

MEDIA RELEASE

North East LHIN Expands Indigenous Palliative Care Support Through Cultural Volunteer Training Program

March 17, 2017 – In the first event of its kind in the Parry Sound District, the North East Local Health Integration Network (NE LHIN) is funding Hospice West Parry Sound to educate volunteers on culturally safe and relevant palliative and bereavement care.

“The Spirit Journey: Indigenous Teachings on Death and Dying” workshops, co-hosted by the Parry Sound Friendship Centre, features guest speakers, Shane Tabobondung, former Chief of the Wasauksing First Nation -- one of the four First Nations in the hospice’s catchment area -- Delores McKay, Executive Director of the Parry Sound Friendship Centre, and Faith Pegahmagabow, Community Health Representative of the Wasauksing First Nation. The other First Nations in the area are Shawanaga, Magnetawan and Henvey Inlet.

The workshops support the NE LHIN’s efforts to expand culturally appropriate health services for Aboriginal Northerners through its *North East LHIN Aboriginal Health Care Reconciliation Action Plan*.

“The NE LHIN is proud to support training that helps to increase the awareness of the need to offer culturally appropriate health care services, said Louise Paquette, CEO, NE LHIN. “This need is particularly important at the end of life’s journey.”

The workshops will be held March 23 and March 28. Up to 100 participants are expected to attend each session and represent Hospice West Parry Sound visiting volunteers, board members, and palliative care providers including Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) case managers, physicians, and nurses. First Nation residents and care providers are also expected.



Shane Tabobondung, former Chief of the Wasauksing First Nation -- one of the four First Nations in the Hospice West Parry Sound’s catchment area – will be a guest speaker at “The Spirit Journey: Indigenous Teachings on Death and Dying” workshops March 23 and 28. The workshops are sponsored by the NE LHIN and support efforts to expand culturally appropriate health services for Aboriginal Northerners through the LHIN’s *Health Care Reconciliation Action Plan*.

“The District of West Parry Sound is home to many Indigenous individuals and families for whom we provide palliative, caregiver, and bereavement supports,” said Melanie Honsinger, Executive Director of Hospice West Parry Sound. “It is absolutely key that our staff and volunteers have an awareness of, and sensitivity to, Indigenous perspectives, practices and beliefs on death and dying. We also feel strongly that the recruitment of more Aboriginal volunteers will help to enrich our team and improve the services we offer.”

FACTS:

- The NE LHIN continues to advance the health care status and patient journey experienced by Aboriginal Northerners through the strategies of Northeastern Ontario’s first-ever **Aboriginal Health Care Reconciliation Action Plan**. The plan was developed through LHIN-led engagements with the Local Aboriginal Health Committee, Aboriginal Northerners and providers across the LHIN region. It launched in 2016. Read it [here](#).
- Hospice West Parry Sound, founded in 1997 and supported by the NE LHIN, is located at 6 Albert Street, Room 1323, Parry Sound. In 2016, it provided palliative and bereavement services to 143 clients and their families. For information about the workshops, contact 705-746-5970.
- Seniors in Northeastern Ontario will climb to 27% of the population (151,000 people) in the next 10 years and there will be a need for a broader range of palliative and end-of-life care options.
- The NE LHIN provides approximately \$4 million each year for hospice palliative care across Northeastern Ontario, which includes nursing funding through the North East CCAC, support to two hospices in Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie, volunteers delivered by nine agencies to visit hospices, and six education programs. See the NE LHIN’s website [here](#) for information on Hospice Palliative Care across the region.

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For more information, please contact Kathleen Bain, Communications Officer, NE LHIN, at Kathleen.bain@lhins.on.ca or 705-840-2340.

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