

MEDIA RELEASE

The North East LHIN Salutes ... Northerners for Making the Minister's Medal Honour Roll

December 5, 2014 – Congratulations to both the **Canadian Red Cross's Priority Assistance to Transition Home (PATH) program** and the **North East Specialized Geriatric Services clinic to help elders in Fort Albany** for making the Minister's Medal Honour Roll.

"We know that we have innovative programs and providers here in the North East that are working to help seniors maintain their health and support them in community," said Louise Paquette, CEO of the North East Local Health Integration Network (LHIN). "It's great when these hardworking providers are recognized at a provincial level. Congratulations to you both!"

The annual Minister's Medal Honouring Excellence in Health Quality and Safety recognizes the excellent work that health care providers do every day to put patients in the centre of the circle of care.

The theme for the 2014 Minister's Medal was "Quality and Value by Design." In an increasingly constrained fiscal environment, initiatives that improve the health of Ontarians should be designed and delivered keeping value for quality of care in mind. In addition to collaboration and sustainable improvements in outcomes, this year's application criteria emphasized achieving greater value in the delivery of high-quality care.

PATH Program

Supported by the North East LHIN as a way to improve transitions of care for the frail elderly, the Red Cross began delivering the PATH program in Sudbury. It is now available across the North East in communities including Timmins, Sault Ste. Marie, North Bay, Espanola and Parry Sound and it has helped more than 1,260 seniors transition safely home from hospital, preventing unnecessary readmissions.

PATH workers are available to drive seniors home from hospital, pick up medications and groceries along the way home, check that the furnace is on, and maybe even make a meal. Most of all, PATH care workers make sure support from caregivers is in place to cover their client's needs over the coming days.

While PATH can be used by frail seniors awaiting discharge from hospital, it is also used by those who visit the emergency department to ensure they have what they need at home, returning safe and secure as well as avoiding an unnecessary admission to hospital.



The PATH team in Sudbury celebrates their 500th transition: (Left to right sitting) Care workers Lise Ribout and Chelsie Karchie, (left to right standing) along with Coordinator Nancy Leblanc and Louise Trudel, District Branch Manager, Sudbury and North Bay Branches.

North East Specialized Geriatric Services

After accompanying the North East LHIN on a visit to the James Bay Coast in 2013, the North East Specialized Geriatric Services (NESGS) worked with the North East LHIN as well as partners Weeneebayko Area Health Authority (WAHA) and Peetabek Health Services, to find a way to provide new care for the most frail elders so that they can continue to live among family and friends in their home community. Through support of the LHIN, NESGS held a geriatric clinic in the remote, fly-in community of Fort Albany, in January of 2014, as well as developed a geriatric screening tool to identify those who most need geriatric services.

With the Aboriginal-focused screening tool, which can be used anywhere, 33 seniors were identified as medically complex and likely to benefit from the geriatric clinic.

Patients and their families were included in the development of each care plan along with the geriatrician, ensuring a patient-centred approach. The individualized care plans were tailored to fit the patients' needs and assisted the patients' involvement in their self-management.

Future plans include an extensive expansion of this Specialized Geriatric Clinic model to five other communities across the James Bay Coast. Central to its success has been the ability to leverage follow-up care through many partners and the use of technology, specifically OTN.

The team included Dr. Jo-Anne Clarke, clinical lead of NESGS; Dr. Janet McElhaney, medical lead for senior care at Health Sciences North; Dr. Samir Sinha, Ontario's seniors' strategy lead; two NESGS geriatric nurse clinicians Melissa Egan and Melissa Pretty; Occupational Therapist Kathryn Berardi; and Heather Cranney, with the Red Cross, as well as members of WAHA and Peetabek.

For more on the Minister's Medal visit health.gov.on.ca or click [here](#).

QUICK FACTS

- The North East LHIN is responsible for planning, integrating, coordinating and providing funding to 150 health service providers in Northeastern Ontario. It oversees \$1.4-billion in local health care investments on behalf of the 565,000 residents of Northeastern Ontario
- Over the next 20 years, the population of seniors aged 65 and over in the North East will increase from today's 19% to more than 30%.



Shown as they left Sudbury on Sunday are members of the team travelling north (left to right): Heather Cranney, Dr. Janet McElhaney, medical lead for senior care at Health Sciences North (Sudbury); Dr. Jo-Anne Clarke, clinical lead of North East Specialized Geriatric Services (NESGS); Dr. Samir Sinha, Ontario's seniors' strategy lead; NESGS geriatric nurse clinician Melissa Egan; Occupational Therapist Kathryn Berardi; and NESGS geriatric nurse clinician Melissa Pretty.