

Community Needs Driven Research Network

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First Nations Issues

Continuing care (CC) issues related to First Nations populations was the top issue for participants in Northern Alberta. Issues regarding First Nations were defined as being the unique and particular characteristics of First Nations communities that are not common in other sub-populations in the province.

Difficulties in providing care:

There are several elements in caring for seniors and those with disabilities that makes caring for these individuals particularly difficult. Examples of these include:

- Isolated geographical locations, which causes stress for the individual, also makes it difficult to attract staff that will commit to the location and who are even interested in moving to these isolated areas. Due to the isolation resident's face, staff retention and recruitment is impacted.
- Another factor associated with the isolation is that it is hard to arrange transportation for CC clients when they happen to need acute care services. Clients in these areas often have to wait longer than those in less isolated regions. Clients' health issues can be further complicated because they have to wait longer to receive the additional services they require.



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- Another geographical issue is the division of First Nation's territory, which can make it difficult to identify the jurisdictions and the agencies responsible for funding. Both facilities and professionals often struggle in identifying the agency or institution that is responsible for funding a certain part of the care process for the client, this delays access to services.



What issues were identified by front-line staff?:

- Confusion arising from inconsistencies in geographic divisions (where you live, who funds your care, hierarchies of care, etc...).
- Jurisdictional issues for aboriginal communities prevent collaboration.
- Not economically viable for health professionals to move to the outlying communities.
- No reliable transportation for outlying communities.

What is being done to address this issue?

A research team (University of Alberta, Keyano College, and Health Canada) has been funded by ICCER to develop and evaluate an educational model focused on aboriginal health for patients in continuing care living in remote northern communities using a community consultation and engagement process. This project will:

- create a diverse project team to develop a community engagement and consultation process in order to identify priority aboriginal health issues for the simulation scenarios, for both students and practitioners;
- build capacity, via a workshop, in instructors at Keyano College, School of Health, Wellness, and Human Services for developing interprofessional simulation-based scenarios focused on the challenges of providing care in remote northern communities with an aboriginal population within the continuing care sector;
- deliver and evaluate as co-curricular activities for students at Keyano College the series of interprofessional simulation-based scenarios developed at the workshop ;
- develop, deliver and evaluate a continuing education approach for current practitioners in Fort Chipewyan; and
- evaluate this educational model (learners and instructors experiences) using a mixed methods, quasi-experimental research design.

For more information on this project, contact Dr. Sharla King (780-492-2233) or Dr. Vincella Thompson (780-791-4833).