



The Best Place on Earth

# Acute Care Inpatient Experiences in British Columbia

2008 Survey of British Columbia Acute Care Hospitals

## British Columbia's Acute Care Inpatient Experience Survey

In 2008, British Columbia undertook a survey of inpatients at 78 acute care hospitals to ask for feedback about their experiences with the care and services they received while in hospital. The survey is the second of its kind in British Columbia; the first was conducted in 2005.

Inpatients can tell us a lot about how we are doing in providing accessible and high quality health services that meet their needs. Their feedback can provide insight into what is working and how quality of care can be enhanced. A survey that includes appropriate safeguards for patient consent and confidentiality allows inpatients to be more candid than they might be if they spoke directly to a health care professional or administrator.

The acute care inpatient experience survey is a "snapshot" of hospital care in British Columbia. It provides health care providers, hospital administrators, health authorities and the Ministry with valuable information about how British Columbia's hospitals are performing. The results will assist health authorities and the Ministry of Health Services in providing quality patient care and making improvements where they are needed.

### What the Survey Measured

The survey evaluated inpatients' experiences with medical, surgical, maternity and pediatric acute care services across eight areas or dimensions of care:

- access to care;
- emotional support;
- information and education;
- physical comfort;
- involvement of family;
- respect for patient preferences;
- continuity and transition; and
- coordination of care.

The survey also considered inpatients' overall impressions of the care they received. Additional questions were asked about patient demographics, safety, surgery, pain management, discharge, courtesy of staff, overall impressions of the hospital environment and food quality.



### Participants

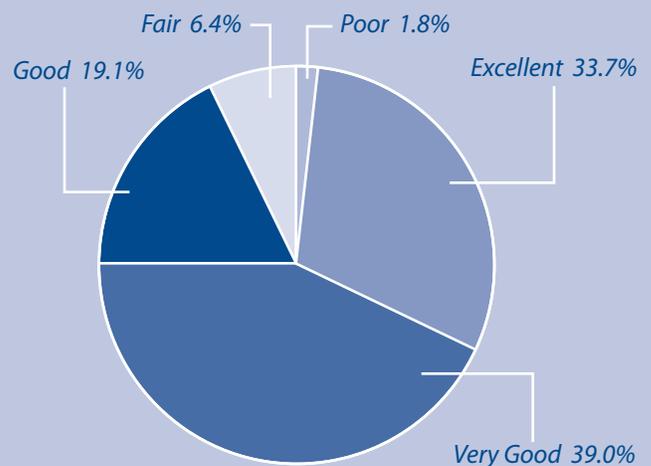
- The survey was mailed to 34,312 randomly selected medical, surgical, maternity and pediatric inpatients discharged from one of 78 acute care hospitals between October 1 and December 31, 2008.
- The response rate was 53 per cent, with 17,389 inpatients responding.

### Overall Quality of Care

Percentage of British Columbian respondents who rated their overall quality of care as good, very good or excellent:

- 92% of all inpatients (Figure 1);
- 93% of pediatric inpatients;
- 94% of maternity inpatients.

Figure 1: Overall Quality of Care for all Inpatients



## How British Columbia Acute Care Facilities are Doing

The results tell us that, overall, most British Columbia inpatients are satisfied with the quality of acute care services. While there are some areas for improvement, 92 per cent rated the overall quality of their care as good, very good or excellent and 94 per cent would definitely or probably recommend their acute care facility to family or friends.

### 2008 survey findings include:

- During admission, 75 per cent of patients felt they did not have to wait an unnecessarily long time to go to their room.
- If they did have to wait to go to their room, 87 per cent of patients reported that someone from the hospital explained the reason for the delay.
- After using a call button, 97 per cent of respondents received help within 15 minutes.
- For those patients that required pain medication, 88 per cent received it within 15 minutes of requesting it.

