



March 2008

LHINKAGES

CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITIES IN HEALTH

Real Change is Coming A Message from the Chair & CEO

In order to make real and necessary change to our local health system, it is important to look at the whole system and all priority areas, as all of the priorities identified in the northwest are inter-related. To support system wide change, the North West LHIN is hosting a variety of activities in March, including *An Opportunity for Real Change: Advancing Health System Transformation in the North West LHIN (March 26th)*.

We are poised for real change, building on the solid foundation we laid in 2007 with the work and support of many health service providers and individuals on our Advisory Teams. We have summarized all of this activity in 2007 on pages 2 to 5 so you can see the momentum that is building.

We continue to build on the extensive community engagement activities used to identify priorities for the North West LHIN's *Integrated Health Services Plan (IHSP)*. Countless numbers are involved in community engagement sessions (roundtables, focus groups, forums, meetings, etc.) related to addressing the priorities outlined in the IHSP, in the committees we have initiated to focus on specific areas, and in broadly distributing information. Thank you to all those who continue to advance health system transformation in the northwest!

There is great opportunity for real change with chronic disease prevention and management (CDPM) in the region. Activities related to CDPM are outlined on page 3. There is a strong interest to build on the innovations that are taking place locally.

Supporting individuals to better manage their chronic illness in the community is an important part of this strategic priority.

Just recently, the LHIN arranged for 28 health professionals in the region to receive Stanford University's chronic disease self management training. These clinicians are now qualified to train other health professionals across the region, greatly enhancing our capacity to help residents manage their illness themselves.

Northern Ontario has been a leader in e-Health, with the Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN) and the ONe-Health Steering Committee (membership from the northwest and northeast) as examples of how our partners work together. Integration of e-Health was identified as a priority for the northwest and will serve as an enabler for the other priorities outlined in the IHSP. As described on Page 4, Phase 2 and 3 of the *Northern Ontario Health Information and Communication Technology Blueprint* were completed in 2007, providing the potential to improve system-level communications and patient care through shared tools and processes.

Access to primary care affects the entire health care system. A priority for the northwest, we are building on our engagement with physicians, nurse practitioners and other health professionals providing primary health care.

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Real Change is Coming *(Continued)*

We have partnered on a number of activities with the Family Health Teams and Public Health Units in 2007 and continue to engage our partners at Community Health Centres, Aboriginal Health Access Centres and clinics.

Local planning, priority-setting and decision-making will allow our communities, in collaboration with the North West LHIN, to determine and implement solutions that make sense in the northwest, ultimately improving the health experience and status of residents in Northwestern Ontario.

By working together, we can achieve the North West LHIN's vision *Healthier people, a strong health system—our future*. Our relationships and innovation are things we pride ourselves on in the northwest. We do things differently, often out of necessity, to find solutions that work for our people and communities. There are many opportunities to

expand on and improve current innovations and to identify new initiatives that would improve the health services (including access to and navigation between services) offered in our LHIN.

We look back proudly on the accomplishments of 2007 and look forward to the work that is well underway and will continue throughout 2008!

There is no greater power than a community coming to grips with what it cares about.

~ Margaret Wheatley

Dr. John Whitfield, Chair
Gwen DuBois-Wing, Chief Executive Officer

Building on a Solid Foundation Leveraging the building blocks in 2007

The North West LHIN is laying the foundation for health system transformation in Northwestern Ontario. Much progress was made in 2007, our first full calendar year of operation. On April 1st, the LHIN became responsible for funding and monitoring the 178 health service providers we oversee.

There has been a corresponding staffing up of our office to support our new funding role and our work advancing the 11 priorities for health system improvement in the *Integrated Health Services Plan (2006)*.

Our full mandate is to plan, integrate and fund the local health care system, using community engagement with our stakeholders to help guide our activities and decisions.

Community engagement in the North West LHIN

Community engagement is fundamental to the work of the North West LHIN. Following engagement of over 2,000 in the development of the *Integrated Health Services Plan (IHSP)* in 2006, we have continued to meet with health service providers, community leaders, educators and general public across the region.

In 2007, we met with nearly 2,000 individuals, groups and organizations in a variety of sessions (key informant interviews, meetings, focus groups, roundtable discussions, forums, etc.). While much of our engagement has been focused on the priority areas outlined in our

IHSP, we continue to meet with various individuals, community groups, boards and committees to provide information on the LHIN, the priority areas identified and current and upcoming initiatives.

