

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Improving Access to Health Services in Webbwood** *North East LHIN Recognizes Espanola & Area Family Health Team and Public Health Sudbury & Districts as Healthy Change Champions*

October 25, 2018 -- About 80 kilometres west of Sudbury sits the small community of Webbwood – and at its centre is the public library – a building that offers a lot more to residents than books. For the fewer than 500 people who live in Webbwood, the library is also a place where they can access health care services.

Health service providers and people living in the area identified that access to health care services in the community is an ongoing issue. Espanola and Area Family Health Team (FHT) and Public Health Sudbury & Districts took the lead in transforming the system so that it becomes more patient-focused, integrated, and easier to access. For their work to bring more services to Webbwood, they have been named North East LHIN Healthy Change Champions.

“Northeastern Ontario is beaming with leaders like the Espanola and Area Family Health Team and Public Health Sudbury & Districts who listen to what Northerners need to live healthy and well in this beautiful part of the province,” said Jeremy Stevenson, CEO, North East Local Health Integration Network (NE LHIN). “Health care innovation is alive and well in the North, and the North East LHIN applauds the work of these two outstanding health service providers whose leadership is helping to meet the needs of people closer to home.”

Public Health Sudbury & Districts and Webbwood Public Library recognized that the library had many existing assets that could be used or enhanced to allow health service providers to offer programs there. Over the last year, they worked together to develop the space.

Earlier this year, the Espanola and Area FHT expanded its programming to Webbwood.

“Aligning with the goals of North East LHIN sub-region planning, the Espanola & Area Family Health Team felt that a programming satellite site was the best way to ensure equitable access to primary care services,” said Jon Brunetti, Manager, Espanola and Area FHT. “Our vision is to offer a more robust delivery model that sets an example for other community agencies.”



Jake Marion, CEO, Webbwood Public Library, Aimee Belanger, Public Health Nurse, Public Health Sudbury & Districts, and Jon Brunetti, Primary Care Manager, Espanola Regional Hospital and Health Centre display some of what's offered at Webbwood Public Library.

Together, the Espanola and Area FHT and Public Health Sudbury & Districts have implemented the *From Soup to Tomatoes* arm chair-based exercise program, the snowshoe and urban pole lending program, health promotion programming, and group programming. The kitchen has been certified, and provides a space for the community to cook together and learn more about healthy eating. In addition, an Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN) connection was established in the library's community room, allowing health care providers to offer OTN appointments, including specialist appointments, to residents of Webbwood, eliminating the need for them to travel to a health care facility in another community.

"Together we are able to increase opportunities so that all residents in the Espanola and surrounding area can have control over their health, while knowing that more accessible and client-centred health care is available when needed," said Aimee Belanger, Public Health Nurse, Public Health Sudbury & Districts.

Many other organizations also offer services to residents in Webbwood. Both the Espanola and Area Family Health Team and Public Health Sudbury & Districts plan to continue to strengthen partnerships and encourage more providers to explore similar models to service delivery.

"It is our goal to develop or modify programming to meet the needs of the residents of Webbwood," said Brunetti. "By working together with the North East LHIN and other partners, we can create a service delivery model that enhances access for individuals in the community."

"Public Health recognizes the strengths in working together with community partners to address health inequities in our communities," said Belanger. "Partnering with the Webbwood Public Library is a prime example of how unique partnerships can be used to improve the health and well-being of a whole community."

#### **Background Information – Healthy Change Champion Award:**

- **Who is eligible?** North East LHIN health service providers, employees and volunteers of providers, as well as, health care leaders, community leaders, and other Northerners who are contributing to building a stronger health care system in the North East.
- **What kind of work does the North East LHIN Healthy Change Champion recognize?** Those who are transforming the health care system so that it becomes more patient/client-focused, integrated, and easier to access. These are people or organizations who are reaching out to others in the course of their work to improve the system. Their work may be small or large in scope, but it's significant in that it is making a difference in people's lives.
- **Who can nominate?** Any Northerner can suggest a Healthy Change Champion. In one or two paragraphs explain why you believe the person or organization deserves this recognition. Send your nomination to [engagingwithyou@lhins.on.ca](mailto:engagingwithyou@lhins.on.ca) or 555 Oak Street East, Third Floor, North Bay, ON, P1B 8E3.
- **How are they picked?** Nominees are reviewed by a senior team from the North East LHIN. Consideration is also given to individuals and organizations advancing the care for certain population groups within the North East LHIN including seniors, Aboriginal/First Nations/Métis, and Francophones.

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