

Improving Care for High-Needs Patients in Northeastern Ontario

McGuinty Government Linking Health Providers, Offering Patients More Co-ordinated Care

December 13, 2012 -- Two of 19 new Health Links across the province are being set up in Northeastern Ontario to improve co-ordination of care for high-needs patients such as seniors and people with complex conditions.

More Health Links will be formed through collaborative work between the LHIN and local health service providers.

Health Links encourage greater collaboration and co-ordination between a patient's different health care providers, as well as the development of personalized care plans. This will improve patient transitions within the system and help ensure patients receive more responsive care that addresses their specific needs with the support of a tightly knit team of providers.

In the North East LHIN region, the **Temiskaming Health Link** will be coordinated by Le Centre de santé communautaire de Temiskaming, and will include the following partners:

- North East Community Care Access Centre, Temiskaming Hospital, Kirkland and District Hospital, Englehart and District Hospital, Kirkland District Family Health Team (FHT), Englehart and District FHT, Temagami FHT, Great Northern FHT, Haileybury FHT, Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Cochrane and Timiskaming Branch, Timiskaming Health Unit, Timiskaming Home Support, Timiskaming Palliative Care Network, Centre de santé communautaire du Témiskaming, Temiskaming Lodge, Red Cross (System Navigator), Le Réseau du mieux-être francophone du nord de l'Ontario.

The **Timmins Health Link** will be coordinated by the Timmins Family Health Team, and will include the following partners:

- North East Community Care Access Centre, East End Family Health Team, Timmins and District Hospital, Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Cochrane and Timiskaming Branch, Misiway Community Health Centre, Timmins System Navigator, Community Facilitator, Porcupine Health Unit, VON, Red Cross, Golden Manor Long-Term Care Home, Extendicare Long-Term Care Home, South Cochrane Addiction Services, Jubilee Centre, Timmins Native Friendship Centre, Access Better Living, Cochrane District Social Service Administration Board, Alzheimer Timmins, Timmins Family Health Team

Each Health Link will measure results and develop plans to improve access to family care, reduce avoidable emergency department visits and re-admission to hospitals, reduce referral time to a specialist, and improve the patient's overall experience through the health care system.

Health Links are part of the McGuinty government's Action Plan for Health Care, by delivering faster access and a stronger link to family health care, and providing the right care, at the right time, in the right place.

QUOTES

"These new Health Links will make a big difference for patients – particularly seniors – in Northeastern Ontario. I'm so pleased to see our dedicated local health care professionals coming together to make this kind of coordinated patient care possible, and to make our health care system even better."

- Rick Bartolucci, Sudbury MPP and Minister of Northern Development and Mines

“Health Links are good news for Northerners – one care plan centered on an individual’s needs – so simple but so effective. Our LHIN is pleased to now have two Health Links and we look forward to supporting more links that focus on the needs of fellow Northerners.”

- Louise Paquette, CEO, North East LHIN

“In Temiskaming, Health Links will provide an opportunity for health care providers to work with individuals, families and the community, to implement integrated care plans that will align and coordinate resources to meet the needs of individuals. Health Links will pave the way to develop a person centred health system in Temiskaming that focuses on access, quality and value.”

- Jocelyne Maxwell, Executive Director of the Témiskaming Community Health Centre

“The approval of the Timmins Health Links Partnership as an early Health Link is good news for the people of Timmins and area. The collaborative work of local health care providers has positioned us well to take this new responsibility on. We welcome it thoroughly. Providers of all levels are keen to strengthen and integrate our local health care system so that people can navigate it to get the care they need more quickly and easily.”

- Dr. Eric Paquette, Primary Care Physician with the Timmins Family Health Team:

“Health Links will break down barriers for Ontarians, making access to health care easier and less complicated. By encouraging local health providers to work together to co-ordinate care for individual patients, we’re ensuring our most vulnerable patients – seniors and those with complex conditions – get the care they need and don’t fall between the cracks.”

- Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

QUICK FACTS

- 19 early-adopter communities have been chosen to launch the first Health Links and will submit plans to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term within the next 60 days. Over time, Health Links will be expanded across the province.
- A Health Link may include family doctors, specialists, hospitals, home care, long-term care and community support agencies. Each Health Link will have one of its providers play a co-ordinating role.
- Each Health Link will work with its LHIN to develop personalized care plans for seniors and other patients with complex conditions, and to increase the number of those patients with a primary care provider.
- Patients with complex conditions include seniors, those with multiple chronic diseases, and those with mental illness and addictions.
- A recent study found that 75 per cent of seniors with complex conditions who are discharged from hospital receive care from six or more physicians and 30 per cent get their drugs from three or more pharmacies.
- Complex patients represent up to five per cent of Ontario’s population, but use two-thirds of the health care budget.
- Providers interested in forming a Health Link in Northeastern Ontario should contact the North East LHIN.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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