experience in accessing and receiving healthcare services.

This year's recipients are:

- Alberta Health Services' (AHS) two adolescent mental health units at the Foothills Medical Centre collaborated with patients, family, staff, and community artists to design and create the **Hope Hallway**. The Hope Hallway transforms the traditional, institutionalized feel of the hospital to one that is teen-friendly, hopeful, comforting, and engaging.
- The Life Medical Clinic and McLeod River Primary Care Network are working together to **reduce the impact of financial strain (RIFS)** on their patients. They developed and implemented a screening tool that creates a safe space to have a conversation with a patient about the impact of finances on their health. The clinic worked closely with the Alberta Health Services Health Promotions team to map the local agencies who could provide appropriate supports for each patient.
- The Stollery Children's Hospital Patient and Family Centred Care team facilitated conversations with families of medically complex children, to understand how they were uniquely impacted by the COVID-19 restrictions and quarantine and created a series of **virtual caregiver support sessions**. This AHS initiative created a virtual community to help families cope and navigate challenges with supportive peers and providers through the pandemic.
- The **medical assistance in dying (MAID)** program at [AgeCare](#) provides residents with compassionate end-of-life care in a peaceful and supportive space, surrounded by the people most important to them. The COVID-19 pandemic created new challenges for residents across Alberta seeking MAID. AgeCare acted quickly and worked with the MAID navigation team at Alberta Health Services to continue to accept transfers for MAID by providing a dedicated space for transfers during the pandemic, ensuring the safety and comfort of all involved.

"Each of these initiatives shared deeply personal stories that demonstrate the power and strength care teams can harness when all of the members are open with each other, and centered around the experiences of patients and families," says Brent Windwick, Chair of the HQCA Board of Directors. "When we meet each other where we are at and greet one another without judgement, with cultural

humility, and with a sincere desire to improve, the results are incredibly inspiring. We hope these teams will inspire others to think about what they can do to improve their patients' and families' experiences.”

The Award recipients will be profiled in-depth via video in the future, to share additional learnings about their programs.

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

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