



Dear Long-Term Care Leaders,

The struggles of the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for direct and consistent communication between residents, families and long-term care community staff and management. We know that one of the most effective vehicles for supporting this is a family, resident, or combined family and resident councils.

We also know that while most care communities have councils in place, others may have been forced to suspend activity and have been unable to regain their pre-COVID momentum.

On November 3, 2022, the Ministry of Health issued updated regulations surrounding family councils in long-term care communities and released a detailed guidebook to assist in the creation, operation and maintenance of resident and, or family councils. The BC Care Providers Association also released a similar document.

Fraser Health's Regional Resident and Family Advisory Committee has summarized the key concepts and templates included in the Ministry's and Care Provider's guidebooks and the result is the attached **Fraser Health Toolkit for Family Councils**.

This simple five page document can assist residents, family members and care community leadership establish or restart a council. If you have an existing council, we invite you to share this toolkit with its members.

The Regional Resident and Family Advisory Committee is here to support all councils and we hope the toolkit will help provide comfort, care and connection within your long-term care community.

Regards,

Catherine Youngren, Family Partner  
Co-Chair, Regional Resident and Family Advisory Committee

Suzanne Fox, Executive Director Seniors, Community & Complex Care  
Co-Chair, Regional Resident and Family Advisory Committee



## Resident and Family Advisory Council – Philosophy

Fraser Health's Long-term Care (LTC) and Assisted Living (AL) Team is committed to providing comfort, care and connection to all residents and family members who live, or who have a loved one living in a care community.

Integral to this work is the creation and sustainment of active and engaged resident and family councils. Our goal is to have councils in 100 per cent of all Fraser Health owned and operated and affiliated care communities by 2025.

Resident and Family councils have become increasingly important as both a voice for residents and as a place where family members can find support. Councils give residents and their families the opportunity to:

- Support one another and share experiences
- Look for solutions to common concerns
- Have direct, safe and open discussions and engagement with local leadership and to listen to the leadership responses and reasoning behind decisions that have and are being made
- Generate ideas to improve quality of life and build a sense of community
- Provide a space for further education

It is up to each care community to determine what type of council is needed. For example, options might be only a family council; separate family and resident councils; or a combined resident and family council.

All councils should be established in collaboration, consultation with support from residents, families and site leadership.

One of the most important aspects of a successful council is its structure. Having clear objectives and goals will help to guide the councils work. Fraser Health has identified four (4) common goals:

1. **SUPPORT** – Council members support one another and provide a space to share experiences.
2. **COMMUNICATION** – Councils facilitate and enhance communication between residents, families, staff and leadership and give everyone an opportunity to be kept informed about what is happening at the site.
3. **COLLABORATION** – A successful council works collaboratively with the care community's leadership team in order to advance the interests of the residents.
4. **EDUCATION** – Councils provide a forum for discussion of relevant issues or topics, while providing updates on what is occurring at the site.



Councils should primarily consist of residents and family members. It is important to respect and recognize how the resident defines what 'family member' means to them. Fraser Health's Regional Resident and Family Advisory Committee has created this toolkit to support council creation and sustainment with the following:

- Terms of Reference: outlines how a council functions and will be reviewed annually to make sure they continue to meet the current needs of the council.
- Suggested agenda topics
- Agenda
- Meeting minutes

If your local care community would like further support in getting a council started, a representative from the Regional Resident and Family Advisory Committee would be happy to assist. You can reach out to [LTCALadmin@fraserhealth.ca](mailto:LTCALadmin@fraserhealth.ca) for more information.



## **Terms of Reference Family and/or Resident Council**

### **Background and purpose**

Resident and/or family councils work together with their care community to maintain and enhance the quality of life of residents by providing them a voice in the decision making process. They consist of people who either live in an assisted living or long-term care community or the contact persons, essential care partners, representatives or relatives of a resident.

Councils will receive support from a member of the care community leadership team or a site leader may service directly on the council. Members will promote and facilitate communication, partnership and collaboration between residents, family members, facility staff and management.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

- Members will work collaboratively with the care community to improve processes that will benefit the residents
- Members will facilitate discussion of concerns and generate solutions
- Members will identify opportunities to enhance quality of life and participate in local quality improvement projects that will benefit the residents
- Members will engage in education and information opportunities relevant to assisted living and long-term care

### **Meetings**

- Councils are recommended to meet monthly or, at a minimum, quarterly
- Meeting dates and times to be determined by the council

### **Terms, renewal and leaving the Council**

- There is no maximum amount of time that members can serve on the council
- Members can withdraw from the council at anytime by any means (e.g., written, verbal, or electronic)

### **Membership**

**ALL** family members or representatives are welcomed to participate for however long they so chose. There is no maximum to the number of members allowed on the council. Alternative means of participation, such as Zoom or Teams should be utilized by the council to maximize participation.

### **Chair**

The family and/or resident councils will be chaired by a member volunteer and supported by a member of the site leadership team.

**Leadership Support**

Leadership will reserve meeting space, provide technical support during meetings, and maintain meeting records. They will co-create the meeting agenda with the chair, provide meeting minutes and distribute them to the members at the start of the meeting.

**Fraser Health Suggested Agenda Topics for Resident and/or Family Councils**

The Regional Resident and Family Advisory Committee have developed a list of suggested agenda topics to be used at your local care community council meetings:

1. Updates of local care community – can be operational or awareness
2. Ask the council to submit topics they are interested in
3. Engagement opportunities with the community at large
4. Volunteer opportunities within the site
5. Fundraising ideas
  - a. Specialized equipment
  - b. Recreation activities
  - c. Team/staff member appreciation
  - d. Local charities
6. Planning for family and resident group events
  - a. Holiday dinners
  - b. Summer BBQ's
7. Education sessions with topic experts
  - a. Medical Director – end of life planning,
  - b. Lawyers - estate planning and power of attorney
  - c. Pharmacist – reducing antipsychotic medications
  - d. Director of Care – care conference structure, how are care plans generated, what care is covered under Fraser Health