

Alternate Level of Care (ALC) in the North East Region

Background

- ALC in the North East LHIN is a long-standing health care challenge.
- Since 2006, the NE LHIN has made ALC a priority and has worked to bring the right partners to the table to identify specific strategies to address the ALC patient issue in this region.
- ALC is a health system issue. Alleviating the ALC pressures placed on hospitals is dependant upon increasing the overall mix and quantity of community based health programs and services.
- Resolving ALC is a *people* issue. Every ALC statistic has a face behind it.
- Effectively resolving the delicate ALC issue will take time. The NE LHIN is implementing a mix of short, mid and long-term solutions.
- The NE LHIN cannot stabilize ALC on its own. The solution lays in the collaborative efforts of the NE LHIN and its health system partners to establish community-level infrastructure and programs to stabilize ALC.
- The ALC Task Force Report (December, 2007) provides a comprehensive overview of the ALC situation in North East Ontario and is the result of four NE LHIN created Task Forces, who have worked collaboratively since March, 2007. The Report identifies 74 initiatives aimed at addressing ALC.
- The NE LHIN's ALC Action Plan (December, 2007), identifies strategic directions, targets, and initiatives to guide the NE LHIN decisions on ALC over the next three years.
- The Action Plan calls for a 25% reduction of ALC cases year after year for the next 3 years.
- NE LHIN Funding earmarked for seniors, 2008 – 2011:
 - Portion of (\$2.5 million) of Urgent Funding allocation and reallocation of surplus funding for implementation of ALC strategies between January and March, 2008.
 - \$4.2 million for Aging at Home initiatives in 2008/2009.
 - \$10.6 million for Aging at Home initiatives in 2009/2010.
 - \$18.8 million for Aging at Home initiatives in 2010/2011.

The NE LHIN ...

Has the highest ratio of ALC patients in acute hospital beds (estimated at 30%) compared to any other LHIN in the province.

Covers a large geographic area of approximately 400,000 sq. km. The total population of 561,883 (Census 2006) in the North East region has an older age structure, with a relatively high proportion of First Nations, Aboriginals, Métis and Francophones.

Has a higher proportion of the population age 65+ than the province i.e. 16.3% and 13.5% respectively (2006 Census). Seniors age 65+ account for approximately 91,842 of the total population which is 561,882.

Has approximately 7,700 people currently with Alzheimer disease or related dementia. This number is expected to rise by 30% to just under 10,000 by 2016 (North East Dementia Network Coalition, June 2007).

Has more than 23,000 older persons living alone. Overall, 65% of seniors live as a family, 4% live with relatives, and 30% live alone. James Bay Coast area residents show the highest percentage of older persons living as families at 77% compared to 65% in the NE LHIN as a whole.

Has a higher percentage of unemployment, low-income rate, daily smokers, adults who are obese, overweight, relative to the province.