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## Media Release

### HQCA – Survey Results of Supportive Living Resident & Family Experience Reports

July 25 2017

**EDMONTON** – The Health Quality Council of Alberta (HQCA) recently released the results of their 2016 provincial surveys that measure the experience of residents and families with the quality of care and services received at supportive living facilities in Alberta. Conducted by HQCA in collaboration with Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services, the research is a follow-up to their 2013-2014 surveys and provides a measurement by which future survey results can be compared about residents' and families' experiences at AHS, private and voluntary supportive living across the province. These provincial surveys, *Supportive Living Family Experience Survey Report* and *Supportive Living Resident Experience Survey Report*, highlight the voices and experiences of 2,870 residents and 4,629 family members within the province's continuing care system, and also serve to identify areas needing improvement.

The results of the surveys, while mostly positive with 94% of family respondents and 90.5% of resident respondents saying they would recommend their home to someone looking for supportive living, are also demonstrative that there are common misconceptions about our province's continuing care industry that, through perpetuation, only lead to confusion for someone looking for information in an already complex system. For instance,

- As with the 2013-14 surveys, ownership type (AHS publically funded, private, or voluntary) has absolutely no influence on resident or family experience.

All continuing care providers, regardless of ownership type, are held to the same standards and accountability. Many conduct their own surveys in addition to the HQCA research, as quality service and care improvements are always the focus for all organizations caring for Alberta's seniors and adults requiring continuing care.

More and more though, with aging infrastructure, decades-old regulations and policies, and mounting costs of operation, care providers have to be innovative in ensuring this is possible. Respondents' satisfaction comes as a result of cultures of caring having been fostered. As one survey respondent stated, "The (facility) is a real home, not because of the building but because of the staff. There is a culture of love that I believe flows down from the management to the vast majority of the staff." Yet, staffing levels and availability, along with food quality and dining experiences, remain respondents' top two concerns.

Family members perceive a "direct link between government funding for supportive living in Alberta, and the quality of care residents receive". Food service is, in fact, funded through accommodation charges, which are regulated by the government. Alberta's current accommodation fees, which also cover housekeeping, heat and power, building, maintenance, and other facets that lead to an individual's comfort and security, are among the lowest in Canada. While Alberta Continuing Care Association (ACCA) members are encouraged by and support the results of the HQCA Reports, we are increasingly concerned by the mounting challenges of a rapidly aging population with increasingly complex needs and dwindling resources.

Now, more than ever, Alberta Health, Alberta Health Services, and ACCA members need to be focused on investing in our province's continuing care industry, as was recently done in British Columbia and in other jurisdictions, so that Albertans receive the quality care and services in the safe and comfortable environments they so deserve. Without long-overdue investment, Albertans need to be prepared for future survey results to go down; not from lack of continuing care providers' efforts, as evidenced by comments directly from families and residents, but from a system that, despite what the statistics have been telling us for years, continues to be forgotten.

*About ACCA - ACCA represents the owners and operators of continuing care facilities and home care and support organizations. Collectively, our members provide care and services for almost 13,000 long term care and designated supportive living individuals and over 5 million hours of Home Care to Albertans. We champion for quality of care, quality of life and enhanced wellness for those requiring Continuing Care.*

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