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## *News Release*

February 25, 2008

### **Landmark partnership aims to enhance life in continuing care**

EDMONTON – Four of Alberta’s leading health and education institutes 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 be 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 aide, 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.

#### **About the partners**

**Capital Health** in Edmonton is Canada's largest health region and is affiliated with the University of Alberta, providing integrated health services to over 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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## ***BACKGROUND***

### **About the Institute for Continuing Care, Education and Research**

#### **Mission**

The Institute will create a learning community where evidence-based practices, founded on research, are developed and used to enhance the quality of life for those served by the continuing care system—residents, family, community, and staff—and to ensure excellence in education for students, our future health care professionals.

#### **Vision**

The Institute will be a partnership of long term care practitioners, researchers, educators and learners collaborating to provide the best care and quality of life for those served by continuing care.

#### **Strategic Objectives**

##### ***1. Foster innovation in education and training of care providers***

Each of the entities brings unique strengths and expertise to the institute:

- NorQuest College graduates over 1,000 health care workers annually in a wide range of skilled occupations to deliver front line care. NorQuest provides innovative instructional models for workplace-based learning, and is committed to delivering educational experiences with a strong inter-disciplinary focus.
- The University of Alberta has over 5,000 health science students in 14 disciplines across eight health science faculties. The Alberta Centre on Aging (ACA) and other centres and groups on campus conduct research on aging, continuing care and health systems.
- CapitalCare is the largest public continuing care organization in Canada, with 2,800 staff and 11 sites in Edmonton and area. CapitalCare's vision is to be a community of excellence in continuing care: teaching, researching and learning to enhance quality of life.
- Capital Health provides public health, community health, acute care, long term and home care, rehabilitation, and mental health services to over one million citizens. As an academic health region, Capital Health is actively involved in educating a comprehensive range of health professionals.

The institute therefore will provide an ideal environment to create synergies, resulting in leading edge research and evidence, and allowing for innovation and the implementation of best practices.

***2. Strengthen the effectiveness of the clinical practicum experience in the continuing care environment***

Because of the diversity of the entities, the institute will offer excellent opportunities to foster a multi-disciplinary approach to continuing care. Students in related programs at the University of Alberta and NorQuest College will be able to learn and work together, and be able to transition smoothly into jobs and careers in the field, as offered by CapitalCare and Capital Health.

***3. Stimulate and support research and its application in continuing care***

Research is the key to gathering the evidence necessary to implement best practices. The knowledge created through the institute's research activities will ensure that care is delivered innovatively and in the safest and most appropriate manner. Building on the strong research commitment of the entities, the institute will maintain or expand the leadership position they currently enjoy in Alberta, Canada and beyond.

***4. Share and exchange knowledge and expertise with the community***

Continuing care traditionally has a strong bond with the community it serves. Individually, the entities also have excellent connections with and support in the community. The institute will provide excellent opportunities for the entities to exchange knowledge and expertise with those it serves. The flow of knowledge and expertise preferably works in both directions, and a number of venues will be explored to facilitate it, such as conferences, publications, media involvement etc.

***5. Promote continuing care as a career of choice***

Attracting health professionals and other workers to the field of continuing care is an ongoing challenge. Continuing care does not enjoy a high profile amongst the health disciplines and staff shortages are exacerbated in today's highly competitive Alberta labour market. The institute will be well positioned to address these challenges. It will offer a continuum of education, research and service provision, as well as many opportunities of interdisciplinary activities that should generate increased interest in continuing care as a career of choice.