

## North East LHIN Board Highlights

*Meeting of October 10, 2018,  
Collège Boréal, Sudbury*



Ron Farrell –  
Board Chair



Kim T. Morris –  
Vice Board Chair



Denis Bérubé



John Febraro



Mark Palumbo



Anne Stewart



Betty Stone



Petra Wall



Cheryl St-Amour



Lorraine Dupuis

The North East Local Health Integration Network (NE LHIN) Board met on October 10<sup>th</sup> before heading into a strategic planning session that began that afternoon and finished the next day.

During the meeting, the Board heard from Richard Joly, Vice President of Home and Community Care as he gave an overview of the work of the NE LHIN with regards to the current **capacity challenges across the region with Personal Support Workers (PSWs)**.

Both home and community care providers and long term care homes (LTC) homes are experiencing Personal Support Worker (PSW) capacity challenges. While health human resource problems have occurred in the past, the situation emerging in the North East has become more acute than ever before. Challenges are now not limited to one community but are occurring right across Northeastern Ontario, including urban areas. Other LHINs are also reporting shortages in their PSW capacity.

Here in the North East LHIN region, PSW capacity challenges are having an impact right across the health care system. For home and community care clients, it means they might be wait-listed for service or experiencing missed visits. LTC homes are having problems staffing as well, resulting in the short staffing of shifts and higher sick rates for burnt out employees. This shortage is also having an impact on North East hospitals with discharge of patients slowed due to waitlists for services.

There are a number of reasons attributable to this shortage in this vital workforce that is the backbone of our Northern healthcare system: wage variations; scheduling challenges; increasingly heavy workloads; increased acuity of patients; and more.

**Addressing PSW capacity challenges is currently a top NE LHIN priority. NE LHIN CEO Jeremy Stevenson has called for “all hands on deck” to develop solutions – immediate, short-term and longer-term.**

### NE LHIN Actions to Date:

- In June 2018, a regional NE LHIN Personal Support Worker (PSW) Task Force was struck with the purpose of addressing recruitment and retention of PSWs, as well as increasing overall system capacity shortages in the North East. The Task Force has been charged with the development of a work plan, due by the end of October. Membership of the task force includes: NE LHIN staff; members of the NE LHIN Patient and Family Advisory Committee; and representatives from LTC homes, home and community care providers, service provider organizations, training and education institutions, and local employment Boards.

- The Task Force has identified two priority areas -- total compensation and collaboration and innovation—as well as the following action areas: recruitment, retention, and sustainability. It is in the process of identifying short and long term solutions that can be actioned within the next three months, six months, and one year period.
- The NE LHIN has also undertaken a number of internal measures directed at creating capacity within the delivery of its home and community care including:
  - directing the use of Registered Practical Nurses for high need patients instead of PSWs;
  - implementing client-partnered scheduling using windows of time rather than specific times to book appointments and encouraging clients to choose less demand times if their schedule is flexible;
  - investing in PSW recruitment fairs;
  - meeting with service providers organizations to review waitlists.
- The Board also heard about a proposal for the Espanola area where home and community care service provider organizations have been unable to recruit PSWs. The NE LHIN will hire two PSWs for this area as a pilot project; currently the LHIN does not have any PSWs on staff but contracts service providers to hire PSWs to provide care to clients at home. The NE LHIN Board supported this pilot and passed the following motion: *“BE IT RESOLVED THAT: The NE LHIN Board of Directors support the PSW pilot project and evaluation plan and request a comprehensive expansion plan following completion.”*

During the strategic planning session, the Board reviewed the NE LHIN’s work to develop its three year strategic plan known as the **Integrated Health Service Plan (IHSP)** which included: the results of 55 engagements with Northerners, health service providers, and other stakeholders such as District Social Service Administration Boards (DSSABs) and Public Health Units; 1,140 survey results; and more than 4,500 ideas received. In addition, the Board examined the results of an Environmental Scan delving into demographics, social determinants of health, and health outcome indicators for people in our region. Both the engagement and environmental scan outcomes greatly informed the strategic directions and priorities outlined in the draft IHSP, 2019- 2022 which will be submitted to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care at the end of October.

The NE LHIN’s draft strategic directions for the next three years are centered on:

- **System Integration**
- **Home and Community Care and**
- **Mental Health and Addictions.**

More information will be provided once the work is completed.

**Next Board Meeting: November 21, 2018**