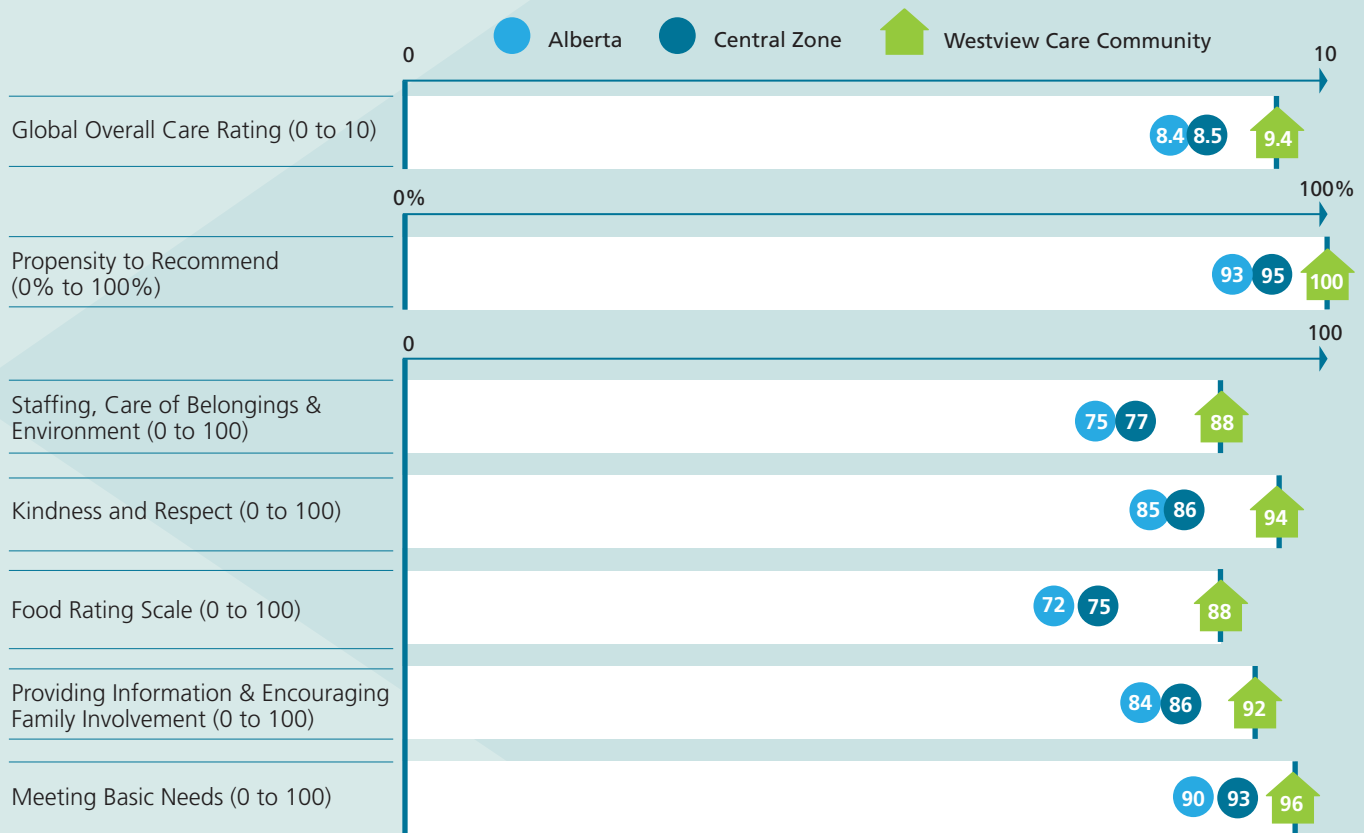


▲ The creation of a **'come-and-go breakfast buffet'**. How Westview Care Community, in Linden Alberta, is enhancing experiences in long-term care.