To ensure we continue to hear a number of perspectives and advance the priority areas identified in the northwest, the North West LHIN has struck the following groups:

System Integration Committee

Seniors' Services Advisory Team

Chronic Disease Prevention and Management (CDPM) Advisory Team

Health Human Resources Roundtable

Wait Times Working Groups

Centre of Excellence for Integrated Seniors' Services (CEISS) Steering Committee and Working Groups

Health Professionals Advisory Committee

Communities of Interest for Seniors' Services, CDPM and Health Human Resources

Building on a Solid Foundation *(Continued)* **Leveraging the building blocks in 2007**

Planning in the North West LHIN

Everything the NW LHIN does is tied to advancing the IHSP priorities in a significant way. The main focus of the NW LHIN is to move the IHSP forward with the help and input of our partners. Here is a snapshot of how the IHSP progressed in 2007, summarized by priority:

Access to Primary Health Care

- A Health Human Resources (HHR) Roundtable, with 12 members from across the region, was established to identify and explore opportunities to improve access to primary care physicians and health care providers in the northwest.
- Twelve Family Health Teams (FHT) have been announced in the northwest. FHTs consist of doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners and other health care professionals who work collaboratively to provide patients' care, as close to home as possible.
- Some physician engagement has taken place.
- The NW LHIN helped the Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council (HPRAC) coordinate a Nurse Practitioner Public Hearing in Thunder Bay aimed at reviewing the scope of practice for registered nurses in the extended class with respect to controlled acts.
- Dr. Shaun Visser was appointed the NW LHIN's Emergency Department Lead. Dr. Visser will be working with health care partners in the region to improve patient flow and reduce emergency department wait times and pressures.

Specialty Care/Diagnostics

- Dr. Mike Scott was appointed the NW LHIN's Critical Care Lead. Dr. Scott is working to develop plans on the best use of critical care resources within and between hospitals in the LHIN.
- Three Working Groups - Total Joint, Diagnostic Imaging (CT/MRI) and Cataract Surgery, were established to support initiatives to achieve the NW LHIN Wait Times Strategy Targets.
- Wait Times data at the end of 2007 indicates the NW LHIN will either meet its wait times targets or be within the performance corridors on all procedures included in the Ministry-LHIN Accountability Agreement.

- Announcements aimed at improving access to specialty care/diagnostics in the NW LHIN included:

- Cataract surgery was expanded at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre.
- A new cataract program was initiated at Wilson Memorial hospital in Marathon
- CT scanners have been approved for the Dryden Regional Health Centre and Riverside Health Care Facilities in Fort Frances
- Angioplasty is now being performed at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre in Thunder Bay.
- The Total Joint Centre opened up at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre with 10 beds dedicated to patients requiring joint surgery.

Chronic Disease Prevention and Management (CDPM)

- A CDPM Advisory Team, with 17 members from across the region, was established to provide advice to the NW LHIN on the planning and implementation of comprehensive services within the context of the IHSP.
- The North West LHIN hosted three presentations on Chronic Disease Prevention and Management to help advance a CDPM strategy in the region. We also partnered with the Dryden Family Health Team and Thunder Bay District Health Unit to hold CDPM self-management sessions in Dryden and Thunder Bay.
- An extensive CDPM environmental scan was conducted using focus groups, one-on-one discussions and a random survey to 1,000 households across the region to gauge the current state of CDPM in the Northwest.

Mental Health and Addictions

- Sixty-four specialized behavioural beds were announced as part of the Centre of Excellence for Integrated Seniors' Services project (see Long Term Care below for full details). These beds will be an important resource for the entire northwest region, supporting the growing number of people with dementia with specialized services in a safe and therapeutic environment.
- The NW LHIN's Mental Health and Addictions Advisory Team is being finalized.

