

HIGHLIGHTS: Alberta Seniors Home Care Client Experience Survey

COGNITIVELY WELL LONG-TERM SUPPORTIVE AND MAINTENANCE CLIENTS, AGED 65 AND OLDER



November 2019



The Health Quality Council of Alberta (HQCA) conducted the *2018 Alberta Seniors Home Care Client Experience Survey* in collaboration with Alberta Health Services (AHS) and Alberta Health to identify opportunities for improvement and highlight areas of success in home care.

Purpose: to capture the experiences and obtain feedback from seniors receiving home care services across Alberta.



This survey provides a **voice** for home care clients and an opportunity for that voice to be **shared** across the health system.

WHO was surveyed?

- Long-term supportive or maintenance clients
- Ages 65 and older
- Without cognitive impairment
- Receiving weekly services

This population represents among the largest group of home care clients in Alberta.



6,914 clients responded to the survey about their experiences with home care services. The provincial response rate was **59%**.



To download the full report: *Alberta Seniors Home Care Client Experience Survey: Provincial Report* – visit: www.hqca.ca/surveys

The SURVEY asks questions about clients' experiences with home care and the services home care delivers and/or manages. These include:

Professional services Typically provided by AHS staff, such as nurses or therapists. Includes assessment of health status and/or medical conditions; performing treatments and procedures; and rehabilitation to maximize function.

Personal care services Typically provided by AHS or by service providers contracted by AHS, such as healthcare aides. Includes personal hygiene; dressing; toileting and incontinence management; and, mobilization or transferring.

Case management and care planning Case management refers to managing and coordinating the delivery of care; care planning is defined as how the case manager assesses each client and creates the client's care plan.

SURVEY FINDINGS at a glance – client’s overall experience

Geographic area was shown to have a strong impact on the overall ratings of client experience of home care services. These are defined as:

- **Metro:** Calgary, Edmonton and commuter communities
- **Urban:** populations 25,000 to 500,000 and surrounding communities
- **Rural:** populations less than 25,000 people and/or greater than 200 kilometres from a metro/urban centre

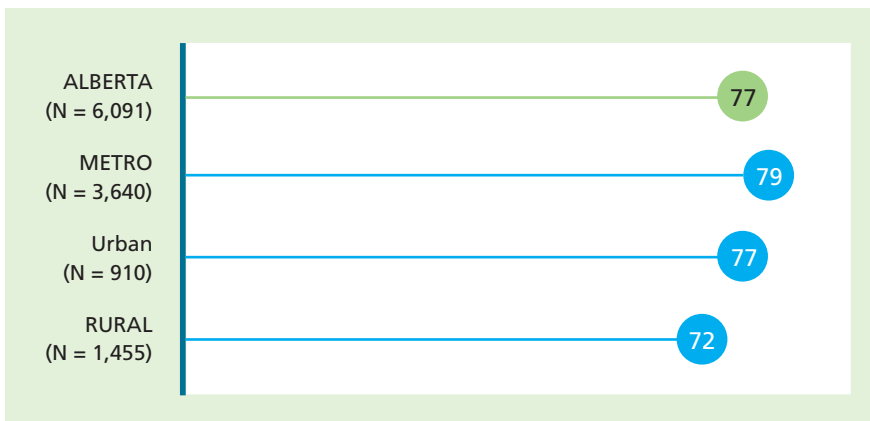
Because of the greater influence of geographic area on the overall care rating, AHS zone-specific results are not presented in this summary, but can be found in the appendices of the full report: *Alberta Seniors Home Care Client Experience Survey: Provincial Report – November 2019* available at www.hqca.ca

DOES home care help clients stay at home?

An important goal of home care is to support clients to remain at home safely and independently for as long as possible.

While 77% of clients reported that home care helped them stay at home, this percentage was higher in Metro areas (79%) compared to Rural areas (72%).

% WHO SAID YES HOME CARE HELPED THEM STAY AT HOME IN 2018



"I think they are wonderful, kind, and helpful!"

Home care clients rated their overall experience with home care at **8.3 out of 10**

HOW did clients rate home care?