▲ **MEET WESTVIEW CARE COMMUNITY**

WESTVIEW has **37 long-term care beds**, is classified as a voluntary not-for-profit operator, and was ranked by family members as the **#1 facility** in the Central Zone according to the HQCA's 2018 Long-term Care Family Experience Survey; a result they maintained from the 2014-15 survey.

In the HQCA's 2018 Long-term Care Family Experience Survey, family members of residents at Westview Care Community reported better experiences across six areas of care and services compared to other facilities in the Central Zone, and across Alberta.



▲ **Westview story: turning common challenges into workable solutions.**

As our HQCA team chats with Gideon and Donna at Westview Care Community, the passion and dedication they have for their work is clear. Gideon is the Managing Director and Donna is the Director of Care. They tell us about a recent initiative that has transformed the morning routine at their facility. Westview's mission statement is placed on the wall in the boardroom where we are sitting, and it says, *'To compassionately care for the disabled and elderly, preserving dignity, respect, and independence without discrimination, in the physical, social, emotional, and spiritual aspects of life'*. We hear how these words are exemplified in real and tangible ways in the conversation that follows.



▲ Enhancing Experiences in Long-term Care

▲ **The challenges:** feverish and hurried morning routines



Gideon and Donna's description of the morning routine at Westview Care Community prior to the implementation of their new initiative illustrates the challenges they faced. Mornings were frenetic, and full of feverish and hurried activity. Health care aides (HCAs) had to rouse multiple residents from their beds, bathe and dress them, and get them to their assigned spot in the dining room by a set time for breakfast. Sometimes, however, HCAs would hurry to meet the deadline, only for residents to arrive on time and have to wait for their food because of the demand. Other times, due to resistance or unforeseen situations, residents would arrive late to the dining room and be faced with cold food.

In addition to these issues, we also hear from Gideon and Donna about the difficulty in honouring resident preferences. While some, prior to moving into the facility, preferred to remain in bed until later in the morning, others preferred an earlier start to their day. Despite these expressed preferences, no processes existed to honour them.

Gideon and Donna explain their attempt at honouring dietary preferences in their past admission processes. On admission to the facility, resident dietary likes, dislikes, and preferences, would be discussed and recorded. While this capture of information allowed residents to be met with a familiar cup of orange juice at their spot, on arrival to the dining room (if that is what they indicated on their admission paperwork, sometimes filled out several years prior), it didn't easily allow for changes in likes or dislikes. Often, admission preferences did not line up with current preferences.

▲ **When things aren't working,** the impact is felt by everyone

Gideon and Donna tell us that staff expressed unease about the morning routine. Their HCAs took pride in their work and felt personally responsible to meet the breakfast deadline, even though situations were beyond their control. If, for example, a particular resident was not feeling well, or needed assistance beyond their usual routine, the already tight timeline would be considerably impacted. HCAs also felt that they didn't have time to converse with residents, do extras in their personal care routine such as shaving a face, or provide much needed assistance and supervision during mealtime resulting in unintended consequences, like residents pouring juice instead of milk over their cornflakes. Dietary staff also felt constrained by the rigid schedules and strict timeframes. The production-line atmosphere in the kitchen was uncomfortable and they felt helpless upon seeing an empty seat or an uneaten plate of food. Some of this food ended up unclaimed and in the garbage, disappointing staff who had prepared the meal. With unclaimed food it was also not clear whose role it was to re-heat, re-toast, and re-serve the meal for a resident at a later time.

Obviously unhappy with the Westview morning routine, there was an overwhelming feeling that a better practice must exist.

Enhancing Experiences in Long-term Care

Let's put our heads together, there must be a better way

Motivated to improve, management, staff, and residents/families, looked for solutions through brainstorming and debate. The concept of a **'breakfast buffet'** was landed upon, which offered many benefits for residents including: the flexibility to stay in bed longer and enjoy a later breakfast; more opportunities for residents to indicate their food and drink preferences; and increased staff availability to provide assistance during meal time.

