

MEDIA RELEASE

TWO FOR TWO

NE LHIN/Sault Ste. Marie Solutions Group Move Forward on Priorities to Ease ALC Pressures in Algoma

Monday, May 17, 2010 - Two short weeks after having been formed, and two meetings into their mandate, the NE LHIN/Sault Ste. Marie ALC Solutions Group confirmed their commitment to six priorities to ease ALC pressures in Sault Ste. Marie and Area. Of the Group's six priorities, two are already underway:

1. **Strengthening community support/assisted living** with a focus on: (1) a **home-first strategy** that enhances home care services and improves existing processes so that seniors receive the care they need faster and more effectively; and (2) **cluster care** which looks at providing personal support care to people in high-density buildings so that they efficiently receive the care they need in their own home setting.

At a recent NE LHIN meeting of Northeastern Ontario's CEOs and Board Chairs of the four large hospitals, NE CCAC and Northeast Mental Health Centre (HUBS), leaders unanimously supported a decision to build and strengthen a regional home first strategy. Home first is a basic change in both process and philosophy for health service providers and families who are faced with having to make a decision about how to care for an aging family member. Through a close partnership between the CCAC, the LHIN and health service providers, patients are given the option to convalesce at home with personal care support services instead of in a hospital bed. This allows families to take the time needed to look at options available for their loved one's health care needs while allowing hospitals to return to providing acute care services for patients. .

2. **Developing a community plan to move ALC patients** from the hospital to beds available in the community. A small task force will report back to the Group within several weeks on a business case that includes how many beds are available in non-acute care settings and an estimated cost to move patients to those beds.

The NE LHIN/ALC Sault Ste. Marie Solutions Group will continue to move forward with implementing its six priorities under an overarching plan that houses the many components needed to bring about positive health care changes in the area and relieve ALC pressures being felt by health service providers and patients.

QUOTES

Shelley McEachern, Administrator, Extendicare Nursing Home and Co-Chair ALC Solutions Group

"All the right ingredients to bring about positive change are in place. ALC is a decade-long issue and a very complex one. It is important that the entire community is focussed on the same plan that includes both short and long-term solutions."

Terry Tilleczek, Senior Director, NE LHIN and Co-Chair, ALC Solutions Group

"As we work to implement short-term solutions, we need to remain focussed on the fact that the potential for ALC pressures will be a reality for Northeastern Ontario for some time given our growing aging population. It is important that our investments made today fit into where we want and need to be as a community tomorrow."

Debbie Amaroso, Ontario March of Dimes

“It is important that the health care system provides efficient and effective services to the people of Sault Ste. Marie so that their needs are met in a manner that promotes independence and quality of life. Those people who are aging in our community deserve to stay in their homes as long as they can with the support they need.”

Tracy MacDonald, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Sault Area Hospital

“It is imperative that we find lasting solutions to the ALC problem in our community. At the same time, we must address the immediate need to ease the unprecedented overcapacity we have been facing at Sault Area Hospital. It’s obvious that the Solutions Group realizes the urgency and is already moving forward on identified solutions.”

Dr. Al McLean, Chief of Staff, Sault Area Hospital

“Our staff, physicians and volunteers have shown remarkable dedication and resilience in dealing with the current overcrowding at our hospital, which is directly attributable to the significant number of ALC patients occupying our beds. I am hopeful that we will see some tangible results shortly in alleviating the tremendous pressure our people face. They deserve our gratitude and, more importantly, our support.”

QUICK FACTS

- Members of the ALC Solutions Group include: Shelley McEachern, Co-Chair, Extendicare Tendercare; Terry Tilleczek, Co-chair, NE LHIN; Dr. Al McLean, Sault Area Hospital; Ann Matte, NE CCAC; Debbie Amaroso, Ontario March of Dimes; Elaine Blakeborough, Group Health Association; Dr. Frank Ianni, Algoma District Medical Group; Kim Streich-Poser, City of Sault Ste. Marie; Mary Ellen Luukkonen, Blind River District Health Centre; Tracy MacDonald, Sault Area Hospital
- The Group’s six priorities include: (1) community ALC plan, (2) community support/assisted living, (3) human resource strategy, (4) long-term care opportunities, (5) emergency department wait times, (6) community geriatric services.

LEARN MORE

For further information, please contact: Cynthia Stables, Cynthia.stables@lhins.on.ca or 705-845-1887.