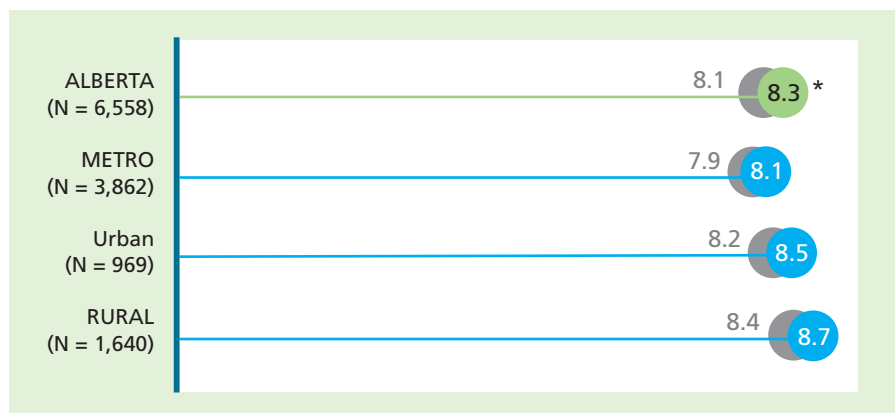
Clients rated their experience with home care on a scale from 0 (worst) to 10 (best).

On average, clients living in rural areas had more positive overall care ratings, followed by clients in urban, then metro areas.



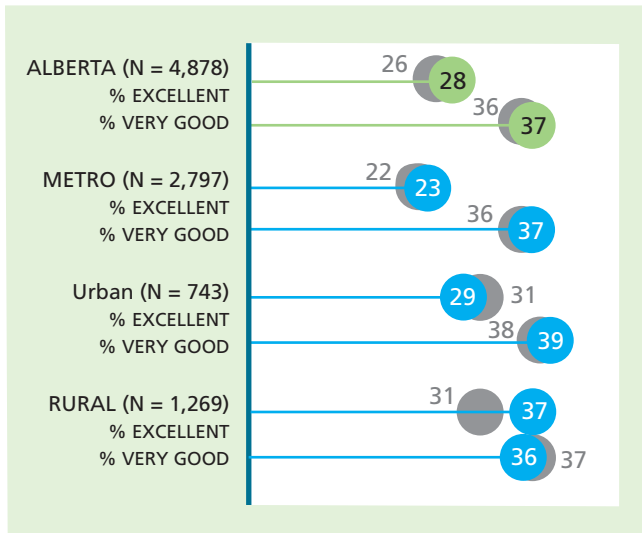
Results from the 2015 survey are presented (in grey) alongside the 2018 results.

AVERAGE OVERALL CARE RATING (0-10) IN 2018 AND 2015

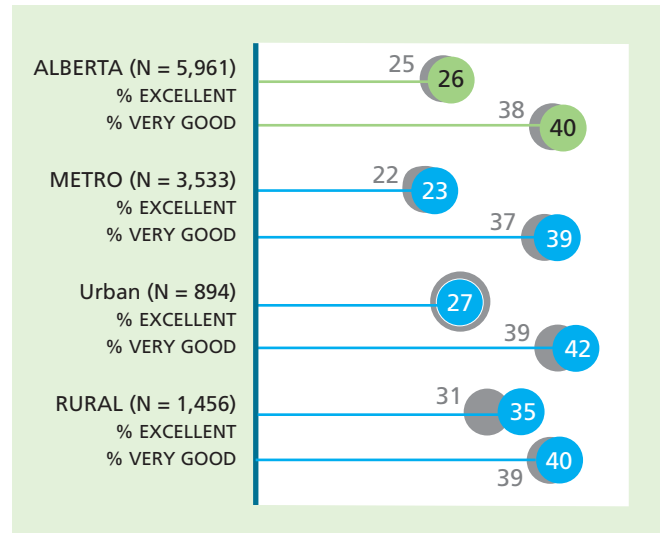


*Indicates a statistically significant difference at P < 0.01

HOW did clients rate PROFESSIONAL services in 2018 and 2015?



HOW did clients rate PERSONAL care services in 2018 and 2015?



2018 COMPARED TO 2015

Provincially, the overall rating of home care services was higher in 2018 than in 2015.

