



INSTITUTE FOR CONTINUING CARE EDUCATION & RESEARCH

# **An Evaluation**

## **Executive Summary**

February 2016



## Executive Summary

### **Background**

The Institute for Continuing Care Education and Research (ICCER) is a collaborative network of post-secondary institutions and continuing care provider organizations in Alberta. It was established in 2008, with representation from four key partners. Since then it has grown and the network, at the time of the evaluation, included twelve organizations.

ICCER's mission is to improve continuing care in Alberta by encouraging research, translating knowledge into better practice, enhancing education, and informing policy.

The evaluation was carried out in late 2015 and early 2016. Representatives from member organizations, other continuing care providers, researchers, and staff in continuing care organizations were engaged and contributed in order to fully understand the value of ICCER, its major accomplishments to date, and how it reaches various audiences.

### **Evaluation questions, approach and methodology**

Two overarching evaluation questions guided the evaluation:

1. What has ICCER accomplished over the past seven years?
2. What, if any, are the benefits of ICCER's accomplishments to its members and target audiences?

The evaluation approach was collaborative in nature involving ICCER staff, member organizations, and the external evaluator.

The methodology used mixed methods and multiple data sources to allow for data triangulation to ensure high confidence in the evaluation results. The multiple lines of evidence included secondary document review (n=47), electronic survey (n=99), telephone interviews (n=17), and a focus group.

### **Findings**

The ICCER collaborative network has established a strong foundation upon which to build into the future. The seminal work done in the early years has led to sound practices and a clear vision. The active community consultation work is viewed as effective in reaching those in the continuing care sector.

ICCER has stayed true to its original vision of best care and quality of life for those serviced by the continuing care sector by:

- Working in collaboration with continuing care providers.
- Defining research needs based on the needs identified by continuing care stakeholders.
- Sharing the learnings (KT) with all its continuing care stakeholders.

All member organizations saw great value in being a member of ICCER. Through their membership, they have had an opportunity to become stronger learning organizations. The ICCER membership aligns with their own organizations' business plans and mandates.

It is a unique collaboration that brings together a variety of organizations and businesses all with a focus on ensuring that continuing care best practices are available and evident in service delivery. However, there is also concern that some key organizations are not members as of yet.

ICCER has created both local and provincial "sandboxes", structures that allow individuals and organizations to meet and engage around specific topics and explore how to work together in moving specific research and quality improvement projects forward. ICCER is a neutral host and organizer that creates the opportunity for connections to be made and meets the needs of various types of stakeholders such as post-secondary institutions, researchers, and providers.

ICCER has a rather low visibility among continuing care stakeholders. The benefits and value of ICCER membership are not well known in the continuing care sector, outside of the immediate members. These benefits need to be highlighted and actively shared and ICCER's successes should be tracked in a systematic way to provide evidence of value to potential future members and funders.

Since its inception, most of the day-to-day leadership has been provided by staff. To become more sustainable and to truly reflect the underpinning of the collaborative, member organizations would like to see more practical application of ownership by its own members.

ICCER has had limited impact so far on continuing care policy development. However, there are great opportunities for ICCER to provide the linkage (two-way-street) between ensuring that policy and accountability frameworks for continuing care are supported by sound and reliable research, while also acting as the agent to encourage research that informs and influences policy.