

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Health Quality Council of Alberta reports longstanding concerns persist for Alberta continuing care residents and their families in latest experience survey

(Calgary, AB) The Health Quality Council of Alberta (HQCA) has released survey results of 2,683 residents and 8,791 family members' experiences in long term care (LTC) and designated supportive living (DSL), collectively known as facility-based continuing care. This was the single largest surveying effort conducted in continuing care post-pandemic in Alberta.

On average, residents rated their overall care experience as 7.5 (LTC) and 7.7 (DSL) out of 10. Family members rated their overall experiences on average as 8.3 (LTC) and 8.4 (DSL) out of 10.

"These surveys are paramount for giving Albertans a voice. They give residents and family members an opportunity to share their experiences about care and services," says Charlene McBrien-Morrison, HQCA chief executive officer.

In general, the results have not changed from the last four LTC surveys and three DSL surveys that the HQCA has conducted.

"We began surveying in LTC in 2008 and DSL in 2015, we continue to see the same concerns persist with each survey iteration," says McBrien-Morrison. "We have identified these as actions for improvement in our report. It doesn't mean that improvements have not been made at the site level. It shows us there are areas in continuing care that continue to be a priority for residents and families, and that need to be addressed to improve their experiences."

The greatest opportunities for improvement, according to the experiences reported by residents and families, relate to staffing, cleanliness, food, and compassion. For example:

- **Staffing:** 24 per cent of residents and 16 per cent of families in LTC feel there is always enough nurses and aides at their site.
- **Cleanliness and hygiene:** less than half of all family respondents said their loved one always looked and smelled clean.
- **Food:** 27 per cent of residents in LTC said they could always get the food they like.
- **Compassion:** in one of five new questions related to compassion, 27 per cent of residents in LTC strongly agreed that their healthcare providers were attentive to their needs.

"Our analysis also shows that while there are sites providing exceptional care and experiences according to residents and their family members, the experiences are not consistent across Alberta. There is variation in results, where some sites have high results in certain areas of the survey, other sites have very low results in the same survey areas."

For example, when family members were asked about Staffing, Care of Belongings, and Environment, scores in DSL ranged from a low of 59 to a high of 97 (the average was 76).

The HQCA used the survey responses along with comments from families to identify actions for improvement for Alberta Health, operators, and leaders of continuing care. If implemented, with the collaboration of both residents and family members, these actions have the potential to improve overall experiences across the facility-based continuing care system.

The information the HQCA collects and analyzes is provided to individual sites, Alberta Health, operators, and leaders in continuing care to inform improvement opportunities and replicate areas of success. The HQCA shared individual, site-specific survey results with facility-based continuing care operators in the summer of 2023 to use for their ongoing monitoring and quality improvement.

Both provincial-level reports and a survey highlights document are available at www.hqca.ca/fbcc.

A selection of the survey results are also available on the HQCA's FOCUS on Healthcare website, <https://focus.hqca.ca/>. FOCUS presents data from different areas of the healthcare system to create a whole system view that supports transparency and quality improvement.

About the HQCA

The Health Quality Council of Alberta is a provincial agency that brings together patients, families, and our partners from across healthcare and academia to inspire improvement in patient safety, person-centred care, and health service quality. We assess and study the healthcare system, identify effective practices, and engage with Albertans to gather information about their experiences. Our responsibilities are outlined in the *Health Quality Council of Alberta Act*.

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