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ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES**

**MDS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND MEASUREMENT LTC PROJECT
SYMPOSIUM**

CLOSING REMARKS

**MAYFIELD INN
16615 109 AVENUE
PALLISADES BALLROOM
EDMONTON, AB**

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 2009
SPEAKING TIME: 3:15 P.M. – 3:45 P.M.**

INTRODUCTION

- **Hello everyone, and thank you for inviting me to speak at the MDS Quality Improvement and Measurement LTC Project Symposium**
- **Improving measurement in long term care is absolutely critical to improving the quality and sustainability of long term care in Alberta. It is also a personal interest of mine so I'm honoured to be here today on behalf of Alberta Health Services.**
- **I would also like to commend everyone here today for their continuing commitment to providing quality health services to our seniors and individuals with disabilities. Whether you are an administrator, support staff, nurse, or researcher, the work you do is critical to the well-being of Albertans, and I thank you for that.**
- **I know you've soaked up a lot of information today, so I promise not to go on too long and will let you get on your way soon.**

New Organizational Structure/AHS Background

- **Over the past year, there has been a lot of talk about Alberta's health care system. Where we've been, where we are, and where we're going.**
- **As you know, there has been a lot of change within the health system as we continue to develop our provincial structure. The amount of work involved in bringing together the province's staff, physicians, volunteers, facilities, programs and services has been, and continues to be, a monumental task.**
- **But when you look at our goal, it seems really quite manageable. Our mission is to provide a patient-focused, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans. Our mandate is to ensure that quality health supports and services are coordinated across the province.**
- **We know what we need to achieve and I know that we can achieve the goals we set.**
- **Many people have asked how Alberta Health Services is different from the former regionalized structure. One of the main differences is that there is now central accountability, we are introducing signed performance agreements, and singular sets of provincial standards and policies to guide everyone.**

- **This means that we can ensure that good ideas from anywhere in the province can be picked up and rolled out to every corner of Alberta. We are the largest health care provider in Canada; it is our task to demonstrate we are also the best, and to become the gold standard for health delivery around the world.**
- **To become that gold standard, we are committed to building an organization based on collaboration and engagement.**
- **A large step toward that goal took place on Monday, with the implementation of our new organizational structure. This is a foundational step for drawing like functions together, launching a new culture of engagement for Alberta Health Services.**
- **The new structure supports our vision of patient-focused quality care that is accessible and sustainable.**
- **It is based on four principles: clear and unambiguous line accountability; flattening of the organization; integration of services and units as close as possible to the front line; and a direct link to strategy and implementation at the Executive level.**

- **Over time, we'll be developing Alberta Service Models, our single approach to design and implementation of the care approach across Alberta.**
- **Developing these 'service models' will be collaborative, involving people from the front line, people with research experience in the relevant area, consumers, people with skills in costing the implementation and so on.**
- **Although not advocating a one size fits all approach, we want to ensure equity across the province and that the best evidence-based ideas and approaches are shared and implemented so that all our services can be of the highest-quality possible.**
- **As the provincial health authority, we are responsible for improving the planning and delivery of health services and supports in a way that directly benefits Albertans. This is the reason you came together for this symposium – to share ideas that will shape the future of continuing care in Alberta.**

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

- **In addition to finalizing our organizational structure, one of our top priorities has been to develop a clear strategic direction for the new organization.**
- **As this will be the plan that is going to guide and steer us for the next three years, we invited our staff, physicians and health delivery partners to provide their input into the plan.**
- **We felt it was incredibly important they had the opportunity to share their thoughts – after all, they are the ones who work in the system every day, and are well-aware of the challenges and opportunities we are facing.**
- **Their contributions are a big part of the direction of this organization, its success and its future.**
- **Our strategic direction document will help us shape our organization's culture. The Health Minister noted this morning how much customer service is impacted by an organization's culture. We want to ensure our clients, patients and residents have the best experiences possible as they use our facilities, services and programs.**

VALUES

- **At the core of our strategic direction are our values. These values will help define our culture.**
- **Values or principles are important in all organizations, but are particularly important in the health sector. We work in an industry driven by values, and most of us choose to work in this sector just because of those values, and the reward we get from helping those in need.**
- **One of my first priorities when I took the role of President and Chief Executive Officer was to lay out what our core values should be.**
- **In consultation with our staff and executive, we established *respect, accountability, transparency and engagement* as the core values.**
- **Our expectation is that every member of Alberta Health Services, from support staff to the executive office – which includes me, lives these values in our everyday work.**
- **Each of these values will be seen in how we go about that work.**

- **Our values aren't just simple words – they represent very important concepts and behaviours that we need to follow moving forward.**
- **By following these values everyday, in each part of the health system, our patients and clients will have a much better experience, as well as those employed in the health services industry.**

CONTINUING CARE STRATEGY

- **Now I'd like to steer things back toward our continuing care strategy.**
- **The World Health Organization describes the aging population as “one of humanity's greatest triumphs” and one of its “greatest challenges.”**
- **One of the major questions going forward is the province's capacity to meet the health-care and personal care needs of the seniors' population from both a human and a financial resource perspective.**
- **Currently, demand for long-term care beds exceeds what is available in the province. This has resulted in occupancy rates near or at 100 per cent, and with that comes significant**

waiting lists.

- **Patients waiting for continuing care are often in acute care facilities In fact, approximately 11 per cent of patients in Alberta's acute care beds are awaiting long-term care beds or supportive living placement.**
- **To deal with these issues, we need a focused multiple-strategy approach.**
- **We want to offer seniors and persons with disabilities more options for quality accommodation that suit their lifestyles and service needs.**
- **Providing the right type of placement for seniors at the right time and in the right location ensures seniors:**
 - **Can age in place;**
 - **Receive the same level of dignity and respect for their abilities and quality of life**
 - **Can participate actively in decisions about their care**
 - **Are supported to remain as engaged with family, friends and community as possible.**
- **By improving choice and availability of services, more capacity will be opened for acute care patients waiting for**

- continuing care – including home care, supportive living and long-term care.**
- **We need to support all this by a rational funding strategy. This means we need to ensure that our continuing care facilities are paid for the care they provide, and that care is what the residents need. This in turn means we will need to have robust assessment and measurement procedures, and funding models linked to that. RUGs will provide the basis for this. All this will take time to develop, but we need to start phasing it in for the next financial year. As we move on funding reform, or sustainability to use the term from our goals, we also need to work on quality. That is why conferences such as this are so important.**
 - **Our approach to quality and safety in Alberta will highlight three key enablers:**
 - **Patients as partners (and here we include residents and clients). This piece is about patient engagement, patient involvement and informed decision making**
 - **Skilled people and a supportive culture (probably self explanatory) and**
 - **Accountability through measurement and evaluation.**

- **This conference clearly positions you well with respect to this last theme. This theme will play out in continuing care through an increased focus on tracking performance of our facilities (including our funded facilities) in terms of terms of things like the incidence of quality markers such as pressure wounds or falls. The InterRAI tools will be useful here.**

CONCLUSION

- **So, we come to what everyone here has been waiting for - the conclusion of my speech. Thank you for staying with me to this point.**
- **Alberta's health care system is recognized as one of the leading health systems in the country, and I am happy to be part of the team working to make it even better.**
- **As Alberta Health Services works to further the integration of systems and best practices across Alberta, we will build on this province's history of success and innovation in health and look to all of you to help continue that success.**
- **I know that working together, we can build a health care system that addresses not only the needs of seniors, but also the needs of all Albertans.**
- **Thank you all, and have a pleasant journey home. END**