- In 2018, more clients felt that personal care staff met their needs related to eating, getting dressed, using the bathroom, and taking their medications compared to 2015.
- In 2018, more clients responded that they would talk to their case manager if they needed a change to their home care services compared to 2015.
- In 2018, less clients felt that professional home care staff gave them choices about how care was provided and talked with them about the purpose and side effects of their medications compared to 2015.

"[Home care] workers at all levels make me feel like family and they always make me feel safe and loved."



WHAT are the 5 DRIVERS that influence Albertans' rating of home care?

Using both survey results and client comments, five drivers were identified as most strongly influencing a client's overall home care experience. These can be used to identify improvement opportunities and help understand client's overall experience.

These drivers are ordered from the strongest to weakest influence on the overall care rating and their importance based on client comments.

- 1 Relational Care
- 2 Client Needs and Expectations
- 3 Case Management and Care Planning
- 4 Scheduling
- 5 Information Sharing and Communication Processes

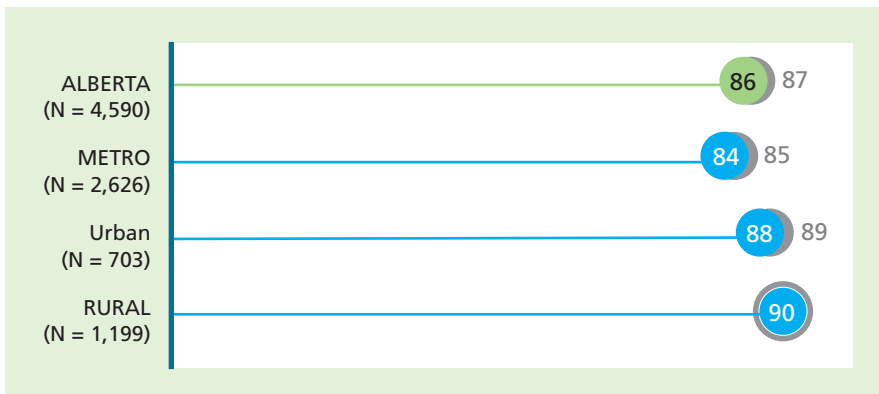
DRIVER 1 Relational Care

Relational care refers to how clients felt they were treated by home care staff and the interpersonal relationships they have with them.

Clients felt that **positive and respectful relationships with staff, as well as having the same staff over time that were knowledgeable and attentive to their needs, were important.**

From the client’s perspective, the more positive treatment by staff, the more positive their overall experience.

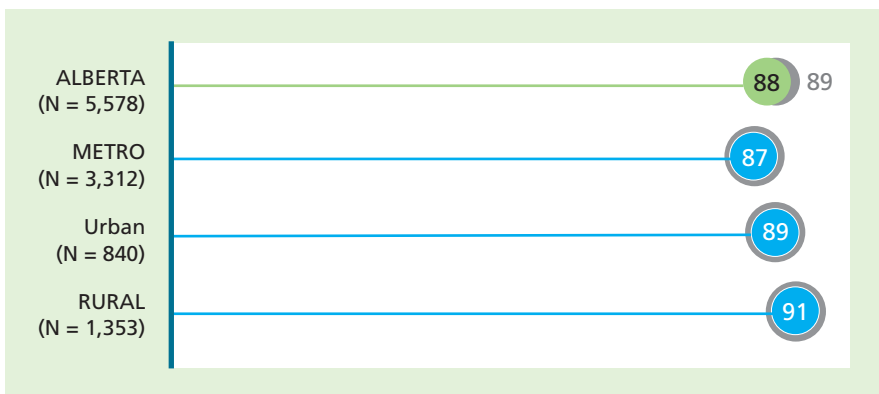
TREATMENT BY **PROFESSIONAL SERVICES STAFF SCORE (0-100) IN 2018 AND 2015**



“I would prefer if caregivers are not changed frequently. It helps me keep rapport with caregivers so I do not have to explain my requirements frequently.”



