



Issue 3 - July 2007

LHINKAGES

CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITIES IN HEALTH

The North West Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) is focused on advancing our *Integrated Health Services Plan (IHSP)*. The IHSP outlines the health care priorities, identified through community engagement activities and data analysis, and strategies to address these priorities over the next three years.

Advisory Teams have been launched to support the work of the North West LHIN in moving forward on the IHSP priority areas. Each Advisory Team will be supported by a Community of Interest (COI) with special interest and experience in the Team's priority area. A list of all members will be circulated in a future issue of *LHINKages*.

Access to specialty services (including diagnostics) is a priority outlined in the IHSP for the northwest. On page 2, an update on the Wait Times Strategy provides information on how the North West LHIN, together with its partners, is working to address this priority area.

During community engagement throughout the northwest, innovations that support services being provided close to home were reported as something that 'works well'. One initiative that was repeatedly cited as a success story and a model for future innovations was the Ontario Breast Screening Program's Coach. The Coach is highlighted in this issue.

Innovation in the North West LHIN was celebrated provincially in May at the Celebrating Innovations in Health Care Expo. Summaries of these successes are available on page 6. We congratulate all those representing the northwest at the Expo and will continue to profile and celebrate innovation at the local level.

We hope you enjoy the July issue of *LHINKages*! We look forward to working with our partners throughout the region to develop innovative solutions to improving our health system.

Launch of Advisory Teams

Making Changes at the Local Level

We had an overwhelming response to our call for Advisory Team members. Over 160 expressions of interest were collected from across the northwest. Teams are being formed to address the local health service needs and priorities outlined in the North West LHIN's Integrated Health Services Plan.

The following teams have completed their inaugural meetings:

- Chronic Disease Prevention and Management Advisory Team
- Health Human Resources Roundtable
- Wait Times Working Groups

Meetings for the following teams are scheduled to begin in the fall:

- Mental Health and Addictions Services Advisory Team
- Seniors' Services Advisory Team
- Wait Times Advisory Team
- e-Health Advisory Team

A listing of all Advisory Team members will be released soon.

Putting the North West LHIN's *Integrated Health Services Plan* into action will help achieve the North West LHIN's vision for the northwest – *Healthier people, a strong health system – our future*, and begin to address health system challenges in our region.

in this ISSUE

- Launch of Advisory Teams
- Our Mission & Vision
- Wait Times Update for the Northwest
- Our Board Members
- The OBSP Coach
- Honours at the Provincial Health Expo



North West LHIN's Mission and Vision

The Board of Directors has developed the following Mission and Vision for the North West LHIN to provide direction and guide our activities as we work with our partners in the northwest.

Mission

Develop an innovative, sustainable and efficient health system in service to the health and wellness of the people of the North West LHIN

Vision

Healthier people, a strong health system – our future.

Wait Times Strategy:

New Data Shows Significant Improvements in the Northwest Area

The Wait Times Strategy is a key element in improving access to diagnostic and treatment services, which is a priority in the North West LHIN *Integrated Health Services Plan*.

Northwestern Ontario is showing a significant decrease in wait times for a number of key health services according to the province's latest data. This region has the shortest wait times for cancer surgery and the second shortest wait times for hip and knee replacement and MRI scans.

“We are seeing a real difference for residents in Northwestern Ontario thanks to the collaborative efforts of the front line staff, physicians and surgeons in our health services organizations”, says Gwen DuBois-Wing, CEO of the North West LHIN.

Since the province started collecting data in August/September 2005, wait times in the North West LHIN have decreased by:

- 160 days for MRI scans
- 32 days for angiography
- 243 days for knee replacement
- 18 days for cancer surgery
- 19 days for hip replacement

At the same time, wait times for two health service areas have increased:

- 37 days for CT scans
- 207 days for cataract surgery

The government recently invested \$702,000 for Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre to expand its cataract surgery program and \$150,000 for additional cataract surgeries at Wilson Memorial General Hospital in Marathon.

Wait Times Activity in the North West LHIN

Working Groups with both administrative and clinical expertise have been created to address three priority wait time areas for our region:

1. Hip and knee replacement
2. CTs and MRIs
3. Cataracts

These groups are meeting to identify and support strategies that improve patient access to these services within the North West LHIN. They will be presenting their work plans to the Wait Times Advisory Team when it meets this fall.

