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News Release

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North West LHIN Releases Plan for Health System Improvement in 2010-2013

The North West Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) has a new *Integrated Health Services Plan* (IHSP) identifying the priorities for health system improvements in Northwestern Ontario over the three years (2010-2013) and the plans to address them.

The IHSP, released today, builds on the findings and progress made on the priorities in the LHIN's plan for 2007-2010. The plan was developed using the information gathered through significant engagement and discussion with local health care providers, communities, health care workers and the public throughout the region.

The priorities in the new IHSP are focused in three primary areas: Access to and Integration of Services; Enablers; and People of Northwestern Ontario. The priorities include, by focus area:

Access to and Integration of Services:

- Emergency Department Wait Times & Alternate Level of Care
- Primary Care
- Specialty Care & Diagnostic Services
- Chronic Disease Prevention & Management
- Long-Term Care Services
- Mental Health & Addictions Services

Enablers:

- Health Human Resources
- eHealth
- Integration of Services along the Continuum of Care

People of Northwestern Ontario:

- Aboriginal Health Services
- French Language Health Services

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QUOTES

“We thank the numerous residents and health care professionals of Northwestern Ontario who met with the LHIN since 2007”, says Janice Beazley, Chair of the North West LHIN Board of Directors. “We believe the health system is best shaped by the people who use and work within it. Their input ensures that our plan will build a better health care system over the next three years.”

“The IHSP is the result of efforts of many people and it will guide our decision making and funding decisions for the next three years”, says Gwen DuBois-Wing, CEO. “It provides overall direction and opportunities for alignment of health services and providers in the Northwest. The IHSP is an action plan that the North West LHIN will carry out together with our health service providers, partners and communities.”

Thunder Bay-Superior North MPP Michael Gravelle applauded the three-year plan. “Once again, the North West LHIN is taking an innovative and integrated approach to delivering health care services to our vast region, reaching out to ensure people in all our communities can access the health care they need. That’s an enormous challenge, but this plan includes input from the people who matter most – the people of Northwestern Ontario – and also addresses the priorities for health care outlined by the Government of Ontario.”

"Thunder Bay and district continues to see major advancements in the provision of health care services," said Bill Mauro, MPP Thunder Bay-Atikokan. "This Integrated Health Services Plan will help guide decision-makers over the next three years, and reflects the priorities of stakeholders in our area."

QUICK FACTS

- Each of the 14 LHINs review and revise their IHSP every three years to ensure local priorities are on track and reflect the current needs of residents and service providers.
- The IHSP was created using information gained from extensive engagement. In 2007/08, the LHIN hosted over 150 sessions including forums, roundtable discussions, meetings, workshops and training for over 2,500 participants. This activity was doubled in 2008/09, with over 5,435 individuals engaged at 331 sessions across the northwest. The largest single engagement initiative was the *Share Your Story, Shape Your Care* project, which collected input from over 800 people.
- The North West LHIN 2010-2013 IHSP has 11 priorities for change to the health care system in Northwestern Ontario.

LEARN MORE

The 2010-2013 IHSP is available on our website at www.northwestlhin.on.ca under the IHSP tab.

The North West LHIN is responsible for planning, integrating and funding local health services – hospitals, long term care facilities, the community care access centre, community health centres, community support services and mental health and addictions agencies. The North West LHIN and its Board of Directors are responsible for over \$560 million of health care services delivered in Northwestern Ontario.

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Background

North West LHIN Integrated Health Services Plan 2010-2013

The North West LHIN

The North West LHIN is responsible for planning, integrating and funding local health services – hospitals (13), long term care facilities (14), the community care access centre (1), community health centres (2), community support services (61) and mental health and addictions agencies (37). The North West LHIN and its Board of Directors are responsible for over \$560 million of health care services delivered in Northwestern Ontario.

The Purpose of the Integrated Health Services Plan

The Integrated Health Services Plan is an important plan that maps out our priorities for the health care system in Northwestern Ontario. This second plan builds on the findings and accomplishments of our first IHSP to make sure the health system is best meeting patients' needs across the North West LHIN. It outlines the local and provincial priorities for improvement to the health system and the plans to address the priorities.

How the IHSP was developed.

Each IHSP is based on information gathered through significant community engagement with residents and health care professionals, as well as from local data and a variety of supporting documents. Advice is provided to the LHIN through our community engagement activities and education sessions, roundtables and our many Advisory Teams. Our largest single engagement project in 2009 was our *Share Your Story, Shape Your Care* initiative, which gathered opinions, stories and ideas from over 800 people on priorities for change to the health system in Northwestern Ontario.

