

## MEDIA RELEASE

### North East LHIN releases *Integrating Innovative Ideas* summary

**October 28, 2010** – Collaboration, communication, programs and services, technology, and human resources were the five themes identified in a two-day effort last month by representatives of the region's 26 hospitals at a summit on rural health care in Northeastern Ontario. The summary of proceedings was released today by the meeting's organizing body, the North East Local Health Integration Network (NE LHIN).

Integrating Innovative Ideas: Small Rural Hospital Summit was held September 23-24 in Sault Ste. Marie. The Northeast region's 22 rural hospitals, plus its four larger hospitals, were represented and participated in 36 hours of presentations and one-on-one networking opportunities. Representatives of the North East CCAC and the Northeast Mental Health Centre also shared their time and expertise during the Summit.

The NE LHIN summary of summit proceedings, *Integrating Innovative Ideas: Small Rural Hospital Summit*, outlines a call for action to improve health care delivery in rural Northeastern Ontario. The summit challenged the senior level delegates to consider ways to improve the delivery of health services to the people of Northeastern Ontario. This document will become the focus for implementing change over the coming year.

While there is still much work to do on many of the Summit's suggestions, some prompted the NE LHIN's to respond immediately, explained Louise Paquette, CEO of the NE LHIN. Eight ideas were followed up within a week of the summit, including delegate suggestions for sharing best practices, policies and procedures through an electronic platform.

#### Quotes:

"Our region's first-ever rural health summit was a great success," stated Peter Vaudry, Interim Chair of the NE LHIN. "We will meet in one year's time to determine how far we've come now that we have charted a course for stronger health care in our rural communities."

"With approximately 40 per cent of our Northeastern Ontario population living in rural communities, compared to 15 per cent provincially, it's very important that we work together to respond to our region's health care delivery challenges," said Louise Paquette, NE LHIN CEO. "It's critical that these communities have a voice in shaping the delivery of healthcare."

"As a rural resident and a NE LHIN Board Director, I embrace all efforts to build a stronger healthcare system for our rural citizens," said Jib Turner, NE LHIN Board Director from Manitoulin Island. "Today's report is a step in the right direction as it charts a course for positive action by all partners involved."

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**Facts:**

- 40 per cent of Northeastern Ontario's population live in rural areas, compared to 15 percent provincially.
- The North East LHIN engages on a bi-monthly basis with the region's 22 small rural hospitals.
- The North East LHIN engages regularly with the region's four larger hospitals, the North East CCAC and the Northeast Mental Health Centre, known as regional HUBS. To date, the work of the regional HUBS has yielded a memorandum of understanding between the North East CCAC and the four large hospitals on implementing a **Home First Strategy** to allow the region's frail elderly to convalesce at home instead of in hospital.
- The North East LHIN will invite all Rural Health Summit delegates to a follow-up meeting in one year's time.

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The *Integrating Innovative Ideas: Small Rural Hospital Summit* report is available at [www.nelhin.on.ca](http://www.nelhin.on.ca).

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