



NEWS RELEASE

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Health Quality Council of Alberta releases findings of second provincial long term care family experience survey

Majority of areas surveyed have improved or remained stable since 2007/08

(Calgary, AB) – The Health Quality Council of Alberta (HQCA) today released the results of its second survey that captures the experiences of family members who have a resident living in a long term care facility in Alberta. The 2010/2011 survey compares results with those from the first survey conducted in 2007/2008.

Survey packages were mailed to 11,690 family members (or the most involved person) for residents living in 157 long term care facilities across Alberta between November 22, 2010 and February 20, 2011. Overall, 8,179 surveys were completed for a response rate of 70%, which is similar to the response rate in 2007/08 and indicates a very high interest on the part of family members. The high response rate and large sample size resulted in a very low margin of error of less than or equal to 1% at the provincial level.

In the majority of areas surveyed in 2010/11, results have improved or remained stable since 2007/08. On a scale of 0 to 10, 47% of family members surveyed rated the care at the long term care facility as 9 or 10 out of 10 in 2010/11 compared with 44% in 2007/08. This represents a modest but significant improvement in the global rating of quality of care. Thirty-one per cent (31%) of survey respondents said they were unhappy with the care the resident received at the long term care facility in the last six months. This represents a modest but significant improvement from the 33% who were unhappy with care in 2007/08.

Similar to 2007/08, the survey found that those facilities that received the highest overall care ratings from family members were smaller with fewer beds and more home-like environments. They also had more nurses/aides available to help residents and took better care of residents' clothing and medical belongings. Eighty-five per cent (85%) of respondents in the top-performing facilities reported there were always or usually enough nurses/aides compared to 54% in the low-performing facilities. In addition, 34% of respondents in the top-performing facilities reported the resident's clothing was damaged or lost compared to 66% for low-performing facilities. Eighteen per cent (18%) of respondents in top-performing facilities reported that the resident's medical belongings were damaged or lost compared to 42% in low-performing facilities.

On releasing the survey results, Chief Executive Officer Dr. John Cowell said, "As in 2007/08, the main reason we did the survey was to gather information from families about the quality of care their loved ones received. This is a key measure of quality in long term care." He adds that family members' response to the survey was tremendous and they provided many excellent comments and suggestions regarding how quality of care could be improved.



From the perspective of family members, the survey findings suggest improvement efforts should focus on:

- Improving the number and availability of long term care staff.
- Ensuring the care and security of residents' personal belongings.
- Creating environments and staff relationships similar to those found in smaller long term care facilities.

There is considerable variation in performance between long term care facilities across the province. "We have given a detailed report to every long term care facility that participated in the survey so they can see what they are doing well and where they can improve," says Dr. Cowell, adding he hopes those facilities that received lower scores overall and on specific attributes will look to higher-performing facilities as a resource for sharing best practices, ideas and experience.

The provincial results and the highlights are available at www.hqca.ca.

The HQCA gathers and analyzes information and collaborates with Alberta Health and Wellness, Alberta Health Services, health professions, academia and other stakeholders to translate that knowledge into practical improvements to health service quality and patient safety in the healthcare system. The HQCA is a provincial health board created in 2006 by the Health Quality Council of Alberta Regulation under the Regional Health Authorities Act.

BACKGROUNDER FOLLOWS WITH KEY FINDINGS

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For more information, please contact:

Pam Brandt, Communications Lead
403.297.4091 Cell 403.850.5067




BACKGROUND

Long Term Care Family Experience Survey 2010/11

Provincial-level Findings

- On a scale of 0 to 10, 47% of family members surveyed rated the care at the long term care facility as 9 or 10 in 2010/11 compared with 44% in 2007/08. This represents a modest but significant improvement in the global rating of quality of care.
- 31% of survey respondents were unhappy with the care the resident received at the long term care facility in the last six months. This was a modest but significant improvement from the 33% who were unhappy with care in 2007/08. The Calgary Zone also showed a significant improvement from 2007/08.
- 92% of those surveyed would definitely (56%) or probably (36%) recommend the nursing home where their family member resided to someone else, similar to 91% in 2007/08.
- A new survey question for 2010/11 found that on a scale of 0 to 10, 22% of respondents rated the food at their nursing home as 9 or 10, 41% rated it as 7 or 8 and 38% rated the food from 0 to 6.
- 86% of those respondents who tried to find a nurse/aide during any of their visits said they were always (43%) or usually (43%) able to find a nurse/aide when they wanted one, a significant improvement from 83% in 2007/08. The Calgary Zone also showed a significant improvement from 2007/08.
- 64% of those surveyed reported there were usually (47%) or always (17%) enough nurses/aides in the nursing home, a significant improvement from 53% in 2007/08. The Calgary, Edmonton and Central Zones also showed a significant improvement from 2007/08.
- 90% of respondents reported the resident always (39%) or usually (51%) looked and smelled clean, similar to 89% in 2007/08. The Edmonton Zone showed a significant improvement from 2007/08.
- 92% of those surveyed reported the resident's room always (51%) or usually (41%) looked and smelled clean, a significant improvement from 91% in 2007/08. The Edmonton and Central Zones also showed a significant improvement from 2007/08.
- 94% of respondents reported they always (63%) or usually (31%) saw nurses/aides treat the resident with kindness over the last six months, similar to 93% in 2007/08. The Calgary Zone showed a significant improvement from 2007/08.
- 88% of those surveyed that sought information about the resident from a nurse/aide reported they always (48%) or usually (40%) received the information as soon as they wanted. This is similar to 87% in 2007/08.

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- 68% of respondents reported they helped with care of the resident when they visited in the last six months compared to 70% in 2007/08.
 - A new survey question for 2010/11 found that 94% of respondents said their family member always (60%) or usually (34%) received the medical services and treatments they needed.

Differences between facilities with higher than average overall care ratings and those with lower care ratings

- Top-performing long term care facilities received an overall care rating of 9.2 out of 10 from respondents compared to 7.5 for the lower-performing ones.
- Facilities that were high performers were operating nearly three times fewer the number of beds on average than low-performing ones (66 beds versus 177). This is similar to 2007/08.
- Respondents from high-performing facilities reported more often that there were always or usually enough nurses/aides compared to lower performing facilities (85% versus 54%). They also reported they were more likely to find a nurse/aide when they wanted one (97% versus 80%).
- Residents' clothing and medical belongings were damaged or lost to a lesser extent in high-performing facilities than in lower ones (34% versus 66% for clothing and 18% versus 42% for medical belongings).

The provincial results and the highlights are available at www.hqca.ca.