

Community Needs Driven Research Network

ISSUE

05

June
2014

CNDRN

Role definition within the CC sector

Participants identified role definition as an issue caused by the overlap that exists among tasks given to RNs, LPNs, and HCAs across facilities. This related to the rising demands that are being placed on LPNs and HCAs in settings where they are leading the care without the needed critical thinking tools to do so. It is unclear whether LPNs have certain skills that can allow them to lead and drive some care settings, or whether they are being asked to do so without providing them the necessary educational tools.

Participants spoke about a few areas of research that match this theme, such as:

1. Comparing outcomes of care between RN and LPN driven tasks in certain key areas (e.g. RAI assessment); and
2. Exploring which competencies RNs, LPNs, and HCAs perceive as within their role and competencies in the CC sector, and compare that to actual care models



What front-line workers said:

- “And when you go from one model of care that is an LPN focused model of care to another model of care which is an HCA [led] model of care, and these people need to be superstars in their organizations, how can we have that within our scopes of practice?”
- “To have some research around competencies of the LPN vs. the RN, around scope of practice, and you know, um, as the assessment leads.”



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This project was funded by:
Alberta Innovates Health Solutions

What is being done to address this issue?

- A one-day symposium, *Creating Cultures of Care: How Responsive Leadership Creates Responsive Care*, was held in Calgary and Edmonton on October 7 and 8, 2013. The symposium was related to the issue of role definition and team work between the RNs, LPNs, and HCAs.
- A grant, 'The Responsive Leadership Interventions', was submitted to Network of Excellence in Seniors' Health and Wellness (NESHEW). The principal investigator (PI) on the project is Sienna Caspar and Co-PI is Don McLeod, both from Bethany Care Society.
- A working group is exploring strategies to address issues related to role clarity among nursing staff in continuing care (CC) as a follow-up to a related ICCER/AHS study (*Optimizing Workforce Utilization to Inform Care Delivery in CC Facilities*). This is part of a CIHR planning grant project.
- A team of researchers from Wing-Kei Care Centre, Bethany Care Society, University of Calgary, and University of Alberta, has been funded to look further into role definition within an interdisciplinary team. The project, 'A Comparison of the Effectiveness of Electronic vs. Paper-based Documentation', proposes to compare the effectiveness of electronic versus paper-based documentation by Health Care Aides (HCA) and how technology affects the communication between HCAs and their interdisciplinary team members. Documentation forms a critical component of decision-making for staff. Technology has the potential to impact the quality of care to residents and improve communication between interdisciplinary team members.

