



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.

Resident and Family Councils (RFCs) are mechanisms for families to share their ideas and for operators to proactively share information and to develop plans in cooperation with families. Implementing effective RFCs in continuing care facilities will help ensure that families and residents are active partners in care. The Network will enhance and expand the value and utilization of RFCs in continuing care settings.

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

Results:

- 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.
 - Many sites saw an increase in resident, family, staff and administrator attendance during the pilot
- Most participants reported improvement in their council function. Those that did not were waiting until after the pilot completed to make changes to their council.
- 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.
- 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.

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.