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## POSTER ABSTRACT

# **Adaptive Strategies to Building a Sustainable Workforce: Health Care Support Worker (HCSW) and the Health Career Access Program (HCAP)**

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### ***Introduction***

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a tremendous impact on organizations. Health care in particular has been affected in many ways. Health care professionals have been working around the clock to support patients and families during these tumultuous times. It is well known that these demands have taken a significant toll on staff which has led to burnout. To ensure that the health care workforce remains strong, the British Columbia Government has implemented the Health Career Access Program (HCAP). Fraser Health coordinates the management of HCAP in the region that it serves (1.8 million people, 1 out of 3 British Columbians).

### ***Aims Objectives Theory or Methods***

The British Columbia Government opted to introduce a new career building strategy in the midst of a pandemic. Through HCAP, individuals have the opportunity to apply to become a Health Care Support Worker (HCSW). The HCSW role is an entry-level position that provides non-direct care to residents in AL and LTC. While working, HCSWs are afforded the opportunity to go to school to become health care assistants, with all costs covered by the Government, including their salary. The Return of Service agreement ensures that staff remain and there is stability and sustainment in the workforce.

### ***Highlights or Results or Key Findings***

Through the use of key change management principles, the Fraser Health HCAP Project Team has been supporting the HCSW, the care team, as well as residents and families. Focused on building a team-based care environment the project team creates opportunities for open dialogue and engagement. This supports building "Awareness" and "Desire." Preparing resources such as the "HCSW Can Do-Can Not Do" list in addition to the shadow-shifts and buddy-pairing amongst other tactics, allow for the "Knowledge" and "Ability" to show up. By investing in, and supporting the growth of an individual, there is emphasis on sustainment and longevity (Reinforcement).

Although early in the implementation phase, the feedback has been positive from both the provider- and resident-experience. A Logic Model is being built to measure the true impact of the program, and how the model can inform the future of the provision of AL and LTC services.

### ***Conclusions***

While working in health care this past year has certainly brought its challenges, there have also been opportunities. The broad interest in HCAP has shown that rather than shying away from health care, the opposite appears to be true in that people want to be part of the field.

### ***Implications for applicability/transferability sustainability and limitations***

While having taken a system-wide engagement approach, HCAP focuses on current and immediate future needs. It is highly dependent on the supplementary funding from the government and questions will remain as to how long funding will be available.