



Client satisfaction survey reveals quality initiatives effective

Preferred Health Care Services engages front-line staff for input

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By Lisa Bailey

A client satisfaction survey has revealed that quality improvement initiatives implemented by Preferred Health Care Services are effective, and identifies opportunities for enhancement.

The spring telephone survey of 214 clients yielded many positive results and improvements from the last survey in 2008, says Preferred Health Care Services director of client services Rene Rodgers.

For example, 96 per cent of respondents said they would definitely recommend Preferred Health Care Services to family and friends, which is up five per cent from two years ago.

As well, 59 per cent of respondents gave services the highest survey rating of excellent, which is an increase of six per cent from 2008.

Rodgers notes there are a number of things that Preferred Health Care

Services can celebrate.

More than 80 per cent of clients gave top scores for personal support workers (PSWs) respecting the client's home and belongings (93 per cent); having the right skills to care for clients (86 per cent); explaining what they will be doing (89 per cent); providing the same quality of care during each visit (81 per cent); and providing care in the client's preferred language (81 per cent).

The survey also looked at management of services.

For example, 79 per cent of clients said they know who to call with questions or concerns and for scheduling. As well, 75 per cent of respondents stated Preferred Health Care Services was able to accommodate the client's schedule.

"We certainly improved for the most part over 2008," Rodgers says, citing two contributing factors.

She notes that director of

quality improvement and risk management Barb van Maris has implemented a number of quality enhancement processes since joining Preferred Health Care Services last year.

Rodgers also says attendance has increased at team meetings, where front-line staff members engage with nurse managers and other members of the management team to pinpoint expectations, discuss quality initiatives and share best practices.

These meetings, held every six to eight weeks, are key educational and networking opportunities for PSWs because they largely work in isolation in the field.

"It's really important they feel they're part of an organization, part of a team," Rodgers says, adding front-line staff members were consulted about the survey results and how to address some areas.

For example, strategies are in place to ensure clients

consistently see front-line staff washing their hands or using sanitizing gel when entering and leaving the client's home, which is key to infection prevention and control.

Internal processes are also being examined to facilitate accurate arrival times at clients' homes.

Rodgers notes that hand-washing and arrival times were two survey areas affected by client perception.

For example, they may have thought PSWs were not washing hands or using gel when, in fact, they just had not seen them do it.

As for arrival times, front-line staff may have arrived 15 minutes after a stated time due to traffic. As a result, a 15-minute window may now be given.

With information-gathering on the survey complete, Rodgers says team meetings in November will focus on actions to enhance clients' experience.