Gideon and Donna tell us staff were excited to try out this concept, seeing it as a way to ease the strains of the hectic morning pace. Several practical issues needed to be worked through, however. Before making any permanent changes or alterations, it was strongly felt that certain things needed to be tested before committing to more permanent changes. As such, before purchasing commercial grade equipment, several staff members brought in their own portable appliances, such as crock-pots, to aid in the ability to keep food at the right temperature. Alterations would also be needed to the physical layout of the dining area, but this too could be tested without committing to a final concept.

This isn't easy; the human side of change

Despite the staff's positive enthusiasm, the story Gideon and Donna tell also speaks to the human side of change. During times of change, staff members are required to do things differently and move beyond previously well-established routines and processes. This can feel unsettling. Oftentimes, fears also exist related to perceptions of being replaced, or that new roles will be completely different than previous ones. As much as an initiative such as this is ultimately for the benefit of the residents, the impact on staff members needed to be acknowledged. They also point out that for any change to be successful, staff needed to be able to see a **'what's in it for me'** component, and visualize how their work lives may also be improved through the successful implementation of the new way of doing things.



A better way to do the morning routine

After many staff huddles to discuss concerns and worries, small tests of change, rearrangement of physical space, changing of work flows and job tasks, and dealing with the general challenges of change, Westview Care Community now offers a **'come-and-go breakfast buffet'** every morning from 7:30 to 10:30 a.m. As able, residents are free to express their personal preferences to the staff in terms of wake-up times, and the time they would like to eat. When residents enter the dining area, which has been redecorated and fully utilizes the large picture windows which frame the Alberta countryside, they are warmly greeted, can sit where they prefer, and are offered a drink of their preference. With a large selection of breakfast foods each morning, they can choose or indicate both the type of food, as well as the amount they'd like.

*"The key words that describe the Garden Room is **'personal attention'**. I so much appreciate the one on one interaction that happens in there. My wife has dementia so is awake at night. She can have a later breakfast of her choice."*

(husband of a Westview resident)

▲ **A better way** – continued

Health care aides no longer have to rush their residents out of bed, and have more time in the mornings to interact and provide assistance with other areas of residents' care. Dietary staff find it easier and more efficient to serve residents from the buffet table, don't have all the tables to prepare and clean at once, and also have more time to assist residents who need help with eating.

During our tour of the dining area, we see the large windows, the bright sunshine, and the never ending views of the Alberta landscape. You can't help but imagine the things Gideon and Donna have told us about the new morning routine: the time for increased interactions between residents and staff; the ability to honour resident's personal preferences in a wide range of ways – wake up times, seating arrangements, and the type and amount of food; being able to recognize that people's tastes change over time, and finding ways to identify and respect those changing interests instead of being held to what is documented on an admission form; the pride in knowing that as a staff member, you have the ability and authority to assist in identifying a problem, the courage to try something different, and the ability to make something better. *'To compassionately care for the disabled and elderly, preserving dignity, respect, and independence without discrimination, in the physical, social, emotional, and spiritual aspects of life'*. Words written on a boardroom wall that are very much being put into action.

*"It's **rewarding** to give the residents the food choices from the buffet."* (healthcare aide)

*We don't have all the tables to clear at once but clean up as they come and go. The dietary staff now have **time** to also assist some of the residents that need help with eating."*

(member of dietary staff)

"We absolutely love it!"

(Westview resident)

As told by Jamie Stroud and Tony Mottershead. Tony Mottershead is Director – Health System Improvement at the Health Quality Council of Alberta, and Jamie Stroud is Lead – Health System Improvement.

The Managing Director and Director of Care of Westview Care Community were interviewed on-site by HQCA staff. The HQCA would like to thank Westview Care Community staff and residents for welcoming us and sharing their story with us.

Westview is one of a group of facilities that had either shown statistically significant improvements in certain dimensions of care, between the 2014-15 and 2018 HQCA Long-term Care Family Experience Survey Report, or had high positions in the Zone ranking charts in our report.