

Media Release

North Bay Citizens Voice Their Thoughts on Local Health Care

July 7, 2011 -- Last night, an enthusiastic crowd of local citizens participated in an engagement session with the North East LHIN. People voiced their thoughts, concerns and solutions to improving access to care in North Bay and area. The engagement was the second held in North Bay in less than eight days – last week local health service providers met one-on-one with the NE LHIN and discussed solutions to more integrated care in this community.

The engagements are two of about 25 that the NE LHIN is holding this spring and summer with fellow Northerners about how health care is experienced and delivered across the vast Northeastern Ontario geography. Hundreds of people from Cochrane to Parry Sound, from Englehart to Manitoulin Island, and from Sault Ste. Marie to Noëlville have participated with ideas for building a stronger local health care system that provides the right care, in the right place, at the right time, and at the right cost.

People in North Bay and across the region have said that more assisted living services are needed so that our seniors and frail elderly can benefit from help with activities of daily living such as preparing meals, bathing and more. Sometimes just a little extra homecare can keep us living at home longer and more comfortably, and at the same time avoids becoming a dreaded ALC statistic. In North Bay, more than 100 people have benefited from *Home First* – a new philosophy embraced by the North Bay Regional Health Centre where seniors are given every opportunity to return home from hospital upon discharge, with care support, so that they convalesce in the comfort of their own home and consider the next phase of their care.

Fellow Northerners have also expressed how communities could benefit from more access to transportation services to and from medical appointments, and having designated people in the community to help connect people with the care they need, as close to home as possible. As well, many comments have been received about the fragmentation in mental health and addiction services and how a more integrated system could better serve fellow Northerners.

Louise Paquette, CEO of the NE LHIN says, “Over the course of the summer, we will compile all input and recommendations from these engagements and report back to fellow Northerners in the fall. There is no doubt that making our health care system more accessible for people in North Bay and all across our region, means thinking as a system rather than in silos that too often are focused on the organization rather than the patient. The input we have received has been outstanding and it will help us to ensure our local investments and priorities are on track to building a more accessible and strong local health care system – together.”

Facts:

- Northeastern Ontario residents are sicker and have higher rates of chronic disease than those in Southern Ontario.
- The North East LHIN’s \$1.3-billion dollar budget goes directly to front-line care through accountability agreements with 186 local health care providers.

Page 2 of 2

- The population of Ontario grew by 13% between the 1996 and 2006 census periods, it decreased in Northeastern Ontario by 5%.
- Approximately 17% of the current North East population is older than 65, which is higher than the provincial average of 13%. This demographic is going to grow dramatically in our region in the coming two decades.

For more information:

Cynthia Stables, NE LHIN; cynthia.stables@lhins.on.ca or (705) 845-1887.

-30-

North Bay Engagement with local citizens, July 6, 2011

