

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is the HQCA?

The Health Quality Council of Alberta (HQCA) is a government agency with a mandate to promote and improve person-centred care, patient safety and health service quality across Alberta and to survey Albertans about their experience with the healthcare system.

The HQCA gathers and analyzes information, monitors the healthcare system, and collaborates with Alberta Health, Alberta Health Services, health professions, university researchers, and other stakeholders to translate that knowledge into practical improvements to health service quality and patient safety in the healthcare system.

Why are sites sharing resident and family information with the HQCA?

Alberta Health Services and Alberta Health are collaborating with the Health Quality Council of Alberta (HQCA) to conduct these surveys and interviews. The *Health Quality Council of Alberta Act* gives us the authority to engage with Albertans on their experience and satisfaction with patient safety, person-centred care, and health service quality.

Under the *Health Information Act* (HIA), the HQCA is designated as a custodian, and a public body as defined in the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPPA). As a custodian, the HQCA has the legislated authority to use personal health information to monitor and improve the healthcare system. The HQCA strictly follows all of the requirements of the HIA and FOIPPA to protect family and resident information and identity.

What will residents and families get out of participating in this survey and interviews?

The survey and interview responses will be analyzed to explore the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the experiences of residents who live in continuing care, and the experiences of their family members, as well as their perceptions and understanding of the public health orders and their implementation by sites. In addition, both outbreak and non-outbreak sites will be included in the work. This information will address knowledge gaps in Alberta's pandemic response and will help stakeholders identify opportunities to improve the pandemic response and the delivery of care and services in the months ahead.

Can residents and families refuse to participate?

Resident and family member participation in this survey is completely voluntary. Participation will not influence the care residents receive now or in the future. We hope that they choose to participate, but it is completely voluntary.

How will the information be used?

The information residents and families provide in the surveys and interviews will be analyzed and reviewed by the HQCA, who will then report the results to AHS and AH as well as on its website, www.hqca.ca.

How will patient privacy be protected?

The HQCA is a custodian under the *Health Information Act*, and as such, the information the HQCA collects is strictly protected and confidential. All survey and interview results will be completely anonymous and it will not be possible to identify individuals in the reports.

In accordance with the *Alberta Protection for Persons in Care Act* we are legally obligated to report any abuse or neglect which we are informed about to the appropriate authorities.

Also, if residents or family members raise any concerns that we are not legally bound to report, but suggest that they or others are unsafe, we may decide to report this information to *Patient Concerns* at Alberta Health Services and ask them to explore the concern. Please be assured that if we do this, no names will not be revealed unless the HQCA is given permission to do so.

Will it be possible to identify residents or families in the information?

No. Any information reported will be a summary of all survey and interview results. The HQCA will not report information that could identify a resident or family member.

Can residents and families get a copy of the survey results?

Survey and interview results will be reported publicly via the Health Quality Council of Alberta's website, hqca.ca when the project is completed.

Is there someone residents and families can talk to for more information about the survey?

If residents or families wish to speak with someone to verify the survey or interview process, to ask questions, or to provide comments about the survey or interviews, please contact Ryan Reyes, Sonja Smith and/or Jessie Gish at the Health Quality Council of Alberta:

- Toll-free at 1-855-508-8162
- Email: covid19@hqca.ca

