

Connecting with Northerners ... At a Forum Focused on the Future of Aging in the North

December 9, 2013 -- Janet Fathers, of Noojmowin Teg Health Centre, spoke with Louise Paquette, CEO of the North East LHIN, about her work helping seniors remain independent in their homes on Manitoulin Island at a forum focused on the future of aging in the North. Fathers thanked the LHIN for investing in aging at home projects and services on the island that are “really making a difference in the lives of seniors.” This fall, the North East Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) provided funding so that an additional 330 seniors can receive rides to medical appointments or to pick up groceries through Noojmowin Teg’s Aging at Home Van.



Janet Fathers and Louise Paquette

Louise provided the opening remarks at a day-long forum on Thursday, Nov 28, exploring the challenges of supporting healthy aging seniors in this part of the province, hosted by the Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research (CRaNH) and the Rural Ontario Institute (ROI).

“As the CEO of the North East LHIN and as a born and raised Northerner, I understand the challenges and the fear of loss and the territorial behavior of some providers. But I also heard Northerners tell us loudly and clearly “status quo is not an option.” Today’s forum will help to keep the conversation going and what we can do within our span of control and within our own area of influence,” Paquette said.

“I welcome your ideas as we work together to develop a ‘made in Northern Ontario plan’ that answers the question - How do we deliver and care for 553,000 people (of which 100,000 are over 65) and suffer from chronic conditions, in a geography bigger than Germany so that Northerners can remain as independent as they want and receive as much care as they need, particularly those living in remote and rural communities? “



Louise Paquette and Dr. Samir Sinha

Dr. Samir Sinha, the province’s Senior Care Strategy Lead, spoke about his report, Living Longer, Living Well, and its recommendations. He also talked about a trip he took with the North East LHIN to the coastal communities of James and Hudson Bay and the LHIN’s innovative work to find a solution to the personal support worker (PSW) shortages in these communities. It is working with the Red Cross to provide culturally appropriate training so that residents don’t have to leave their home communities to learn how to care for elders and others with complex needs in their own homes. Dr. Sinha said he was happy to hear that 25 people had registered with the Red Cross to become PSWs.