

June 1, 2006

Health Quality Council established as a provincial health authority

Edmonton... Effective July 1, Albertans will benefit from more coordinated province-wide programs that focus on patient safety and quality health care as the Health Quality Council of Alberta is established as a provincial health authority.

"Designating the Health Quality Council as a health authority is consistent with the government's health reform goals to have a health system that is focused on the patient," said Iris Evans, Minister of Health and Wellness. "This will facilitate the sharing of resources and ideas between health authorities helping to improve quality and safety, as well as help reduce overall health costs."

"The primary role of the Health Quality Council has always been to provide Albertans with an independent assessment of the quality, safety and performance of the province's health system," said Dr. Lorne Tyrrell, Health Quality Council Chair. "I am confident that establishing the Council as a health authority will help support continued improvement to the quality of health care in Alberta."

The Council will work in cooperation with other health authorities to improve health service quality and patient safety. The Council will be able to undertake research and policy reviews that individual authorities may not be able to do on their own. Their mandate will also include providing information to all health authorities that can be put into action in Alberta health facilities and programs. In some cases Council recommendations may be put into directives or standards by the Minister to guide the delivery of health services.

The Council will continue to survey Albertans about their experience and satisfaction with the quality of health services and patient safety and report the findings. They will also continue to build relationships with other provincial, national and international organizations interested in patient safety and quality health services.

The Health Quality Council of Alberta was established in January 2002 as the Health Services Utilization and Outcomes Commission as a result of the Report of the Premier's Advisory Council on Health (Mazankowski Report). In February 2004 the name changed and the mandate expanded. It has functioned as a Ministerial Committee which reports to Albertans on the quality, performance and accessibility of health services; identifies best practices; as well as reviews and monitors health care quality and patient safety issues. As a provincial health board, the Council will have a broader system-focus.

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Media enquiries may be directed to:

Joanne Anderson
Communications
Alberta Health and Wellness
Phone: (780) 427-7164

Pam Brandt
Communications
Health Quality Council of Alberta
(403) 297-8162

To call toll-free within Alberta dial 310-0000.

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