

Facilitating Resident and Family Engagement in Alberta Continuing Care Facilities

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BACKGROUND

Covenant's Network of Excellence in Seniors' Health and Wellness (The Network) strives to enable seniors to live to the fullness of their capacity as active and connected member of communities.

PURPOSE

This project developed and tested resources and supports to help Alberta's continuing care sites establish effective resident and family councils that work collaboratively to improve the lives and care of residents in the continuing care (CC) site.

METHODS

An Advisory Committee reviewed best practices and results of a survey of current practices in CC sites and provided input on the creation of a comprehensive toolkit and components of the pilot project.

PILOT PROJECT

Over nine months, nine pilot sites tested resources to support resident and family councils (RFCs) by:

- Using the toolkit
- Attending Networking meetings (education session and networking discussion)
- Completing pre- and post-pilot surveys
- Completing post-pilot focused interview questions

28 Participants

9 Residents 6 Family Members 4 Administrators 9 Site Staff

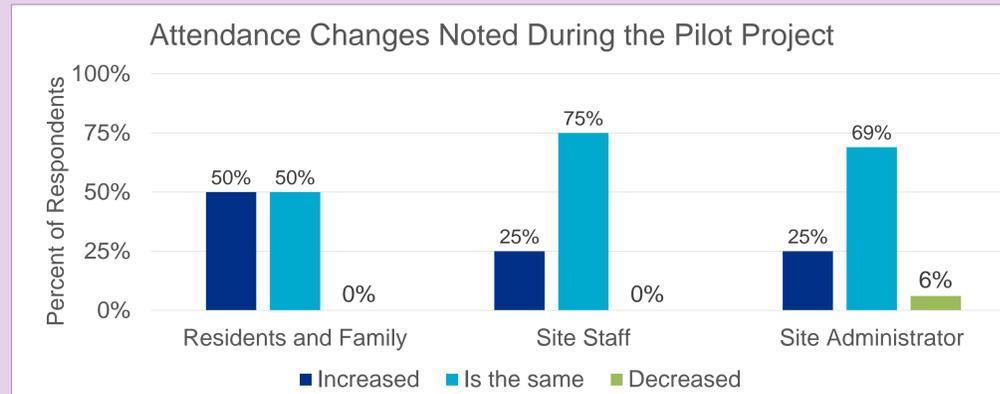
9 Pilot Sites

4 Urban Sites 5 Rural Sites 5 Large Sites (100 or more beds) 4 Small Sites (under 100 beds)

"The networking meetings let us know that we aren't alone in our struggles, particularly family engagement. I really appreciated the guest speakers; I always got pointers from the speakers on their topics."
- Pilot Participant

"Councils are vital. These are the people we serve. We need to receive input from them on what their needs and desires are. Our clients, be they residents or family members, have a vested interest and it is our responsibility to ensure their voices are heard."
- Pilot Participant

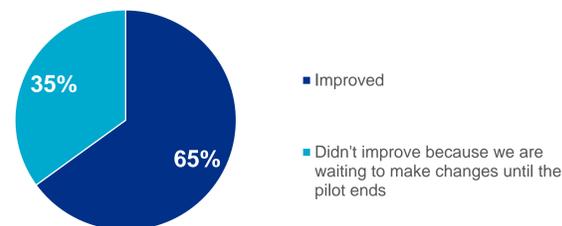
RESULTS



Graph 1: Attendance changes during pilot:

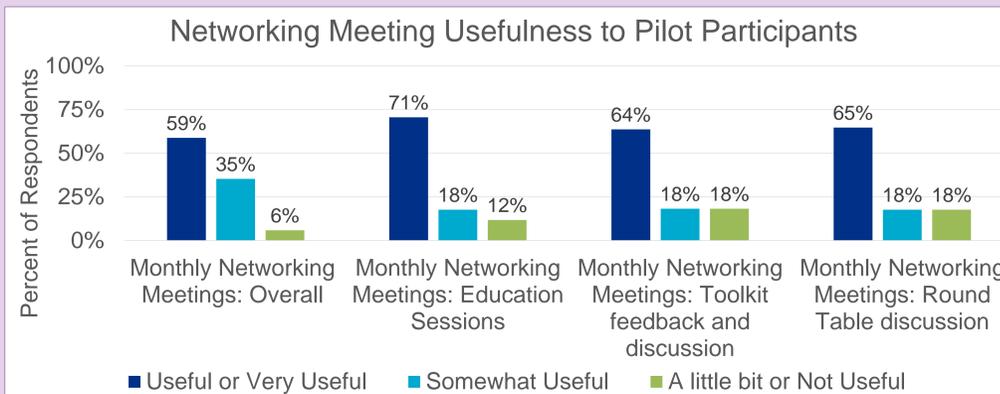
Many sites saw an increase in resident, family, staff and Site Administrator attendance at meetings during the pilot

As a Result of the Pilot Our Council Operation:



Graph 2: Council Operation:

Most participants reported improvement in their council function during the pilot. The remaining sites chose to use the pilot to learn and make changes after completion.



Graph 3: Usefulness of Networking Meetings:

Most participants found the Networking Meetings very helpful.

Other results from pilot analysis include:

- Fewer sites identified having formal council positions post-pilot (78% pre-pilot had a Chair which reduced to 53% post-pilot).
- 100% respondents thought the toolkit should be available to all CC sites in Alberta.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Use RFCs to meaningfully contribute to CC standards, policies and priorities, including quality improvement initiatives.
- Ensure senior site administration is the site lead on their RFC.
- Develop networking opportunities for RFCs to share information, challenges and successes.
- Ensure the toolkit is electronically posted, annually updated, advertised and readily available to all Alberta CC sites.
- Establish a provincial RFC information and support service office to share best practices and connect resources.

DISCUSSION

Key findings from the project include:

- Attending Networking meetings was the first time resident and family council members were able to connect with other sites.
 - They see huge benefit in sharing information, challenges and successes with their peers at other sites.
 - A supported mechanism to bring them together is highly desired and is a practical, tangible approach to seed effective, successful councils.
- Family and resident engagement was a common challenge. Pilot sites were looking for tips on how to improve involvement and engagement of family members and residents.

NEXT STEPS: DISSEMINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

- Provide every Continuing Care site in Alberta with *The Alberta Continuing Care Resident and Family Council Toolkit*.
- Collaborate with Alberta Health Services to develop communications and processes to support effective resident and family councils across Alberta.

Visit the Network's website: seniorsnetworkcovenant.ca

The Alberta Continuing Care Resident and Family Council Toolkit can be found at:
seniorsnetworkcovenant.ca/network-initiatives/alberta-resident-family-council-toolkit/



"This project was an extremely useful, wonderful educational experience. Participating in this project has given us a valuable guide on how to set up a proper functioning council."
- Pilot Participant