

News Release / Pour publication immédiate

Regional Clinical Services Roadmap Initiative to Improve Access to Health Care across Southeastern Ontario

Belleville, Ontario (Tuesday, July 27, 2010) – Georgina Thompson, Board Chair, and Paul Huras, CEO, of the South East Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), today announced an initiative that will improve overall access to high-quality health care for residents across southeastern Ontario.

This initiative, known as the Regional Clinical Services Roadmap, will examine different services currently provided to varying degree by the seven hospitals and the South East Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) across this region, and consider ways in which to improve access to the right care, at the right time, in the right place.

By designing a regional system of hospital care, the Clinical Services Roadmap will maximize the effectiveness and efficiency with which patients are diagnosed, referred and treated. It will also look for ways to make it easier and faster for people working in the health-care system to get residents the care they need, when they need it.

An example of the effectiveness and efficiency the Roadmap process will help achieve comes from Kingston General Hospital. Several years ago, cardiologists at KGH realized patients were at high risk of not surviving a heart attack because of the 'red tape' involved in transferring a patient from one hospital emergency room to another. Working with their colleagues in the area, they created a protocol that let patients be transferred directly to the cardiac unit at KGH so that life-saving interventions could be provided in enough time to matter. This protocol is a shining example of what can be achieved by working together to solve system-wide problems. It is exactly the kind of streamlined, regional approach to hospital services the Clinical Services Roadmap aims to establish across other areas too.

"We have been considering this Roadmap process, in consultation with our Health Service Provider partners, for over a year," says Thompson, "and our goal is simple. We want to evolve our local health system into a true regional system of care. We want to patch the gaps within the system where patients can often get lost; simplify what happens next for patients when their health care needs change; provide services that keep people healthy and out of the hospitals; and reduce the red tape and duplication people often experience when they need care," she added.

"Our existing hospital system was built on a model that is decades old," says CEO Paul Huras, "and it does not reflect the economic realities we face today. Governments have indicated they simply cannot continue to support the growth in health care expenditures that hospitals experience – costs that are growing at twice the rate of inflation. We can't keep up with that so we have to work harder to improve our system from within. Renovating our local health system using the Regional Clinical Services Roadmap will ensure that we are putting our money in the right place to improve access to high-quality healthcare, and ensure that services are here for people who need them today, as well as for our children and grandchildren into the future." he added.

In the fall of 2008, the South East LHIN began to develop its three year Integrated Health Services Plan for the southeast region. Planning included a study of the current and predicted health care needs of residents across this region and the ability of various providers to meet those needs. As well, it included a review of demographic information about residents to see what their health care needs are and where they go to get health care services. South East

News Release / Pour publication immédiate

LHIN staff and Board members then visited over 40 communities to ask how residents saw their health care needs and what they expected from the health-care system today and into the future. This region-wide round of discussions with both the public and with health care providers contributed to the creation of the LHIN's Integrated Health Services Plan (IHSP), "Reaching for Excellence". It also provided the vision and the foundation for the Regional Clinical Services Roadmap.

Each of the southeast region's Hospital and CCAC CEOs, Chiefs of Staff and Chief Nursing Executives have worked collaboratively to develop the Clinical Roadmap process and all, including Board Chairs, have indicated their strong commitment to its success for the benefit of residents in the southeast.

"We are all in agreement that this is the right approach, and now is the right time," says Huras.

Embarking upon the Regional Clinical Services Roadmap will begin with the development of action plans for a number of Clinical Areas of Opportunity that have been identified, through analysis conducted by the South East LHIN's Knowledge Management Team, as the most pressing areas to address for residents of the southeast. Those areas include: Surgical Services, Healthcare Acquired Infections, High-Risk Maternal and Newborn Care, Cancer Care, Mental Health Services and Restorative Care. The focus will be on effective chronic disease management, patient self-management, reduction of hospital readmission rates, and the improved coordination of care between sectors and providers to improve upon the availability of the right high-quality care, in the right place, at the right time, by the right provider.

Clinical Leaders have been selected for each Area of Opportunity and the selection of team members has begun. They will be responsible for leading a team in the overall development of an action plan in their respective area of clinical expertise – and for identifying the resources, processes and logistics to bring that plan to implementation.

Development of the action plans will involve engagement with clinicians and other stakeholders across the region and will be happening over the next three to six months. Once recommended plans have been submitted for approval, detailed implementation planning will begin.

It is expected that the Regional Clinical Services Roadmap will be implemented in phases over a one to three year period.

--30--

For more information contact:

Michael Alexander
Communications/Community Engagement
South East LHIN
613-967-0196 (ext 229)

version française à suivre.