TREATMENT BY **PERSONAL CARE SERVICES STAFF SCORE (0-100) IN 2018 AND 2015**

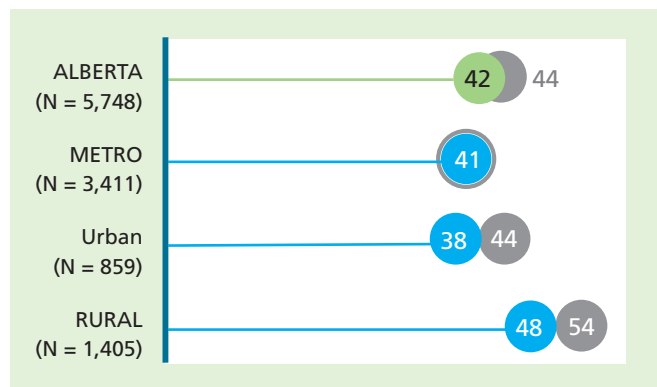


HOW did clients feel about the number of different personal care staff they had?

Provincially, **42 per cent** of clients reported they were “Very happy with the number of different personal care staff” they had compared to 44 per cent in 2015.

The percentage in 2018 was highest in rural areas compared to both urban and metro areas.

% **VERY HAPPY WITH NUMBER OF DIFFERENT STAFF** IN 2018 AND 2015



DRIVER 2 Client Needs and Expectations

The survey asked clients a number of questions related to the services they receive and whether their needs were met. Clients felt less positive about their overall experience when their needs were not met to their expectations, or they had unmet service needs including services that may be beyond their care plan or the scope of home care.



The top 5 unmet service needs identified by clients were:

- Housekeeping*
- Grounds keeping*
- Grocery assistance*
- Bathing
- Therapies

*Not currently provided by Home Care in Alberta.

“Housekeeping, grocery, yard maintenance, etc. are not provided in the care plan, and I depend on family and private agencies. Professional agencies are paid by me.”

“I require more care. Can't reach the case manager as they are never available. Unsure who the new one is.”

DRIVER 3 Case Management and Care Planning

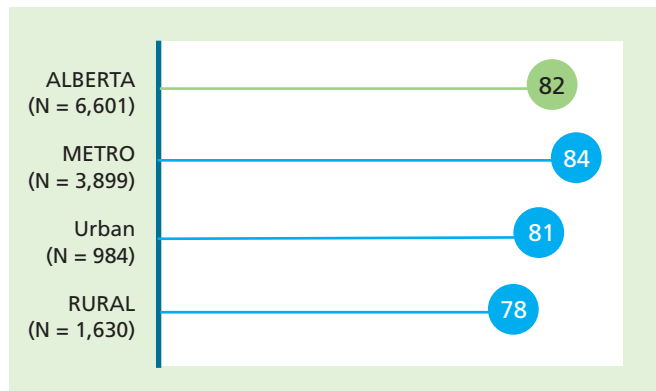
The survey asked clients a number of questions related to:

- if clients know their case manager and if they had just one case manager;
- case management; and,
- care planning and care meetings.

The case manager assesses each client and creates a care plan for the client. They are responsible for managing and coordinating the delivery of client care.

Clients stated that having available and responsive case managers who follow up regularly are crucial to them identifying, obtaining, and receiving the consistent home care services they need to stay at home.

% YES THEY KNOW THEIR CASE MANAGER IN 2018



Drivers 4 and 5 were identified through analysis of **client comments**.

DRIVER 4 Scheduling

Themes in client comments about scheduling refer to the availability, punctuality, and attendance of staff and the client's perception of how much time staff is given to provide care. It also includes communication about scheduling such as arrival times, delays, or changes to visits.

When clients felt that staff informed them of schedule changes they had a more positive overall home care experience.

Scheduling was discussed by a large proportion of clients who were receiving both professional and personal care services. Clients expressed a high level of frustration and uncertainty with scheduling that consequently negatively impacted their day, the care received, and their overall experience.

"They change the times for my services frequently and without asking or letting me know about changes. This makes it very hard for me to schedule appointments and to be ready when they arrive."



"They arrive at different times. We can handle a little variation of arrival time like 15 or 30 minutes, but when it's 2 hours that's too hard an adjustment for us."



"Every time a change in treatment was made at a doctor's appointment, extra time was spent by family to make sure the case worker got the information and then care workers got proper info. Somehow communications need to be better and prompt between all parties"

DRIVER 5 Information Sharing and Communication Processes

The ways in which home care staff communicate with clients and with each other was important to clients. This includes how information is exchanged, staff responsiveness to client concerns, language barriers, and the transparency and availability of information. Clients reported more positive overall experiences when staff:

- were easy to contact and available;
- spoke clearly so the client could understand them;
- were receptive to and addressed the clients concerns in a timely manner; and,
- informed the client about available home care services.