In general, the findings highlight the following about acute care inpatient experiences in British Columbia:

- Patient ratings of satisfaction with PHYSICAL COMFORT in BC are slightly higher (average scores: 81% vs. 79%) than in the other provinces in the Canadian benchmark (Ontario, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, and Yukon).
- Patients in BC rated PHYSICAL COMFORT highest (average score of 81% positive rating), which is similar to the ranking in the other Canadian provinces. Patients in BC rated CONTINUITY & TRANSITION lowest (average score of 64% positive rating), which is minimally lower than scores in the other Canadian provinces (66%).

### What the Results Mean

These results represent acute care inpatient voices and experiences. They provide vital information about where the BC acute care system is working and what inpatients think could be improved. For example, inpatients give high ratings to the courtesy and availability of physicians and nurses, as well as the overall care provided by physicians. They also say that acute care doctors and nurses work well together. These results testify to the outstanding efforts health care providers make every day.

Many of the areas where acute care inpatients tell us that change is desirable relate to preparation for discharge and emotional support. The ability to dialogue with the top performers in these areas regionally and provincially in BC, as well as with other hospitals in the Canadian benchmark, will provide an opportunity for us to learn from others and spread best practices.



### Top Strengths

Minutes for help after using call button	97%
Courtesy of physicians	95%
Courtesy of admission staff	95%
Overall physician care	94%
Courtesy of nurses	93%



### Top Areas for Improvement

Discussed when to resume normal activities	46%
Overall quality of food	52%
Nurse discussed fears/anxieties	53%
Enough say about treatment	54%
Discussed danger signals to watch for after returning home	55%

## Survey Results

Respondents were surveyed about their inpatient experiences across eight aspects or dimensions of their care. Each dimension of care consists of a series of questions. The responses to each of these questions were averaged to provide an overall score for the dimension. Overall, the survey has a  $\pm 0.6$  per cent random sampling error at the 95 per cent confidence level, which means the results at the provincial level are accurate within + or - 0.6 per cent, 19 times out of 20.

<i>Dimension of Care in B.C.</i>	<i>Average</i>
<b>1. Physical Comfort</b> Includes questions on patients' perceptions about pain management, and availability of assistance at the bedside, such as help with getting to the bathroom in a timely way and wait time after using call button.	<b>81%</b>
<b>2. Access to Services and Care while in Hospital</b> Includes questions on inpatients' perceptions about the availability of physicians and nurses, as well as whether inpatients felt they were able to obtain all the services they needed.	<b>80%</b>
<b>3. Respect for Patient Preferences</b> Includes questions on inpatients' perceptions about whether they felt physicians and nurses talked in front of them as if they weren't there, whether they were treated with dignity and respect and had enough involvement in their own care.	<b>77%</b>
<b>4. Information and Education</b> Includes questions on patients' perceptions about whether physicians and nurses provided sufficient information on issues related to the patients' treatment in a way that was easily understood.	<b>73%</b>
<b>5. Coordination of Care</b> Includes questions on inpatients' perceptions about the timeliness of scheduling tests and procedures, whether the wait to go to their room was unnecessarily long, the organization of the admission process, whether they received conflicting information from different physicians or nurses, and whether one physician was in charge of their care.	<b>72%</b>
<b>6. Involvement of Family</b> Includes questions on inpatient's perceptions about whether their family or someone close had enough involvement in their care.	<b>67%</b>
<b>7. Emotional Support</b> Includes questions on inpatients' perceptions about their confidence and/or trust in physicians and nurses and their availability to discuss anxieties and fears, as well as ease in finding someone to talk to about their concerns.	<b>66%</b>
<b>8. Continuity and Transition</b> Includes questions regarding patient perception of preparation for discharge (e.g. whether the purpose of medications, medication side effects, danger signals to watch for, and when to resume normal activities, were discussed).	<b>64%</b>

## How British Columbia Compares to Other Provinces

British Columbia acute care inpatients' views of their experiences were remarkably similar compared to the average for other Canadian provinces that comprise the Canadian benchmark (Ontario, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, and Yukon).

Their overall rating of the quality of British Columbia's acute care inpatient services (92 per cent) is also on par with the benchmark (93 per cent).



