

Helping Northerners One Day at a Time

September 28, 2017

Dear Northerners,

It has been a season of change in health care, including at the North East Local Health Integration Network (NE LHIN). This spring, we expanded our role as an organization to include providing home and community care services to more than 16,000 Northerners each day – in addition to planning, funding, and integrating the Northeastern Ontario health care system for the 565,000 people who call this part of the province home.

Throughout this transition, the continuity of care for patients, caregivers, and families remained our top priority.

We are always looking for new ways to keep patients at the centre of our work. For example, we now open up each of our Board and senior management team meetings with a patient story – and discuss ways we can learn from the story to improve the patient's experience.

One of these stories comes out of Timmins, where one of our Social Workers, Tiphonie Hartling, received a referral for a client in the outlying area who did not have a family physician, but wanted to receive treatment for hepatitis C. Tiphonie contacted a hepatitis nurse in Sudbury through the Northern Hepatitis Centre of Excellence to ask about her client's ability to receive treatment despite not having a family physician.



Rosalee Côté, left, with NE LHIN Care Coordinator Katherine Courvoisier during a visit to Côté's home in North Bay.

It turns out, the hepatitis nurse had been looking to open a clinic in Timmins. Tiphonie provided her with potential contacts in the community. The hepatitis nurse is now going to Timmins on a monthly basis to facilitate treatment of this curable disease. As a result of advocacy and one telephone call, a client in the Timmins outlying area is able to receive hepatitis C treatment. In turn, the community has benefited from having this service available.

And meet Rosalee Côté, another Northerner who is receiving care in community. She's developmentally delayed and requires a wide range of care to meet her needs.

A Personal Support Worker (PSW) visits Rosalee to help her with things like dressing, personal hygiene, and some respite time for her mother. Rosalee also receives nursing for wound care and an Occupational Therapist sees her every two months to work on mobility and equipment issues. One of our Care Coordinators assesses Rosalee's needs on an ongoing basis and arranges for care where needed. It is the care, delivered with compassion, that allows Rosalee to remain at home and independent.

These are just two of the many patient stories about how Northerner's experience our health care system alongside the many dedicated health professionals who care for them each day.

I am very excited to let you know that we have also just selected the members of our new Patient and Family Advisory Committee – a group that will help to ensure better engagement, communication, and health care outcomes for people living across our beautiful region. I'll write more about these amazing 15 individuals in my next blog.

I look forward to the new season and to our continued growth as one organization focussed on ensuring Northerners get the right care, at the right time, in the right place.

Kate