**Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care**

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November 24, 2017

Mr. Chris Salt
Acting Board Chair
South East Local Health Integration Network
71 Adam Street
Belleville ON K8N 5K3

Dear Mr. Salt:

I am pleased to write you in your capacity as Acting Chair of the South East Local Health Integration Network (LHIN). Pursuant to the requirements of the Agencies and Appointments Directive, this letter sets out my expectations for the South East LHIN for the 2018-19 fiscal year.

In 2018-19, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (the "ministry") will continue to work in partnership with patients, families, LHINs, health service providers and health care innovators to transform our health care system today and for the future. Together we will build on a strong foundation to improve patient experiences, increase access to care, and reduce wait times – while working to reduce health disparities. Patients First created the foundation of an integrated health care system to deliver world-class patient care closer to home, with services distributed equitably across the province. As we collectively transform health care, local care planning and delivery will happen at the community level and will focus on the patient and their family as the key partners in delivering care. Local health care providers and organizations will be empowered to work collaboratively to their full potential.

I ask that the South East LHIN consider how it will contribute to this Patients First vision and work with the ministry and other LHINs to realize our shared goal of transforming Ontario's health care system to ensure the best health outcomes for all.

With this in mind, our collective focus in working with health care leaders throughout this transformation phase must continue to be on:

- Improving the patient experience by partnering with patients in health care planning and by delivering care that reflects the patient voice and is responsive to patients' needs, values and preferences.
- Addressing the root causes of health inequities and the social determinants of health.
- Reducing the burden of disease and chronic illness and investing in health promotion.

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- Creating healthy communities by improving access to primary care and reducing wait times for specialist care, mental health & addictions services, home and community care and acute care for patients when they need it, which will reduce variation in access across the province.
- Breaking down the silos between our health care sectors and providers to ensure seamless transitions for patients, and to ensure that providers work together and in collaboration with patients to deliver the best possible care.
- Supporting innovation by delivering new models of care and digital solutions to make accessing care easier for patients and more efficient for health care providers.

Transformation will occur for many years beyond this mandate letter, but these priorities are important to consider when planning for 2018-19.

**Integrated Health Care Planning and Responsible Fiscal Management**

With the new mandate you were given in 2017-18, you are now responsible for creating an integrated service delivery network that includes primary care providers, inter-professional health care teams, hospitals, public health, mental health and addictions, seniors care, palliative care and home and community care to provide for a more seamless patient experience.

While continuing to undergo this work, it is also expected that you will remain fiscally responsible and manage your budget in a prudent manner to ensure programs and services are effective, efficient, and sustainable into the future. I also expect the LHIN to further streamline and increase the efficiency of administration and ensure savings are reinvested into front-line patient care.

In particular for 2018-19, the South East LHIN is asked to prioritize a reduction in the number of people who are waiting in a hospital bed for the right level of care, expanded access to mental health and addictions services, and initiatives that support seniors. The LHIN is also asked to continue making progress on the following:

**Transparency and Public Accountability**

- Work with Health Shared Services Ontario (HSSOntario) to complete an enterprise-wide review of the LHINs that identifies opportunities for improving efficiency and effectiveness, and opportunities for savings that can be reinvested into patient care.
- Continue to be accountable for outcomes and report on your progress toward achieving health system performance targets.
- Collaborate with the ministry to develop performance targets to measure the success of transformational activities and publicly report on progress and outcomes.
- Effectively manage all operational, strategic, and financial risks encountered by the LHIN while ensuring alignment with government priorities and achievement of business objectives.

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**Improve the Patient Experience**

- Continue to engage your Patient and Family Advisory Committee(s) to ensure patients and families are involved in health care priority setting and decision-making.
- Work towards improving transitions for patients between different health sectors and providers so that patients receive seamless, coordinated care and only need to tell their story once.
- Support patients and families by implementing initiatives that reduce caregiver distress.

**Build Healthy Communities Informed by Population Health Planning**

- With input from patients, caregivers and partners, assess local population health needs, patient access to the services they need, wait times and the capacity of health providers to serve the community.
- Through sub-regional (community level) planning, identify how providers and patient partners will collaborate to address health gaps, and improve patient experience and outcomes.
- Work with public health and other health care providers to incorporate health promotion strategies in integrated planning, with a specific focus on chronic disease prevention.

**Quality Improvement, Consistency and Outcomes-Based Delivery**

- Work with the sector to both enhance existing and develop new performance and quality measurement frameworks that are consistent, well-aligned and flexible to address regional priorities.
- Work with local clinicians at a community level to support implementation of completed quality standards in partnership with Health Quality Ontario.

**Equity**

- Promote health equity and recognize the impact of social determinants of health that effectively reduce health disparities and inequities in the planning, design, delivery and evaluation of services by:
    - Identifying high-risk populations and working with public health and local community partners on targeted interventions to improve access to appropriate and culturally sensitive care, and improve health outcomes, including through sub-region planning.
    - Ensuring engagement with Indigenous leaders, providers and patients to guide investments and initiatives.
    - Assessing the capacity of health service providers within LHIN sub-regions and the extent to which Francophone citizens are provided with an active offer of health services in French, and develop a plan to strengthen health services in French.