### How the Results Will Be Used

The Ministry of Health Services and health authorities are committed to acting on the survey results.

Health authorities will work to enhance acute inpatient care and share information about best practices among British Columbia hospitals.

## Who Participated

All six health authorities and all 78 acute care hospitals in the province participated. They included small or community hospitals and larger provincial or regional referral facilities.

With some exceptions, all inpatients who received medical, surgical, maternity or pediatric inpatient services at a British Columbia hospital between October 1, 2008 and December 31, 2008 were eligible to receive the survey.

The survey does not include information about patients who died during the survey period, opted out, or:

- were discharged from a freestanding rehabilitation facility;
- received day surgery services;
- were located in designated psychiatric units or beds;
- were infants less than or equal to 10 days old;
- had no fixed address; or
- experienced a miscarriage or presented other sensitive issues (sexual or elder assault/abuse, domestic violence, therapeutic abortions).

## Sample Size

A total of 34,312 surveys were in field between November 11, 2008 and July 28, 2009.

The response rate was 53 per cent, with 17,389 inpatients responding, exceeding the response rate of 46 per cent for similar surveys across Canada.

## Survey Method

A self-report questionnaire was mailed to the inpatients' home addresses.

Translated questionnaires were available in French, Mandarin, Cantonese, Punjabi and German via a toll-free phone line.

Inpatients could also complete the survey online through a secure website (in English only).

## Survey Tool

The province used the inpatient acute care survey, developed by the Picker Institute and National Research Corporation (NRC) Canada, a leader in measuring patient experience.

Selected questions from the Canadian comprehensive maternity survey tool and the Canadian pediatric survey tool, both developed by NRC Canada and pilot tested in British Columbia, were added to the survey to measure experiences among those inpatients.

## Survey Administration

NRC Canada's inpatient acute care survey tool was chosen for use because it had been used in similar surveys in Ontario, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, and the Yukon.

This meant that in addition to meeting the Province's survey requirements, NRC Canada was able to provide comparative data for similar acute care inpatient populations, as well as comparative results for British Columbia between 2005 and 2008.

## Cost

The total cost of the survey is estimated to be about \$370,000 or \$10.79 per survey.



## Comparing the 2005 and 2008 Acute Care Patient Experience Surveys

Monitoring performance over time helps to ensure that as the health care system evolves, there are no negative or unforeseen impacts on patients. In comparing the 2005 and 2008 Acute Care survey results, we find that impact on patients has been minimal.

Table 1: Comparison between 2005 and 2008 Results

	2005	2008
Overall Quality	92%	92%
All Dimensions Combined	72%	72%
Access to care	79%	80%
Emotional support	67%	66%
Information and education	73%	73%
Involvement of family	67%	67%
Physical comfort	80%	81%
Respect for patient preferences	76%	77%
Continuity and transition	65%	64%
Coordination of care	73%	72%

## Strengths in B.C.'s Acute Care System

Inpatients felt most positive about:

- the courtesy of physicians, nurses, and admitting staff;
- their physician care, overall;
- the amount of pain medicine received; and
- how well physicians and nurses worked together.

Maternity inpatients were also positive about how confident they felt in caring for their baby when first brought home. A nurse visited the home of nearly all maternity inpatients after their hospital stay.

Parents or guardians of pediatric patients felt positive about being welcome to stay with their child as much as they wanted.

Surgical inpatients were positive about staff members answering questions about their operation or procedure beforehand, in a way they could understand.

## Opportunities for Improvement

Inpatients felt improvements could be made in:

- discussing their anxieties and fears about their condition or treatment, with nurses;
- the amount of input in their treatment;
- discussing danger signals about their illness or operation to watch for, after going home; and
- providing more opportunity for family or close friends to talk to their doctor.

Maternity inpatients would have liked more information about blood tests and immunizations for their baby.

Pediatric patients and/or their parents or guardians would have liked doctors to be more available to answer their questions or concerns.

Some surgical inpatients would have liked to have been told how they could expect to feel after their operation or procedure.