

# South East Regional Palliative Care Network

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **The new South East Regional Palliative Care Network begins to look at ways to improve access to palliative care**

Advancing high quality, high value, palliative care in our community.

**South Eastern Ontario - December 13, 2016** - This week the new South East Regional Palliative Care Network (RPCN) officially takes the reigns of hospice palliative care delivery across South Eastern Ontario. The new network represents a community of partners that will work together to ensure that there is a coordinated, standardized approach for the delivery of hospice palliative care services.

In March 2016, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care introduced the Ontario Palliative Care Network (OPCN). This initiative aligns with the Ministry's strategy to make greater patient choice in palliative care a priority.

"The regional implementation of high-quality, high-value hospice palliative care is a priority for the Ontario Palliative Care Network. Communities across the province are the foundation of an integrated hospice palliative care system, to ensure that everyone in Ontario has excellent hospice palliative care when and where they need it," said Bill MacLeod, Co-Chair of the Ontario Palliative Care Network Executive Oversight.

The OPCN supports the work of Regional Palliative Care Networks across Ontario, like the South East RPCN. The South East RPCN is responsible for advancing high quality, high value, palliative care in our community.

"The South East Regional Palliative Care Network represents a key partnership of community stakeholders, health service providers and health systems planners who all have a role in hospice palliative care in our region," said Paul Huras, CEO, South East LHIN and executive co-lead of the South East RPCN. "This Network will be a key component in helping to implement the vision of Patients First: A Roadmap to Strengthen Home and Community Care which highlights a commitment to improved access and equity in palliative care at home and in the community."

Although the South East RPCN is just launching, work is already underway with a newly formed steering committee, responsible for providing leadership, oversight, and support for the effective and coordinated delivery of palliative care.

"With a new steering committee we have the leadership strength and passion to begin the necessary work to improve access and service delivery in the South East," said Brenda Carter South East Regional Cancer Program RVP and executive co-lead of the South East RPCN. "There is a strong commitment on the committee to making a difference for patients and families. Although we are in the early stages, our goal is improved access and equity in hospice palliative care across our region."

This new way of looking at hospice palliative care will ensure that programs are aligned, that quality and performance will be measured consistently, and that patients and families will have a voice at decision making tables.

“As a patient experience advisor, I understand that the only people who travel the entire journey through health to illness and either recovery or death, are the patients and families,” said Kerry Stewart patient experience advisor and member of the new steering committee. “It is essential that we be able to share our perspectives in order to support and enhance the development of wide spread, timely palliative care in our communities.”

“I strongly believe that a palliative approach to care should be available to everyone, in hospital, at home and in the community. It should be easily accessible, in a timely manner, and well understood in the community,” continued Kerry.

## **BACKGROUND**

Earlier this year the Ontario Palliative Care Network (OPCN) funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term care was launched to support provincial direction for hospice palliative care across Ontario. The OPCN is a province-wide partnership of healthcare providers and organizations, health system planners, patients, families and caregivers working together to provide coordinated, high-quality hospice palliative care for everyone in Ontario, regardless of their age, illness, or where they live.

An integral part of realizing this vision is the understanding that every LHIN in Ontario will have a regional palliative care network in place to ensure consistent delivery of care across the region.

## **ABOUT THE SOUTH EAST REGIONAL PALLIATIVE CARE NETWORK**

The South East Regional Palliative Care Network (RPCN) is a partnership of community stakeholders, care providers, patients, families and caregivers in South Eastern Ontario who work together to ensure that there is a coordinated, standardized approach for the delivery of hospice palliative care services. As a community of partners the South East RPCN is committed to improved access and equity in hospice palliative care.

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