Long Term Care

- In response to the City of Thunder Bay's pending closure and transfer of 300 municipal long-term care beds to the province in 2009, the Minister announced a Centre of Excellence for Integrated Seniors' Services (CEISS) in Thunder Bay. The CEISS is responsive to the local populations' increasing demand for seniors' care services. The project realigns existing services and fulfills identified gaps in health services available in the northwest. Upon completion in 2011, the CEISS will accommodate: 336 new long term care beds, including 64 specialized behavioural beds for clients from across the region; 132 new supportive housing units; community support services for an additional 120 clients; Community Care Access Centre services for an additional 30 clients; and enhanced services for existing supportive housing units. The NW LHIN established a CEISS Steering Committee to coordinate the planning and implementation of the project.
- The government's Aging at Home Strategy was announced. The three year project will provide supports to seniors to live healthy, independent lives in their own homes and communities. The NW LHIN is receiving close to \$3.4-million in new base funding over the funding period 2008 to 2011. We submitted a directional plan, based on stakeholder input, to the Ministry for implementation of the strategy in the northwest.
- A Seniors' Services Advisory Team, with 17 members from across the LHIN, was established to be a resource for the planning of Seniors' Services and help to identify creative and innovative solutions for improving services. A Community of Interest has also been set up, made up of individuals interested in assisting the Team.
- The NW LHIN arranged a Visioning Exercise with Dr. Paul Williams, Co-director of the Canadian Research Network for Care in the Community, who presented domestic and international models of care delivery for integrated senior services.
- Many funding announcements were made related to improving the flow of seniors from hospital emergency departments and beds to more appropriate care settings, including: increased home care and community support services; the assignment of CCAC case managers to hospital emergency departments to assess and divert clients to more appropriate community services; and increased emergency department nursing services for seniors with complex functional and/or psychological challenges.
- Two teams in the NW LHIN were approved to take part in the Flo Collaborative, an 18-month provincial project to improve care processes related to patient flow from acute care to subsequent care settings. Both teams include staff from Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC), the North West CCAC and St. Joseph's Care Group.

e-Health

- Significant progress was made in advancing e-Health in Northern Ontario. The North West and North East LHINs implemented a three phase Blueprint Planning Project which:
 1. identified the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) needs and strategies of health service providers
 2. assessed the current state of ICT in the broader health system throughout Northern Ontario
 3. created a tactical plan outlining the priority projects necessary to effectively implement e-Health ICT in the northeast and northwest.The tactical plan's first priority was achieved in the fall of 2007 with the establishment of a Project Management Office (PMO) to plan, implement and monitor e-Health initiatives across Northern Ontario. (more details on the PMO on page 6)
- Bruce Sutton, Chief Information Officer for Thunder Bay Regional Health Centre and St. Joseph's Care Group's Integrated Information Systems department, is the NW LHIN's e-Health Lead.
- An e-Health Advisory Team is currently being established.

Integration Along the Continuum

- A System Integration Committee has been established to provide strategic advice on health system innovation, change and integration to the North West LHIN Senior Leadership Team, considering recommendations and findings of all Advisory Teams.
- The re-building of long-term care (LTC) beds in Thunder Bay was transformed into a true continuum of services for seniors with the Centre of Excellence for Integrated Seniors Services project (CEISS). The project provides support services and facility options for seniors across the continuum: from the seniors living independently, to those at home needing minimal support, to those requiring moderate support services, to the frail who require residential long-term care or specialized behavioural services.



French Language Services

- The NW LHIN has maintained an ongoing dialogue with various Francophone stakeholders on improving access to French language services.
- Our *LHINKages* newsletters are translated and distributed to our Francophone partners to ensure they are kept informed about the LHIN's progress and activities.

Aboriginal

- Focus group sessions have been held with Aboriginal stakeholders to begin a dialogue and planning process for the development of an Aboriginal Community Engagement Plan.
- NW LHIN staff attended the Ministry's Local Aboriginal Health Planning Entities (LAHPE) community engagement sessions with local Aboriginal representatives in Kenora and Thunder Bay.

Recent Events

February 20

Aging at Home Community Innovation Exchange Province-wide videoconference

Participants from all 14 LHINs attended a morning videoconference featuring an address by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, George Smitherman and presentations on five innovative Aging at Home programs. The NW LHIN hosted 12 sites across the region, involving 70 participants. In the afternoon, the participants in the northwest discussed local issues and ideas related to supporting seniors to age in their homes and in their communities.

March 3 – 7

Stanford Training in Chronic Disease Self-Management Thunder Bay

Twenty-eight clinicians in the region received 4 ½ days of training in self-management of chronic disease. All participants received Master Trainer level certification following the course. This enables them to now train other health professionals in Northwestern Ontario.

March 6 & 7

Francophone Health Summit

Fort William Historical Park, Thunder Bay

Co-hosted by the NW LHIN and the Réseau francophone de Santé du Nord de l'Ontario, this 1 ½ day event focused on the prevention and management of chronic diseases.

March 18

Wait Times Forum, Thunder Bay

Board Chairs and CEOs of health service providers and members of the NW LHIN's Wait Times Working Groups and Advisory Team heard from Dr. Alan Hudson, Lead, Access to Services and Wait Time Strategy and other speakers about the future directions of Wait Times in Ontario.

