

Chapter 39

Saskatchewan Health Authority (Sunrise) – Preventing and Controlling Infections in Long-Term Care Homes

1.0 MAIN POINTS

Infections in long-term care homes pose health and safety risks to residents, staff, and visitors.

By June 2018, the Saskatchewan Health Authority had implemented the remaining four recommendations from our 2014 audit at the former Sunrise health region related to preventing and controlling infections in long-term care homes.

It communicated its prevention and control practices to the public (e.g., hand hygiene and outbreak signage), supervisors reviewed the adequacy of resident room cleaning, and management analyzed its infection rates and trends.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes our second follow-up of management's actions on the four remaining recommendations made in 2014.

Our *2014 Report – Volume 1*, Chapter 13 concluded that the then Sunrise Regional Health Authority had, other than areas related to our recommendations, effective processes to prevent and control infections in its long-term care homes. We made ten recommendations. By March 2016, Sunrise had fully implemented six of the ten recommendations.¹

In 2017-18, 12 health regions, including Sunrise, combined to form the Saskatchewan Health Authority. The Authority, under *The Provincial Health Authority Act*, is responsible for planning, organizing, delivering, and evaluating health services in long-term care. This includes infection prevention and control in long-term care homes.

To conduct this audit engagement, we followed the standards for assurance engagements published in the *CPA Canada Handbook – Assurance* (CSAE 3001). To evaluate Sunrise's progress towards meeting our recommendations, we used the relevant criteria from the original audit. Sunrise's management agreed with the criteria in the original audit.

To complete the audit, we discussed with management progress they made in meeting our recommendations, reviewed supporting documentation, and visited three long-term care homes in the former Sunrise health region to verify progress. At March 31, 2018, 13 long-term care homes operated in the former Sunrise health region.

¹ See our *2016 Report – Volume 1*, Chapter 34.



3.0 STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This section sets out each recommendation including the date on which the Standing Committee on Public Accounts agreed to the recommendation, the status of the recommendation at June 30, 2018, and the Authority's actions up to that date with respect to the long-term care homes in the former Sunrise health region.

We found that the Saskatchewan Health Authority had implemented the four remaining recommendations.

3.1 Public Signage and Brochures Communicate Infection Prevention and Control Practices

We recommended that Sunrise Regional Health Authority consistently communicate its practices on infection prevention and control in its long-term care homes to front line staff and the public. (2014 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement February 12, 2015)

Status – Implemented

Sunrise informs the public of infection prevention and control practices through brochures and signage at its long-term care homes.

Entrances and public washrooms have signage for proper hand hygiene practices while on premises. During outbreaks, Sunrise posts additional signage at entrances to their long-term care homes. Outbreak-related signage indicates extra precautions (e.g., the need for a mask) required during visits.

Residents with contagious infections have signage on their doors, alerting visitors of additional safety measures required during interaction with the resident.

At admission, during flu season, and during outbreaks, residents and families receive brochures outlining the importance of infection prevention and control.

3.2 Supervisors Review Room Cleaning

We recommended that Sunrise Regional Health Authority require staff document the level of cleaning completed on each of the long-term care homes and have the documentation reviewed by a supervisor. (2014 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement February 12, 2015)

Status – Implemented

Supervisors of the long-term care homes review the adequacy of room cleaning done by staff.

We found, at the three long-term care homes we visited, evidence that supervisors reviewed the cleaning worksheets.² Sunrise has also implemented an annual check to verify that supervisors complete their daily cleaning-worksheet reviews.

3.3 Infections Analyzed and Reported to Management

We recommended that Sunrise Regional Health Authority routinely analyze information on key types of infections that affect long-term care residents. (2014 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement February 12, 2015)

Status – Implemented

We recommended that Sunrise Regional Health Authority give senior management and the Board routine written analysis on rates and trends of key infections in long-term care homes. (2014 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement February 12, 2015)

Status – Implemented

Management of the Sunrise long-term care homes routinely monitored infection rates and trends and shared information with senior management.

Each month, the Authority collected infection rates for the key infections (e.g., MRSA) observed in Sunrise long-term care homes.³ This information shows that infection rates improved from 2017 to 2018, with 28 healthcare-associated infections between April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018 as compared to 39 infections in 2016-17.

Each quarter, the Local Infection Prevention and Control Committees (north, central and south areas of the former Sunrise health region) discuss their area's infection rates and trends.⁴ The Regional Infection Prevention and Control Quality Improvement Team also receives the infection rate and trend information provided to the local committees.⁵

The Regional Team meets quarterly, and uses the analysis to direct their efforts (e.g., to educate staff on the proper handling of human waste, recommend discontinued use of jetted tubs to senior management, and direct additional training efforts to specific homes needing support).

Each October, Sunrise holds an infection prevention and control workshop for all staff, including staff from its long-term care homes, to address concerns related to infection prevention and control practices. The workshop touches on various topics ranging from outbreak management to urinary tract infections.

² In 2016 (the time of our first follow-up), we identified that although staff appropriately documented resident room cleaning on daily worksheets, supervisors did not consistently review them or have evidence that they reviewed the adequacy of the cleaning.

³ MRSA (methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus) is a bacterium resistant to common antibiotics and that affects the heart, lungs, bones, joints, and/or bloodstream.

⁴ The local committee membership includes a long-term care director, a long-term care home nurse, and representatives from foods services and laundry.

⁵ The Regional Team includes all directors of long-term care for the north, central, and south areas.

