

## THE QUESTION

How are differences in staffing approaches and physical designs within Nova Scotia's nursing homes impacting resident quality of life?

## Project Background

In Nova Scotia, the long term care sector has been undergoing significant changes as part of the Continuing Care Strategy. New and replacement nursing homes were built with physical designs that incorporate several smaller, households. The staffing-mix within households was adjusted to support continuing care assistants to perform personal care, but also for household-level tasks such as housekeeping and dietary. These changes have implications for residents, their families, and staff but the impact of these changes are not fully understood.

The case studies sought to understand the impact of three different models of care, defined by differences in physical design and staffing approach on resident quality of life in 6 care constellations (a resident, family member and staff member). Two residents from each of the three models of care were selected, one who could speak for themselves and one who could not. Findings indicate that relationships and home-likeness impact residents' quality of life, and are highly related to one another (e.g., a home is a place with good relationships, and good relationships improve the home-likeness of the facility).

## Moving Forward

Findings from this research provide evidence that resident quality of life can be improved in all nursing homes, regardless of physical design or staffing approach, by addressing the quality of relationships, home-likeness, and the working environment.

This research has been shared and discussed with sector representatives, resulting in key actionable recommendations in three overarching areas; Policy, Practice, and Education.

For more information about this research, please visit our website at:

~~ [www.careandconstruction.ca](http://www.careandconstruction.ca) ~~

## The Project Team



The project team included many partners: universities, nursing homes, health agencies, and government. Special thanks to the participating facilities, residents, family and staff who made this research possible.



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# Nursing Home Resident Quality of Life

## Case Study Findings March, 2015



## Care and Construction Assessing Differences in Nursing Home Models of Care on Resident Quality of Life

- ✓ Six care constellations of a resident, family and staff member
- ✓ Interviews, participant observation, and activity monitoring in three nursing homes



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# Case Study Results: What Supports Resident Quality of Life?

## Resident Autonomy

Residents expressed their choices by maintaining their favourite activities and routines. Sometimes residents and their family members negotiated with staff to increase opportunities for independence and autonomy.

## Staff Continuity and Familiarity

Consistent staffing was valued by residents, family members, and staff members. Staff consistency enhanced familiarity with resident needs and created opportunities for building relationships.



## Strong Relationships with Staff Members

Residents valued opportunities to share and give back to staff, through activities such as teaching crafts, and sharing recipes and books.

Family members valued a collaborative relationship with staff and wanted to be seen as a part of the care team.

## Family Member Involvement

Family members provided residents with opportunities for social contact, both in and outside the nursing home.

Family members provided residents with a connection to their histories. In particular, they provided comfort and familiarity for residents who were unable to speak for themselves.

Family members helped to monitor residents' medical and personal care needs. Family members also took residents to scheduled services, such as dental hygiene and massage therapy.



## Home-likeness

Residents and family members valued having a private room to support more intimate visits. Personalized décor, an available kitchen and a shared household living room also enhanced home-likeness.

Family members felt that physical design contributed to the home-likeness of the nursing home. Residents focused on their relationships with staff and family when describing if they felt at home in the nursing home.

## Balancing Safety and Risk

Results showed that residents were very inactive and that opportunities for physical activity were limited. Providing opportunities for physical activity for persons at all levels of function can support resident quality of life.

Safety had different meanings for different people. For residents and family, safety was related to issues of privacy (theft, people coming into their room without permission). Staff emphasized the importance of keeping residents safe through falls-prevention and providing a balanced diet. Staff felt that familiarity with residents was important to balancing risk and safety.



## Enhancing Resident Quality of Life

Features that enhanced resident quality of life were:

- A home-like design with private rooms for residents and spaces for family and social activity
- Staff interactions that promoted close, reciprocal relationships with family and collaborative relationships with family members.
- Consistent staffing, enabling staff to know the residents well

These features can be incorporated into any nursing home, regardless of the model of care.