**Primary Care**

- Continue to work with providers to build primary care as the foundation of the health care system and work with health care providers to implement sub-region plans that:
    - Use an equity lens to assess the number and proportion of primary care providers based on the needs of the local population.
    - Improve access to primary care providers, including family doctors and nurse practitioners.
    - Facilitate effective and seamless transitions between primary care and other health and social services.
    - Improve access to inter-professional health care providers to support comprehensive care.
- Implement the plan developed with input from primary care providers, patients, caregivers and partners to embed care coordinators and system navigators in primary care to support smooth transitions of care between home and community care and other health and social services as required.
- Support continued integration of Health Links into sub-regional planning with input from primary care providers.

**Hospitals and Partners**

- Work with system partners to improve how people move through the health system to avoid unnecessary hospital stays, reduce the length of time people must spend in hospital, including the emergency room, and reduce the number of people who are waiting in a hospital bed for the right level of care.
- Support hospitals to enable the adoption of innovations in patient care, like bundled care.

**Specialist Care**

- To improve access to specialty care, work with providers to further reduce wait times and drive appropriate care utilization starting with people suffering from musculoskeletal (MSK) pain, and those suffering from mood disorders.
- Support enhanced connections and communications across networks of providers to drive more effective and appropriate specialist referrals.

**Home and Community Care**

- With input from patients, caregivers and partners:
    - Reduce wait times and improve coordination and consistency of home and community care so that clients and caregivers know what to expect.
    - Continue to implement initiatives that strengthen home and community care.
- Work with the Ontario Palliative Care Network and other sector partners, with support from the ministry, to expand access to palliative and end-of-life care across sectors.

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**Long-Term Care**

- Work with the ministry to strengthen the long-term care home sector, including through the redevelopment of long-term care homes across the province.

**Dementia Care**

- Implement regional dementia capacity plans, with support from the ministry, to enable persons living with dementia and their care partners to live well at home and in their communities for as long as possible.

**Mental Health and Addictions**

- Based on the advice from Ontario's Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council, work with local partners and other sectors to expand access to mental health and addictions services that:
    - Expand access to structured psychotherapy and supportive housing.
    - Establish referral networks with primary care providers.
    - Reduce wait times and make access to community mental health services a priority for sub-region planning, in collaboration with community and social service providers and partners.
- Support the provincial opioid strategy, and provide support to connect patients with high quality addictions treatment.

**Innovation, Health Technologies and Digital Health**

- Champion Ontario as a leading jurisdiction to adopt and scale new and innovative health technologies and value-based processes.
- Support the ministry's Digital Health Strategy, including but not limited to:
    - Ensuring that any hospital information system (HIS) renewal decisions are consistent with HIS Renewal Advisory Panel clustering recommendations and reflect a commitment to reduce the overall number of HIS instances in the province.
    - Implementing or expanding existing virtual models of care or digital self-care models that are consistent with existing provincial initiatives.
    - Supporting the delivery of digital solutions to improve patient access and navigation as well as referrals to specialists, and further expand online consultation between primary care providers and specialists.

As you deliver on your new mandate, I expect the LHIN to ensure the following key pillars continue to be maintained or strengthened:

- Promote health equity, and reduce health disparities and inequities.
- Respect the diversity of communities in the planning, design, delivery and evaluation of services, including culturally safe care for Indigenous people and meeting the requirements of the French Language Services Act.

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- Continue to strengthen local engagement with Francophone and Indigenous communities.
- Work with health service providers and communities to plan and deliver health services.

Ontario's board-governed provincial agencies are vital partners in ensuring the delivery of high quality services to Ontarians. The people of Ontario depend on you to provide leadership to your agency's board, management and staff. Together with your fellow board members, the people of Ontario rely on you to establish the goals, objectives and strategic direction for the agency consistent with your agency's mandate, government policies, and my directions, where appropriate.

I acknowledge that your role as system leaders is a significant one and will require strong leadership. To be effective you will need to rely on your ability to enhance collaborative relationships with health care providers - relationships which motivate them to be the best they can be in sustaining and advancing both positive patient and family experiences and outcomes. Your task is particularly challenging because some of the transformation concerns you will face are rooted in historical health care delivery concepts and approaches. However, as we advance through innovation and integration to make our world-class health care system even stronger, you can be assured that I support your efforts in this work.

I thank you for your willingness to serve, as we continue working together to put patients at the centre of a high performing health care system that is accessible, equitable and integrated, and one that will be there for generations to come. Your efforts and successes are recognised and appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Original signed by the Minister

Dr. Eric Hoskins
Minister

c: Mr. Paul Huras, Chief Executive Officer, South East Local Health Integration Network
Dr. Bob Bell, Deputy Minister, MOHLTC
Ms. Nancy Naylor, Associate Deputy Minister, Delivery and Implementation, MOHLTC
Mr. Tim Hadwen, Assistant Deputy Minister, Health System Accountability, Performance and French Language Services Division, MOHLTC