

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **North East LHIN and Team of Physicians Visit James Bay and Hudson Bay Coast Communities**

**February 21, 2013** – The province’s Seniors’ Strategy lead, Dr. Samir Sinha, will accompany the North East Local Health Integration Network (NE LHIN) on a two-day visit to the coastal communities of Moosonee, Moose Factory, Peawanuck (Weenusk), Fort Albany and Kashechewan. The LHIN team, which will include the region’s two geriatricians and primary care lead, will focus on the needs and challenges of delivering care to seniors, particularly First Nation seniors, in our most northerly communities.

Team members include: North East LHIN CEO, Louise Paquette; Northeastern Ontario geriatricians Dr. Jo-Anne Clarke and Dr. Janet McElhaney, of Sudbury; and NE LHIN Primary Care Lead Dr. Alan McLean, of Sault Ste. Marie. The visit to the most northerly tip of the region has been organized by the NE LHIN with the help of Bernie Schmidt, CEO of the Weeneebayko Area Health Authority, as well as the participation of local chiefs and health care leaders.

In December, Dr. Sinha’s report *Living Longer Living Well*, which recommended ways to improve the delivery of care to older Ontarians, was received by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care Deb Matthews. One of the report’s recommendations noted that older Aboriginal people have unique needs and that a better understanding of these needs is required to develop an Aboriginal Seniors Strategy.

“My early career work with First Nations communities in Northern Manitoba helped me understand that our Aboriginal peoples have unique needs that our health system needs to address in a culturally appropriate and sensitive manner. I am looking forward to learning more from our northern coastal communities on how we can better meet the needs of their older members,” said Dr. Sinha.

Targeting the needs of culturally diverse population groups, including First Nations, is one of the North East LHIN’s four priorities, as outlined in its recently released three-year strategic plan.

Close to 10 per cent of the people living in our North East LHIN region are Aboriginal, First Nation or Métis. On the James and Hudson Bay coast, First Nations make up the majority of the population.

“The North East LHIN has brought together leading physicians from across Ontario to meet with people living along the James and Hudson Bay coasts,” said Paquette. “We will learn first-hand about challenges in health care delivery and will identify solutions for a stronger circle of care in this part of the province.”

Enhancing access to primary care for all Northerners, another of the LHIN’s priorities in its strategic plan, will be moved forward through the work of Dr. McLean.

“I am looking forward to meeting one-on-one with people living in coastal communities. Providing primary care services in this part of the province is like in no other and I’m keen to learn,” said Dr. McLean.

## QUICK FACTS

- **Weeneebayko Area Health Authority (WAHA):** In 2010, after a multi-year process, historic resolutions were signed in Moosonee, Ontario confirming commitment to integrate the provincial James Bay General Hospital and the federal Weeneebayko Health Ahtuskaywin into the new Weeneebayko Area Health Authority (WAHA). WAHA holds an accountability agreement with the NE LHIN to provide care to approximately 11,500 people living along the James and Hudson Bay Coasts.
- Aboriginal/First Nation/Métis people have higher rates of chronic disease and co-morbidities than their non-Aboriginal counterparts.
- Kashechewan has the highest rate of diabetes prevalence in the NE LHIN, at 20.44 per cent. This rate is double both the LHIN and provincial averages.
- Overall, the North East has a higher number of seniors that is growing at a higher rate – in fact a decade ahead – of the provincial demographic curve.
- Population of each community to be visited: Moosonee: 3,500; Moose Factory Island: 2,700; Peawanuk (Weenusk): 300; Kashechewan: 1,700; Fort Albany: 1,100.

## LEARN MORE

The NE LHIN will tweet information updates throughout the visit. Follow us on Twitter @NorthEastLHIN.

To download a copy of the NE LHIN's new strategic plan for 2013-2016 (IHSP), please visit the North East LHIN website – [www.nelhin.on.ca](http://www.nelhin.on.ca), or click [HERE](#).