

MEDIA RELEASE

DAWN OF A NEW ERA...

INTEGRATED CARE FOR THE PEOPLE OF HUDSON AND JAMES BAY COASTS

Friday, October 1, 2010 – People living along the Hudson and James Bay Coast have reason to celebrate today, following a three-year process to integrate the provincial James Bay General Hospital and the federal Weeneebayko General Hospital into the new Weeneebayko Area Health Authority (WAHA).

In 2007, the Weeneebayko Area Health Integration Framework Agreement was signed following more than a decade of work and dedication by numerous individuals. Signatories to the Framework Agreement included the Federal and Provincial Ministers of Health, the Chiefs and Councils of five communities of the Weeneebayko Area, and the Mayor and Council of the Town of Moosonee.

Countless hours of work and dedication from multiple partners made today's milestone event a reality. Since 2007, leaders have been following the North East LHIN's voluntary integration process.

The creation of WAHA now paves the way for the integration of hospital services which will lead to improved quality, accessibility, delivery, effectiveness, efficiency and cultural appropriateness of health care services in communities served by the new WAHA. Integration will allow for better coordination of federal and provincial programs and services, as well as better access to community health services and programs to address local health issues such as diabetes, mental health, and suicide prevention.

As indicated by its name, WAHA will be a health authority, responsible not just for hospital services, but also long-term care, community care, and other services required to improve the health of area families.

WAHA will be governed by a community-based regional board and will enter into a service accountability agreement with the North East LHIN. WAHA will serve 11,500 people with hundreds of kilometres between the area's communities, each with its own unique need for health services.

QUOTES

Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Health, Health Canada

"This is an historic event. This agreement demonstrates the Government of Canada's commitment to improving health care services for First Nations people. By integrating federal and provincial hospital services and programs under a First Nation controlled organization, local residents will see real and positive change in health care delivery, focused on community needs."

Honourable Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

"I am pleased to see the collaborative approach that led to this integration. It will contribute to a more efficient health care system and, more importantly, address the health needs and priorities of Ontario's Northern residents."

Peter Vaudry, North East LHIN Chair

"Today's historic event is a result of a respectful and thoughtful approach of many people. It represents a collective and genuine response to better meet the health care needs of people living along the Hudson and James Bay Coasts."

Louise Paquette, North East LHIN CEO

“From the beginning, the creation of WAHA has been focused on people. Integration will allow for more coordination of health care services, access to more programs, and most importantly a renewed focus on patient-care.”

Leo Loone, WAHA Chair

“After many years of working to improve the health of our people, we have achieved the next important step and WAHA is now a reality.”

Jim Harrold, WAHA CEO

“I commend all partners involved for keeping their primary focus on people, patients and health care, and look forward to a continued focus on better health for the people we serve.”

QUICK FACTS

- The Weeneebayko General Hospital is the last federally-funded hospital in Ontario.
- Approximately 11,500 residents live in the Hudson and James Bay coastal communities. According to Statistics Canada, 87% of this population is Aboriginal.
- The Local Health System Integration Act gives LHINs the legislative power and authority they need to effectively plan, coordinate and fund their local health service providers to make it easier for patients to access the care they need.
- The NE LHIN has worked as an active partner in leading and advancing the Weeneebayko Area Health Authority since 2007.

LEARN MORE

- A backgrounder is on page 3. Two photos are on page 4.
- For more detailed information, please contact: Martha Auchinleck, 705-840-2872, ext. 224, NE LHIN Senior Director; or Cynthia Stables, 705-845-1887, NE LHIN Senior Corporate Advisor.

Background – WAHA

- Signatories to the Weeneebayko Area Health Integration Framework Agreement, which was signed on August 31, 2007, include the Federal and Provincial Ministers of Health, the Chiefs and Councils of five communities of the Weeneebayko Area, and the Mayor and Council of the Town of Moosonee.
- The agreement provided a framework for the:
 - Creation of WAHA;
 - Merging of hospitals in the Weeneebayko Area, to be operated by WAHA;
 - Planning, management and delivery of health care and related programs and services in the Weeneebayko area by WAHA on an integrated basis;
 - Funding of health care and related programs and services to be delivered by WAHA, whereby Canada would provide funding for community-based health programs and federally funded nursing stations and health centres, and Ontario would provide funding primarily for physician and hospital services; and
 - Capital planning for health care infrastructure and the provision of capital funding from Canada and Ontario.
- On October 7, 2008, WAHA corporation was created.
- On May 28, 2010, the Mushkegowuk Council announced that the Signatories in attendance were in favour of continuing with immediate progress under the LHIN Voluntary Integration process in order to get the integration underway in a timely manner.
- An Operational Group led by KPMG and consisting of representatives from Health Canada, Ministry of Health, NE LHIN and the three hospitals continued to work on the integration of James Bay General Hospital and Weeneebayko General Hospital into WAHA.
- On July 14, 2010, NE LHIN announced the signing of resolutions by the three hospital boards: James Bay General Hospital, Weeneebayko General Hospital and WAHA. These resolutions confirmed their commitment to proceed with integration by way of the Voluntary Integration process.
- The WAHA Board is a community-based regional board, it's members include: Leo Loone, Chair; Fort Albany; Lucille Uiselt, Vice Chair, Moosonee; Andrew Linklater, Treasurer, Fort Albany; Henry Kooseses, Kashechewan; Johnny Kooseses, Kashechewan; Bob Gravel, Moosonee; George Small, MoCreebec; Joe Hunter, Peawanuck; Mike Wabano, Peawanuck; Mike Okimaw, Attawapiskat ; Christine Koostachin, Attawapiskat; Dorothy Wynne, MoCreebec.

PHOTOS – WAHA



In July, 2010, the North East LHIN and partners met in Moosonee for two days, resulting in resolutions signed by the three hospital boards involved – Weeneebayko Health Ahtuskaywin, James Bay General Hospital and Weeneebayko Area Health Authority (WAHA). The resolutions confirmed their commitment to have the integration completed by October 1, 2010.

From left to right: Jim Harrold, CEO of WAHA, Kelly Reuben, former Interim CEO of WAHA; Eric Sparks, CEO of James Bay General Hospital, and Louise Paquette; CEO North East LHIN.



In August, 2010, the Honourable Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and Interim NE LHIN Chair Peter Vaudry, spent two days engaging with community leaders in several communities along the Hudson and James Bay Coasts.

From left to right: Jim Harrold, CEO of WAHA; Honourable Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care; Peter Vaudry, NE LHIN Interim Chair; Leo Loone, Chair of WAHA; Eric Sparks, CEO of James Bay General Hospital.