North West LHIN Facts

Compared to the rest of Ontario, the North West LHIN has:

- The largest geography (47% of the province);
- The lowest population (232,135 people with almost half living in the City of Thunder Bay);
- The highest unemployment rate in the province;
- A slightly higher proportion of people 65 years and older; and
- The highest percentage of Aboriginal peoples.

Health Status of Northwestern Ontario

Relative to the rest of the province, the North West LHIN has a higher:

- Prevalence and earlier onset of many chronic diseases;
- Proportion who smoke (24.3% versus 18.7%);
- Proportion of heavy drinkers (27.7 % versus 21.7%);
- Percentage who are overweight/obese (56.0% versus 49.6%);
- Prevalence of activity limitations (40.8% versus 33.1%);

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- Rate of most chronic diseases including diabetes (7.3% versus 6.1%), high blood pressure (18.5% versus 16.4%) and arthritis/rheumatism (19.6% versus 16.9%);
- Percentage of deaths before the age of 65 (25% versus 21.5%).

And a lower:

- Percentage having contact with a medical doctor in past year (74.7% versus 80.6%);
- Life expectancy for females and males (80.5 years versus 82.7 years and 76.8 years versus 78.6 years respectively);
- Proportion reporting self-rated health as “excellent” or “very good” (53.1% versus 60.0%).

Strengths in Northwestern Ontario

- **Technology:** Those living in the Northwest are leaders at using technology (including telemedicine and eHealth infrastructure (e.g. Picture Archiving and Communication Systems (PACS)) to improve access to care.
- **Partnerships:** People living in Northwestern Ontario have a history of working together to meet the needs of their community and improve the lives of their neighbours. This trend continues, as evidenced by the strong participation in community engagement activities.
- **Innovation:** The Northwest continues to be recognized for its innovation provincially, nationally and internationally. Planning for and providing care in remote and rural Northern communities results in the need to try new things to meet the needs of our region (e.g. service provision, health human resource planning and training).

Priorities for Change

It was acknowledged in our first IHSP that the priorities for change would take more than three years to accomplish; since 2007, the health system in Northwestern Ontario has changed since due to a number of advances made in each of the priority areas.

The priorities in our second IHSP are focused in three primary areas: Access to and Integration of Services; Enablers; and People of Northwestern Ontario. The North West LHIN will continue advancing these priorities in 2010-2013:

Access to and Integration of Services:

- **Emergency Department Wait Times & Alternate Level of Care** -- Moving patients through the health care system without delay will free up beds for those recovering from elective surgery or waiting in emergency rooms for admission. Creating more alternatives for patients with or without a family doctor to go to for non-urgent health issues will help reduce the number of these visits to emergency departments.
- **Primary Care** –Models of care that improve access to a team of professionals (e.g. Community Health Centre, Family Health Team, Aboriginal Health Access Centre) increase access to and quality of care. With the vital role primary care plays in the health system, improving access to services will result in better health outcomes, improved quality of care and integration along the continuum of care.
- **Specialty Care & Diagnostic Services** -- Better access to specialty care and diagnostic will result in improved outcomes for clients and higher client satisfaction.
- **Chronic Disease Prevention & Management** – There is an opportunity to reduce hospital visits by expanding chronic disease prevention programs and better managing people’s chronic conditions in the community. Providing more self-management help to people with chronic illness in Northwestern Ontario is an important part of this.

- Long-Term Care Services – Improving access to long-term care services for individuals with moderate to high care needs will help the people who require these services live independently and with dignity.
- Mental Health & Addictions Services – Improving access to and coordination of mental health and addictions services will improve quality of life and care for those requiring service. It will also help prevent people's conditions from getting worse, which results in longer term medical needs and social problems.

Enablers:

- Health Human Resources -- Promoting interprofessional care (a team approach to patient care) will allow clinicians to maximize their time and skills and reach out to more of the population.
- eHealth -- The sharing of patient information along the continuum of care and across communities will allow health service providers to improve the quality and efficiency of care and minimize duplication, inefficiencies and potential errors.
- Integration of Services along the Continuum of Care – Better communication and coordination between and across sectors will help to improve patient access and reduce duplication of health care services.

People of Northwestern Ontario:

- Aboriginal Health Services – Important health gains can be achieved by increasing and improving the delivery of health services in Aboriginal communities and providing Aboriginal-language services to increase their patient satisfaction, safety and quality of life.
- French Language Health Services – Having more health service providers who can provide services in French will improve access to health services for the Francophone population in Northwestern Ontario.