



News Release

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Health Quality Council of Alberta releases terms of reference for an independent review of the quality of care and safety of patients requiring access to emergency department care and cancer surgery and the role and process of physician advocacy

(Calgary, AB) – The Health Quality Council of Alberta (HQCA) today released the terms of reference for an independent review of the quality of care and safety of patients requiring access to emergency department care and cancer surgery and the role and process of physician advocacy. The purpose of the review is to identify and analyze issues related to these two important services and make recommendations to improve system performance. The independent review will be provincial in scope and will be conducted under Section 9 of the *Alberta Evidence Act* to maintain evidentiary privilege over the provision of documents and evidence of participants. Alberta Health and Wellness Minister Gene Zwozdesky requested the review under Section 13 of the *Health Quality Council of Alberta Regulation*.

In making the terms of reference public, HQCA Chief Executive Officer Dr. John Cowell noted that while the HQCA has conducted many reviews in the past, this review is unprecedented in that it is the first time the organization has initiated its own terms of reference. “We are committed to transparency throughout the review process and Minister Zwozdesky supports this transparency,” says Cowell. “That is why the terms of reference are being made public now and the findings and recommendations will be made public once the report is complete.”

According to HQCA Council Chair Dr. Lorne Tyrrell, Minister Zwozdesky has directed the HQCA to establish its own processes and procedures for the review, including the selection of individuals that may be needed to assist throughout the process. “There will be a panel of experts appointed to assist and advise the HQCA Council in this review,” says Tyrrell.

“Our goal in conducting this and any other review is not to lay blame on any one individual or organization but to look at system-wide issues and opportunities for improvement,” adds Dr. Cowell. A full report of the findings and recommendations will be made public within nine months. Progress reports will be publicly released three and six months into the review.

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 and Wellness, Alberta Health Services, health professions and other stakeholders to translate that knowledge into practical improvements to health service quality and patient safety in the health care system.

The terms of reference are attached and are available at www.hqca.ca.

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