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NEWS RELEASE

Landmark partnership aims to enhance continuing care

Edmonton, Canada – Four of Alberta's leading health and education institutions signed an agreement today that positions Edmonton to become a centre of excellence for continuing care.

A first-of-its-kind partnership between NorQuest College, CapitalCare, Capital Health and the University of Alberta aims to enhance the quality of life of people in continuing care by strengthening the role of research and evidence-based practice in the education of health care professionals who work in the continuing care system.

The Memorandum of Understanding lays the groundwork for the creation of the Institute for Continuing Care, Education and Research, based in Edmonton. Once established, the institute will provide a learning community where best practices in education, research and care are developed and used to improve the quality of care in the continuing care system.

The goals of the institute will be to:

- strengthen the effectiveness of the clinical practicum experience in the continuing care environment
- stimulate and support research and its application in continuing care
- share and exchange knowledge and expertise with the community
- promote continuing care as a career of choice

"In the Capital Health region alone the number of seniors is expected to double in the next 20 years. Given this shift, we need a plan to ensure that seniors have access to the care, support and services they require helping them maintain a high quality of life," says Marguerite Rowe, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Community Care, Rehabilitation and Geriatrics.

"With our partner institutions, the University of Alberta is committed to linking clinical and academic research, education and continuing care in a way that is both innovative and productive," said Carl Amrhein, Provost and Vice-President (Academic) at the University of Alberta. "This initiative allows the problem solving to happen across disciplines as well as across institutions. It will re-define the way we address the important issues surrounding continuing care – and will ultimately benefit the care-givers, the recipients of care and the community."

"As a national leader in health care education, particularly in the fields of practical nurse and health care aid, NorQuest College believes this collaboration will improve the quality of education and educational experience for students and instructors," says Dr. Wayne Shillington, President & CEO, NorQuest College.

"Attracting health care providers to the field of continuing care has been a challenge in the past, and is exacerbated in today's highly competitive Alberta labour market," said Iris Neumann, CEO, CapitalCare. "We anticipate the formation of this Institute will generate increased interest in continuing care as a career of choice."

The intent to create the institute was announced today at CapitalCare Dickinsfield, a long-term care facility operated by CapitalCare. Earlier this year, NorQuest College partnered with CapitalCare to offer the Practical Nurse Program on site at Dickinsfield. Since January, 26 students have been enrolled in the two-year program. Students will get practical, hands-on experience with the elderly and disabled people living at the centre. This collaborative method of program delivery is an early example of the changes such an institute could bring.

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Capital Health in Edmonton is Canada's largest health region and is affiliated with the University of Alberta, providing integrated health services to one million residents in Edmonton and the surrounding area. Capital Health acts as a referral centre to central and northern Alberta, the North and the Prairies, providing specialized services such as trauma and burn treatment, organ transplants and high-risk obstetrics.

The University of Alberta is one of the top 100 teaching and research universities in the world. Founded a century ago, the university has an annual budget in excess of \$1 billion and attracts more than \$480 million in external research funding. The eight faculties affiliated with the U of A Health Sciences Council – a consortium that encompasses all aspects of professional health education - serve nearly 4,000 health science students and 400 teachers in 14 professional programs and 29 graduate programs.

NorQuest College serves more than 10,000 students each year through full-time, part-time, and regional programs across Alberta. In addition to health, human services, business and industry career programs, NorQuest offers expertise in adult literacy, academic upgrading, English as a Second Language (ESL) and learner supports for students with disabilities.

CapitalCare is the largest public continuing care organization in Canada. Operating in Edmonton and area since 1964, our 2,800 employees provide care and services for more than 1,400 elderly and disabled adults living in 11 centres and over 300 clients living in the community. CapitalCare is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Capital Health.

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