An important part of the Ontario government's Health Transformation Agenda is the Wait Times Strategy. Additional information on wait times in the North West LHIN is available at: www.health.gov.on.ca/transformation/wait_times/wt_strategy.html.

Introducing the North West LHIN Board of Directors *Part Two*

In the April issue of LHINkages, we introduced you to Chair John Whitfield (Thunder Bay), Vice Chair Janice Beazley (Fort Frances) and Secretary Ennis Fiddler (Sandy Lake).

We'd like to introduce you to the remaining Board members:



Kevin Bähm (Terrace Bay)

Kevin Bähm has been employed as a police officer with the Terrace Bay Police Service and the Ontario Provincial Police since 1988. During this time, he served as acting police chief with Terrace Bay Police Service and gained experience in the fields of administration, media relations, community service and exhibits management. From 1986 to 1988, he was employed as director of commercial contracts/security and investigations with Pinkerton Security Limited. Prior to this, through progressive advancement, he worked as a police officer and then detective/investigator with the Metro Toronto Police. His community involvement has included serving as a member of the Schreiber and Terrace Bay Chamber of Commerce, board chair and member of the McCausland Hospital, and board chair of the Lake Nipigon Health Network. Kevin's term runs from January 5, 2006 to and including January 4, 2008.



Marleen Wong (Kenora)

Marleen Wong holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from the University of Ottawa and a Masters of Health Science degree in Health Administration from the University of Toronto. She has been representing Northwestern Ontario since 2003, serving as a Medical Member of the Office of the Commissioner of Review Tribunals for Canada Pension Plan/Old Age Security. Prior to this, she was provincial director of clinical and diagnostic support services for the Provincial Health Services Authority in B.C. Earlier in her career, she was regional director of provincial programs and strategic initiatives for the Vancouver/Richmond Health Board; co-acting president and CEO, as well as vice-president of programs of The Richmond Hospital; vice-president, patient care, at St. Vincent's Hospital (Vancouver); and vice-president, nursing, at The Royal University Hospital (Saskatoon). Marleen currently serves as secretary and property committee member of the finance council at Notre Dame du Portage Roman Catholic Church and is a past surveyor with the Canadian Council on Health Care Accreditation and a member of several committees and task forces. Her term runs from January 5, 2006 to January 4, 2008.



Chantelle Bryson (Thunder Bay)

Chantelle Bryson, of Thunder Bay, has been practicing municipal, health, aboriginal and environmental law since 2002 throughout the Thunder Bay, Kenora and Rainy River Districts. Prior to that time she was the law clerk to Chief Justice Allan Lutfy of the Federal Court of Canada, focusing her legal efforts on federal labour and employment, aboriginal, equality rights, taxation and immigration and citizenship law. She also has extensive career experience as a counselor in Northern rural communities, working primarily with aboriginal women, youth and children. Chantelle currently participates in a variety of professional, public, post-secondary and trade organizations, as an advisory board member and guest speaker, providing guidance on public entity governance and participating in a variety of community leadership, educational and fundraising initiatives for these groups and their members. She is appointed for the period May 17, 2006 to June 16, 2010.



Bob Gregor (Marathon)

Robert (Bob) Gregor is a long-time resident of Marathon. He worked at Marathon Pulp Inc. for 32 years, where he held a number of progressively more responsible positions including employee relations administrator, manager of human resources and, over the last fourteen years of his career, as president/resident manager. Since his retirement in 2004, he operates a small consulting practice specializing in business, human resources, mediation and forest products. He has served on the boards of a number of organizations, including the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation, the Ontario Pulp and Paper Health and Safety Association, the Ontario Forest Industries Association as well as various community and recreational committees within the Marathon area. Bob is appointed for the period May 17, 2006 to May 16, 2008.



Judy Morrison (Fort Frances)

Judy Morrison is a member of Nicickousemenecaning First Nation. Most recently she was employed by Weechi-it-te-win Family Services as the community liaison worker. She also worked as a health planner for the Fort Frances Tribal Area Health Authority and as a researcher/consultant for Unicare Comprehensive Health Organization (CHO)-Native Perspective. Judy has a long history of working with numerous community organizations. She has served as a trustee of Riverside Health Care, Mine Centre Direct Area School Board, Unicare Comprehensive Health Organization and as a member of the Women’s Council. Currently, she volunteers at the United Native Friendship Centre as a mediator for the Alternative Youth Justice Program. Judy’s term runs from May 17, 2006 to June 16, 2010.