ACTIONS for improvement

The HQCA's analysis determined five questions that have the greatest potential to increase the Overall Care Rating – thereby **improving client experience at the provincial level**. Based on these questions the HQCA developed the following Actions for Improvement.

ACTION 1

Question 32 in the survey asked home care clients: *how do you feel about the number of different personal care staff you had?* Analysis determined that an improvement in the results for this question has the greatest potential to increase the Overall Care Rating. Provincially, only 42 per cent of clients reported they were “very happy with the number of different personal care staff” they had, providing room for improvement.

Home care client comments also provide important insights. Clients felt it was important to have the same home care staff on a regular basis to form trusting relationships built on familiarity with their needs and care routine. When clients had different staff, often it was hard for them to adjust as staff were not knowledgeable about their care. Clients said this made them feel embarrassed and not safe. Clients said they constantly had to explain and teach different staff how to provide their care. Clients stated the need for training most when staff were inconsistent and unfamiliar with their care plan. Urban clients more often expressed concerns with consistency of home care staff.



Alberta Health Services and contracted home care providers work together to fully understand clients' concerns and expectations with care continuity and develop strategies to address these concerns.

ACTION 2

Question 19 in the survey asked home care clients whether professional home care staff talked with them about the purpose of their medications. Provincially, 38 per cent of clients said 'Yes'. Question 21 in the survey asked home care clients whether professional home care staff talked with them about the side effects of their medications. Provincially, 21 per cent of clients said 'Yes'.



Alberta Health Services consult with professional home care staff and home care clients on what tools and support staff need in order to improve communication about medication-related information with their home care clients.

ACTION 3

Question 28 asked home care clients whether professional home care staff listened carefully to their wishes and needs. Provincially, 77 per cent of clients said Yes. Question 27 in the survey asked home care clients whether professional home care staff gave them choices about how care was provided. Provincially, 56 per cent of clients said 'Yes'.



Alberta Health Services consult with professional home care staff and home care clients on what tools and support staff need in order to strengthen their relationships with clients, specifically to more carefully listen to clients' wishes and needs, and where possible, provide an opportunity for client engagement and choice in how care is provided and managing client expectations and understanding, when choice may be limited.



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EXPERIENCE of cognitively unwell clients and their informal caregivers

To capture the experiences of cognitively unwell clients and their informal caregivers, the HQCA conducted a project in parallel to the main survey that **explored their experiences in depth.**

In 2018, interviews were conducted with clients (aged 65+) who were cognitively unwell, receiving long-term supportive and/or maintenance home care services and their informal caregivers.

Overall, cognitively unwell clients reported experiences consistent with those reported by clients with no cognitive impairment. The results of cognitively well and cognitively unwell clients are combined throughout the survey report where they align. New insights from cognitively unwell clients are presented in the *Alberta Seniors Home Care Client Experience Survey: Provincial Report*.

Informal caregivers play a fundamental role in home care. The results of the caregiver experience will be available in a separate report: *The Impact on Unpaid Informal Caregivers Who Support Their Loved Ones Aging in Place*.

WORKING together

The HQCA thanks the clients who participated in this survey and provided valuable insight into what is working well and what can be improved for home care in Alberta.

This survey was conducted in collaboration with Alberta Health Services and Alberta Health. The HQCA thanks these organizations and other stakeholders for their support.

WHAT'S next?

The HQCA shares the results of the survey with home care providers, Alberta Health Services, and Alberta Health. The information can be used to start and support conversations between providers and their clients, clients' family members, the public, and other stakeholders about the experience of clients receiving home care services in Alberta.

The information in the survey report is meant to support a culture of continuous quality improvement that is evidence-based. For example, participating providers and facilities can use the survey results as one source of information for *Standard 19: Quality Improvement Reporting under the Continuing Care Health Service Standards (CCHSS)*. At the system-level, the key findings and results can be used to inform improvement priorities.



Feedback and questions are welcome at info@hqca.ca or by mail:
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