

*June 14, 2016*

## **Customer feedback guides action plan for improvements to the linen service**



*In response to customer feedback, changes have been made to the laundering and folding of scrubs*

Seeking feedback from customers, 3sHealth conducted a customer satisfaction survey for the new provincial linen service in February 2016. Copies of the survey were provided to all health regions and the cancer agency for distribution to stakeholders. The survey was distributed just as the last two health regions, Saskatoon and Heartland, were transitioning to the new service.

“We sought input from a wide cross-section of healthcare linen customers,” says Jim Crawford, Director of Provincial Linen Service for 3sHealth. “We wanted to know what patients, residents, family members, as well as professional care providers and other healthcare facility staff thought about the new service.”

The high (73 per cent) response rate indicated that consumers of the linen service were eager to provide feedback. The highest percentage of responders (73 per cent), were clinical and support staff. Another 24 per cent of respondents represented patients, residents and family members or caregivers.

The survey asked respondents to rate the linen service in the following areas:

- Overall quality of linen
- Quality of specific items such as towels, gowns, sheets, and bedspreads
- Overall satisfaction with the linen service
- Quality of communication with the linen service provider
- Response time for issues and requests
- Linen cart maintenance
- Quality of delivery

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The information that was gathered provides a snapshot in time of what customers were happy with and what needed improvement.

The health regions linen contacts, 3sHealth and K-Bro collectively developed an action plan to ensure that improvements could be put into place as quickly as possible. Many of the actions have already been completed, but some are still in the process of being implemented.

“Many of the improvement opportunities revealed in the survey reflected what you would normally see when a brand new system and service are introduced,” says Mark Anderson, Vice President, Business Development for 3sHealth. “In particular, we knew that “pooling” the existing linen inventory at start-up would present some varying levels of quality in the product for end users. However, we believe that a lot of these issues are starting to get resolved as older linen is removed from the provincial inventory and more people begin using the Black Mesh Bag method for removing defective linen before it reaches the patient.”

Wrinkling of uniforms, lint and hair on clean linen, softness of fabrics were all issues that needed to be addressed by the laundering and processing performed at the K-Bro plant in Regina. In March, K-Bro installed an Aquabatch filter system specifically designed to provide an additional level of filtration in the tunnel washers. Other adjustments to the process include changes to levels of fabric softener and other cleaning components, drying times, and folding processes.

During the transition, there were some products that were not available. Some of these inventory issues were simply a miscommunication between what was needed at the site, and what was available and/or sent. As the service has started to stabilize, these inventory issues are getting better and better. Recent injections of new inventory totalling \$200,000 have been made by K-Bro. In addition, the 3sHealth team is working with customers to help them analyze their use of inventory to capture efficiencies. Fill rates, which track how accurately orders are filled by the linen provider are measured monthly and currently indicate 99 per cent accuracy. “Our goal is 100 per cent,” says Crawford.

Continually monitoring customer satisfaction is essential for the new service. For that reason, another survey will be conducted later in June.

“All health system employees have a role to play in the quality of the linen our patients and residents use,” says Anderson. “We are committed to listening to our customers and working together with K-Bro and our health system partners to take action on implementing improvement opportunities on an on-going basis.”