- The LHIN has recruited a Senior Aboriginal Consultant to serve as lead for the planning and community engagement of Aboriginal people in Northwestern Ontario.

Health Human Resources

- A Health Human Resources Roundtable has been established, as well as a Community of Interest to act as a resource for the Team.
- Interviews for the NW LHIN's Health Professional Advisory Committee (HPAC) are complete and the team has been confirmed. The HPAC's members represent various health professions. This group is to assist the LHIN by providing advice on a number of issues focus on achieving patient-centred care.
- The North West LHIN participated in the Working Group to develop HealthForceOntario's Interprofessional Care Blueprint and continues to work closely with HealthForceOntario.

Upcoming Events

March 26

An Opportunity for Real Change: Advancing Health System Transformation in the North West LHIN

Valhalla Inn, Thunder Bay

This NW LHIN forum will be of value to all people interested in improving the LHIN-wide health system. Four speakers will share information on innovation and integration activities that are receiving national and international recognition, addressing the full spectrum of health and range of ages. Everyone is welcome! To register, contact Darlene Ibey at 684-9425 ext. 2013, toll free at 1-866-907-5446, or by emailing darlene.ibey@lhins.on.ca.

March 27 & 28

Aboriginal Health Forum: Elements of Change Victoria Inn, Thunder Bay

Aboriginal/First Nations Leaders, Health Service Providers, community representatives and the LHIN will be meeting to discuss working together to address First Nation/Aboriginal health care services. Discussions will focus on building relationships, ongoing communications and collaboration to meet the needs of people in the NW LHIN.

To register, visit the Forum website at www.theconferenceplanner.ca/NWLHIN or contact Shirley Salt, Senior Aboriginal Consultant, at 1-866-907-5446 ext. 2019 or shirley.salt@lhins.on.ca.

For the most up-to-date community engagement activities, please visit the "Calendar of Events" or "Get Involved" on our website.

LHIN Team Profiles



Kathy Plaskett

Program Assistant, Performance, Contract and Allocation

Kathy has held administrative positions at Lakehead University, the Children's Aid Society, Ministry of Labour and, most recently, at the Lutheran Community Care Centre and Buset & Partners LLP where she gained accounts payable and bookkeeping experience. She provides administrative support to three Senior Consultants and the Controller/Business Support Manager.

"I feel very fortunate to be given the opportunity to support a team of such dedicated and hard-working individuals, all sharing in the vision of a strong health care system for Northwestern Ontario."



Andy Gallardi

Senior Director, Performance, Contract and Allocation

Andy has extensive experience in system level financial and performance management of health care. Most recently he held the position of Manager, Finance and Information Management for the East Region of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care where he had broad responsibility for regional health-care operations in Eastern Ontario. He has 17 years experience in various ministries within the Ontario Public Service including housing and justice. Andy holds an MBA degree from York University in Toronto as well as a Master of Music degree from the Hartt School of Music in Hartford, Connecticut.

"The establishment of the NW LHIN represents a new way to address the health needs of residents of Northwestern Ontario and I am very excited to be a part of this important initiative. I really feel that we can make a positive difference."

Northern Ontario e-Health Office Up and Running

E-Health in Northern Ontario advanced to the tactical stage with the summer release of the Phase 3 Tactical Plan of the Northern Ontario e-Health Information and Telecommunication (ICT) Blueprint. The Plan identifies 16 priority projects necessary for the successful implementation of Northern e-Health initiatives.

The first priority was the setup of a Project Management Office to plan, execute, coordinate and monitor the implementation of the Tactical Plan. The North East and North West LHINs' Northern Ontario e-Health Office opened in Sault Ste. Marie last October.

Privacy and Security Project Underway

The Northern Ontario e-Health Office is currently developing policies for the privacy and security of sharing data electronically across northeast and northwest Ontario. Respect for privacy is essential to ensuring the acceptance and trust of e-Health by consumers and health care providers.

These policies are being developed to facilitate: the secure exchange of personal health information between health care providers the integration of health services to support a continuum of care the development of an electronic health record for residents of Northern Ontario, and efficiencies and economies of scale for Information and Communication Technology throughout the region.

If you would like to learn more about this project please contact the Northern Ontario e-Health Office at office@northernontarioe-healthoffice.ca.



If you have comments or ideas for future issues, please contact Kelly Arnold at (807) 684-9425 ext. 2030 or kelly.arnold@lhins.on.ca

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