The North West LHIN Board has eight members and will have nine at its full complement. Board recruitment information and opportunities are available at www.pas.gov.on.ca.



Specialty Service Saves Travel Costs for Thousands of Women

It is like a 'breast health' house call for women in communities across Northwestern Ontario. And, while routine, the service it provides can be life-saving to the 6,500 women expected to board the Ontario Breast Screening Program (OBSP) Coach this year.

The OBSP Coach, the only mobile service of its kind in Ontario, was started by the regional OBSP 14 years ago to address two unique challenges – distance and geography. The mobile screening unit comes to the client rather than requiring the client to travel to receive screening services.

"Clients say they love that the program is available in their community," says Alison McMullen, Director of Preventive Oncology for Regional Cancer Care. Clients can self-refer themselves for the service or be referred by their doctors and, once in the program, are automatically recalled every two years.

High Participation Rate

The OBSP specifically targets women 50 years and older, when the risk of breast cancer increases. Its participation rates in this region are impressive: 47% of its target group (women 50+) go for mammograms through the OBSP, which is the 2nd highest rate in the province. Well over half of the participants are serviced on the OBSP Coach.

Even with this record, the Regional Breast Screening Program wants to increase its number of new clients. It set up a workplace challenge this year to encourage groups of women to get an exam done: an initiative that generated 150 newcomers.

Going the Distance

The Coach operates in Thunder Bay for five months in the winter. It hits the road from March to November, travelling 10,000 kilometres to 30 communities across Northwestern Ontario. Four Aboriginal communities were added to the coach program over the past few years.

Team of Two Accomplishes A Lot

A mammography technologist and nurse examiner team travel together aboard the Coach. The teams rotate throughout the year. They capitalize on every community visit, operating 12 hours each day for two to three days. During the 20 minute appointments, breast x-rays are taken by the technologist and a breast exam is performed by the nurse. Both are licensed and trained to drive the coach.

Within two weeks, test results are communicated via letter to the client and her family doctor. The breast assessment coordinator follows up with clients when there is a concern, and can assist those who may not have a family doctor.

"The women reward us every day through their participation and by recognizing us as an excellent service."

Its Rewards

The OBSP Coach is going digital in October 2007. Currently, its mammograms are done on film. Thunder Bay is the first of the eight hub sites in Ontario to be awarded a digital unit for its breast screening program. "With digital technology, the technologist can check the picture quality of the mammogram while the woman is on the coach", says McMullen.

According to McMullen, being the first to go digital is rewarding, as is the program itself. "The women reward us every day through their participation and by recognizing us as an excellent service."



Honours at the Provincial Health Expo

There is a healthy dose of creative and innovative change occurring in the health system in the northwest and the rest of the province. Seven projects in the northwest were showcased at the 2007 Celebrating Innovations in Health Care Expo in May. The Expo features solutions and projects supporting health-system renewal in Ontario.

Many partners in the North West LHIN celebrated honours this year. A listing of awards is located to the right.

The North West LHIN hosted a workshop at the Expo titled “Telemedicine: Improving Rural and Remote Access to Health Services”.

With more than 200 exhibitors and 14 high-level workshops, the Expo is an opportunity to learn about new programs and approaches that are making our health care system better across Ontario.

More information is available at www.health.gov.on.ca/transformation/innovation/expo_07/expo_07_mn.html



Lori Marshall, Caterina Kmill and Gwen Third from TBRHSC receiving their award from Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, the Honourable George Smitherman.

A Minister’s Award

Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre won a Minister’s Award for its *Multi Site Cardiac Rehabilitation Program*, in the category “Meeting Community Needs Through Integrated Care”.

An Award Finalist

The Dryden Area Family Health Team was a finalist in the “Improving Efficiency Through Process Redesign” category with its *It’s Your Health! Program*.

Numerous Exhibitors

The North West LHIN had a total of seven exhibitors at the Expo sharing their innovations. The remaining five included:

- Lake of the Woods District Hospital’s Community Programs *Medically Enhanced Co-ordinated Care for Addictions*
- St. Joseph’s Care Group *Right Care, Right Time, Right Place*
- St. Joseph’s Care Group and Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre *Thunder Bay Mental Health Programs Common Intake*
- Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre *Most Appropriate First Placement: Goal on Admission*
- Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (Northwestern Ontario Regional Stroke Network) *HEARTBEAT of the Anishnawbe Nation*

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

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