

Algoma's Rapid Access Addiction Medicine (RAAM) Clinic Now Taking Patients

Increasing Access and Coordination of Addiction Treatment for People in Algoma

April 25, 2018 – People in Algoma are now receiving timely medical treatment for opioid and alcohol addictions, closer to home.

The **Algoma Rapid Access Addiction Medicine (RAAM) Clinic**, operated by the Sault Area Hospital (SAH), had its grand opening on Wednesday to introduce patients and partners to its location at the Algoma Treatment Centre, located at 123 East Street. Staffed by SAH physicians and a Nurse Practitioner, it provides expedited, barrier-free treatment for patients who are addicted to alcohol or opioids.

Funded by the North East Local Health Integration Network (NE LHIN), the RAAM clinic is part of the NE LHIN's Regional Opioid Strategy, designed to meet the rising rates of opioid use disorder, accidental overdoses, hospitalizations and ER visits in Northeastern Ontario. This strategy was developed by the LHIN's Regional Mental Health and Addiction Advisory Council who will continue to work with Opioid Task Forces within each of the Sub-Regions to support its implementation, ensuring Northerners have timely and equitable access to care.

How the Algoma RAAM Clinic Works

The Algoma RAAM Clinic, operated by the Sault Area Hospital sees clients at the Addictions Treatment Clinic, 123 East Street. Patients can walk-in or call **705-759-3434 ext. 7200**. No booked appointment or referral is necessary, although referrals from doctors, nurses, social workers, addiction counselors and community providers are welcome.

The RAAM model is designed to initiate therapy for opioid or alcohol addiction and then triage clients to the most appropriate ongoing care provider. It is not intended to replace or duplicate the care provided by a primary care provider or a treatment clinic.

The NE LHIN's Strategy uses a "hub and spoke" model, in which RAAM Clinics are located within each Sub-region's urban centres (the hub) with links (spokes) to outlying areas. **The Algoma RAAM Clinic will provide outreach supports to providers throughout the north and east Algoma District.**

As one of the highest users of telemedicine with 300 Ontario Telemedicine Network sites across the region, this strategy leverages virtual expertise to ensure equitable access to services for Northerners living in Algoma.

Quotes

"This strategy recognizes the need to bring care closer to home for people in Algoma who are impacted by the rising rates of opioid use disorder, accidental overdoses, hospitalizations and ER visits. Developed by our Regional Mental Health and Addiction Advisory Council, it leverages both local knowledge and expertise to increase access, as well technology through the use of the Ontario Telemedicine Network to bring care to people living in smaller

communities in Algoma. It is also a good example of how sub-region planning is empowering providers to collaborate and make local decisions to improve access and coordination of services for their residents.”

— **Jeremy Stevenson, CEO of the North East LHIN**

“Sault Area Hospital is proud to partner with our local and regional health care providers to support the enhancement of addiction services in our community. By collaborating with our partners and the North East LHIN, we are able to bring care closer to home for many people in our community. Our community’s Rapid Access Addiction Medicine (RAAM) Clinic, is one part of a larger ongoing effort to enhance the local drug strategy to further support both those affected by addictions, and our community’s health care providers.”

— **Ron Gagnon, CEO of Sault Area Hospital**

“Our most important goal is to provide thorough and timely health assessments to individuals who are struggling with addictions. We then work with other health experts, clinics, and programs in order to provide the care. The Algoma RAAM clinic is a highly collaborative response to our community and regional addiction crisis. It’s inspiring to witness the strong engagement of key institutions, agencies, and individuals; all working for positive change.”

-- **Dr. Robert Maloney**

Quick Facts Algoma RAAM

- The RAAM Clinic offers help with alcohol and opioid use disorders
- Clients access the RAAM Clinic by referral, walk-in, or by calling 705-759-3434 ext.7200. Self-referrals are welcomed.
- Providers can refer by calling 705-759-3434 ext.7200 or faxing 705-759-4189.
- The Algoma RAAM Clinic will provide outreach supports to Blind River, Thessalon, Bruce Mines, Iron Bridge, St. Joseph’s Island, Elliot Lake, Wawa and Hornepayne.
- The Sault Area Hospital received \$330,000 in funding for the operation of the Algoma RAAM clinic and to enhance community withdrawal management from the NE LHIN.
- The Sudbury RAAM Clinic, operated by Health Sciences North (HSN), will also provide support to the Algoma RAAM. The longest running RAAM in our region, it has a role as lead agency for research, data collection/analysis, and evaluation.

Background – NE LHIN and Provincial Opioid Strategy

- Base funding is being invested across the Northeastern Ontario as part of the NE LHIN’s Regional Opioid Strategy. The funding is going toward creating and enhancing four RAAM Clinics and enhancing community withdrawal management programs.
- RAAM Clinics provide an addictions treatment pathway between the clinic and different places where the client is likely to seek care such as emergency departments, primary care providers, mental health and addiction agencies, and withdrawal management programs.
- Over the next three years, Ontario is investing more than \$222 million province-wide to combat the opioid crisis in Ontario.
- Announced in fall 2016, Ontario’s comprehensive [Strategy to Prevent Opioid Addiction and Overdose](#) is ensuring people in pain receive appropriate treatment, increasing access to

holistic treatment for those with opioid use disorder, and improving the safety and health of people who use opioids, including access to the life-saving drug naloxone.

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