

South Health Campus
Calgary, Canada



Opened in 2012, South Health Campus (SHC), part of Alberta Health Services, is a full-service hospital and health care facility. The SHC has about 2,700 full-time staff and 180 physicians who provided 92,000 patient care days and 200,000 outpatient visits annually. The 269-bed campus serves Calgary and surrounding areas and is also a referral center for southern Alberta.

Patient- and family-centred care is one of the four foundational "pillars" of SHC. Patients and families are regarded as full partners on their care teams, and in the planning, delivery and evaluation of health services. Before SHC was built, family presence was already an "embedded philosophy." Early buy-in and strong support by operational and medical leadership were the key elements that drove this cultural change. In planning for the new campus, SHC established a Patient and Family Advisory Council early on to bring the voice of patients, families, and community members to both facility design and program planning.

In developing new guidelines to support family presence, the Council and the interdisciplinary clinical design team worked collaboratively. The team shared perspectives on visiting policies at other hospitals in Alberta Health Services and consulted with clinical project managers, senior leaders, and physician leads. As an example, because of input from patients and families themselves, SHC's guidelines now differentiate between unrestricted "family presence" for key family members and support persons identified by the patient and visiting hours for "visitors."

Following approval of the new guidelines, SHC implemented a plan for staff orientation, including training about patient- and family-centred care and the family presence philosophy. Ongoing educational sessions about potential challenging situations provide support to staff.

"Although we are still in the early days of this innovative new health care facility, we have seen a positive shift in care delivery in which the patient and their family are actively and respectfully involved in the decisions that affect their care and health. It is recognized that family and friends are integral to the patient's healing process. Family and primary support providers are welcomed as essential members of the health care team; they are not "visitors" in the lives of patients, but full partners in care as desired by the patient."

Lori Anderson, Senior Operating Officer, South Health Campus