

June 2, 2017

Dear Northerners,

One thing is for sure, the past seven years at the North East LHIN have been anything but dull!

Let's face it – planning, integrating, and funding health care services for a declining and aging population of more than 565,000 people living across our huge geography takes time and a lot of important attention to detail!

Prior to joining the LHIN I worked in the private sector, for the provincial and then federal governments. Little did I know that those 34 years of experiences were preparing me for what has been the highlight of my career, an incredible journey in health care!

However, after much reflection and careful thought, I will be moving on at the end of June.

I am proud of the significant progress we have made together to improve the Northeastern Ontario health care system. The work we have collectively undertaken to improve access and wait times, increase care coordination, as well as strengthen system sustainability has begun to make a difference.

For instance, the development of an Orthopedic Plan which led to the creation of Joint Assessment Centres in North Bay, Parry Sound, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury and Timmins. These centres have reduced wait times in half for Northerners who need hip and knee joint replacements.

Consider our work as well in mental health and addiction services. Whether it be providing housing supports for people transitioning out of hospital, expanding peer support programs, creating a Regional Warm Line, or commissioning Dr. Brian Rush to undertake a review of addiction services in the region, which then led to the creation of the Regional Mental Health and Addictions Advisory Council.

Enabling technologies has also come to define the North East LHIN – we are one of the highest users of telemedicine in the province! The North East Virtual Critical Care Unit, based at Health Sciences North, has saved the lives of Northerners and won the Minister's Medal. And our most recent collaboration with our 25 hospitals is the creation of the **One Initiative - One Person, One Record, One System**, which will link all Northern hospitals under one system, standardizing quality clinical care so that patients don't have to repeat their story or tests.

Working to improve the health and wellness of Indigenous Northerners has been a main area of focus, most recently with the development of our **North East LHIN Aboriginal Health Care Reconciliation Action Plan**. And we continue to implement the 25 calls for action outlined in the plan.

We've focused on helping seniors to live independently at home by investing in assisted living services and other home supports, as well as innovative solutions such as the Priority Assistance to Transition Home (PATH) program, ensuring seniors get home safely from hospital with all the supports they need in place. A new way of caring for people with dementia, as well as support for their caregivers, has also spread across the region from the creation of the North East Behavioural Supports Ontario (BSO).

And these are just a few highlights of the activities and outcomes of the past seven years!

Now, some of you might wonder after 41 years, if I have learned anything. So ... "a la Letterman style", and in keeping with my seven years as CEO of the North East LHIN, here are my top seven:

- 1) **Love what you do!**
Believe you are making a difference. Feeling passionate about Northerners; getting excited when health system performance indicators are green; feeling good about who you are and what you do is critical to your success.
- 2) **We are often exposed to incredible opportunities -- Seize the day!**
Figure things out, work hard, live every moment, don't look back and always look forward. Rest assured, it was a rather significant learning curve for me when I joined the LHIN, working with many people who had worked in healthcare their entire lives!
- 3) **Listen with your head and your heart, and it will make your decisions easier and wiser.**
- 4) **Have the courage to speak up and take risks; 565,000 Northerners depend on excellent Northern leadership.**
- 5) **Remember it's all in the timing -- be a step ahead, not a step behind!**
Windows of opportunity will present themselves and you must be ready to go through them with your homework already done.
- 6) **Life is about relationships** – building relationships at home and at work takes time and energy.
- 7) **And finally, be comfortable with uncertainty and change. It's part of life!**

It's been a privilege to work with such a positive and enthusiastic group of people. Northerners are very fortunate to have the exceptional talent at the LHIN – talent that is helping to improve the patient experience by building a better system.

As I sign off, I am boarding a plane to return home from Attawapiskat, Fort Albany, Moosonee and Moose Factory where I spent time with many health care and community leaders ensuring our work as a LHIN will continue in our most Northerly communities and we will keep building the many important partnerships that are helping people in this part of our region to live healthy and well.

It was a great few days spent strengthening primary care, including introducing Dr. Paul Preston, our new LHIN Vice-President of Clinical Care (second from right), Dr. Jason Sutherland, our Primary Care Lead for the Sudbury/Manitoulin/Parry Sound Sub-Region (right), and David McNeil, Vice President of Patient Services, Clinical Transformation & Chief Nursing Executive at Health Sciences North (left) to people like Dr. Gord Green, Chief of staff at the Weeneebayko Area Health Authority (WAHA).

Finally, as I bid adieu, I want to thank Northerners for their on-going support, for their generosity of spirit, and their willingness to constantly engage with us as an organization to help build a better health care system. Remember, we work for you!

Wishing you a wonderful summer of 2017 ... thank-you and chi-miigwetch,

Louise Paquette
North East LHIN Chief Executive Officer

