



2001-2002 ANNUAL REPORT

Shaping the Future of the Health System in Northwestern Ontario

NWO Northwestern Ontario
DHC District Health Council
Conseil Régional de Santé
du Nord Ouest Ontario



Our Vision

Shaping the future of the health system in Northwestern Ontario through leadership and partnership in planning.

Northwestern Ontario District Health Council

The Northwestern Ontario District Health Council is comprised of health care providers, consumers and local government representatives.

All members are appointed by Order-In-Council by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. The role of the DHC is to provide regional planning advice to the Minister, taking into consideration local health needs and priorities.

Council 2001/2002

Chair: Rene Larson** - Thunder Bay

Chair: Eiji Tsubouchi - Thunder Bay

Emile Blouin - Kenora

Clifford Bowles - Thunder Bay

Paulina Chow - Thunder Bay

Trevor Giertuga - Thunder Bay

Janice Lessy - Thunder Bay

William Martin - Ft. Frances

Tammy McEachern Hughes - Thunder Bay

Derek Mills - Sioux Lookout

David O'Brien** - Thunder Bay

Joanne Ranger - Longlac

Eric Rutherford - Beardmore

Louise Sawchuk - Atikokan

Andrew Skene - Dryden

Rainette Therrien** - Kenora

Frances White - Ignace

**Term Expired

Message from the Chair and Executive Director

Health care is a pressing issue on the minds of society. The tremendous changes impacting healthcare are complex and often confusing to everyone involved: those who use healthcare services; those who are service providers; and those who influence health policy. A common thread underlies the complexity - we are all potential consumers of healthcare. Another pervasive theme is the need to work together in building the health system for the future.

During this past year we witnessed significant focus on healthcare. Through recent national and provincial consultations, Canadians emphasized how important the healthcare system is to them and how we value access to it.

The Northwestern Ontario DHC's vision is "Shaping the health system through leadership and partnership in planning". The need for partnerships in health system planning has once again been a theme in our health planning experience in the Northwest. As a result, the DHC continues to develop new relationships and strengthen existing ones in planning for the health care needs of the residents of our vast region. In other words, we can't do it alone!

Through partnerships with individuals, groups and organizations we have:

- Conducted a major regional health human resources study with assistance from the Northwest Health Network and with funding from Human Resources Development Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. The study, due for release in early October, will provide us with insights regarding recruitment and retention issues of health care providers in Northwestern Ontario.
- Worked with the other 15 District Health Councils in producing a provincial health labour market survey.
- Produced an environmental scan highlighting various factors impacting the health system in the Northwest.
- Completed a Northwestern Ontario Health System Monitoring project which will provide us with information about health status of Northwestern Ontario residents and the health system in our region.
- Recommended the readiness of Thunder Bay Regional Hospital in becoming a regional stroke centre and assessed the readiness of hospitals throughout Northwestern Ontario in becoming designated district stroke centers.

Through this report, we are pleased to highlight some of the DHC's planning accomplishments for 2001-2002. The tremendous efforts of our Council members and the many volunteers who participated in various activities of the Northwestern Ontario DHC have helped us to advance our vision. We are privileged to work with such committed volunteers. With our numerous partners, we will continue to work towards strengthening the health system in Northwestern Ontario.



Eiji Tsubouchi

Eiji Tsubouchi
Chair



Gwen Dubois-Wing

Gwen Dubois-Wing
Executive Director

Health Human Resources Study Nears Completion

For a number of years health care providers in Northwestern Ontario have experienced difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified health care workers. This problem has been compounded by provincial and national shortages. To explore this important issue, the Northwestern Ontario District Health Council was involved in a comprehensive *NWO Health Human Resources Study* over the past year. This is the first broad-based study conducted in the region that involves a wide range of health care workers. The study is sponsored by the Northwestern Ontario District Health Council and the Northwest Health Network as well as the Government of Canada through Human Resources Development Canada's Local Labour Market Partnership Program and the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

The *Northwestern Ontario Health Human Resources Study* involves a number of components including:

- Employee and employer focus groups;
- Key informant interviews;
- High school guidance counselor surveys; and a
- Labour market survey.

The DHC worked closely with the Ontario Hospital Association and the other 15 provincial DHCs in the labour market survey component of the study.

The high priority that is placed on health human resources is reflected in the excellent study participation. A wide range of Northwestern Ontario residents were involved in discussions about factors affecting health human resources.

Release of the study's final report is planned for early fall.



Northwestern Ontario Health System Monitoring Project 2002 Completed

The *Northwestern Ontario Health System Monitoring Report 2002: A Technical Report* is the culmination of extensive research. This report provides a snapshot of the health status and health services utilization of residents in Northwestern Ontario based on currently available data. It also highlights baseline data from which to monitor the progress of our local and regional health system.

The *Northwestern Ontario Health System Monitoring Report 2002: A Technical Report* is a one-stop reference source comprised of information from a variety of provincial and national health databases. A framework for population health indicators developed by the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) was used to organize the report. The report is divided into four sections: health status, non-medical determinants of health, health systems performance, and community and health system characteristics.

The *Northwestern Ontario Health System Monitoring Report 2002: A Technical Report* is the result of a collaborative effort of the 16 provincial District Health Councils with assistance from the five Health Intelligence Units (HIUs) to measure local health service indicators and to understand health system performance in our region. A regional working group provided valuable advice about the report. We anticipate that the report will be of particular interest to health care leaders, planners, program managers, educators, and government staff.

Additional copies of the report can be downloaded from the Northwestern Ontario District Health Council website at www.nwodhc.com or obtained on CD from the DHC office.

DHC Provides Advice on Ontario Stroke Strategy

The Northwestern Ontario District Health Council (NWODHC) collaborated with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and hospitals throughout the Northwest in preliminary planning for the implementation of the Stroke Strategy in the region. This is in response to the provincial framework *Towards an Integrated Stroke Strategy for Ontario* jointly sponsored by the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario and the MOHLTC. In January 2002, the DHC hosted an initial information meeting regarding the

provincial stroke strategy and its implications for our region.

The DHC provided advice to the MOHLTC on the important designation of the Regional Stroke Centre. In May 2002, the Minister formally designated Thunder Bay Regional Hospital as the Regional Stroke Centre. The DHC has also surveyed regional hospitals on their interest in designation as District Stroke Centres, their ability to meet established criteria, and identification of issues and impacts.

Mental Health: Northwest Mental Health Implementation Task Force

The District Health Council worked closely with the Northwest Mental Health Implementation Task Force (NWMHITF) in the areas of mental health system design and information management. Work carried out to support the development of a Mental Health System Design for the region included reviewing system models of governance and integration, and assessing their appropriateness for Northwestern Ontario in relation to our population, demographics, access to and utilization of mental health services.

A reformed mental health system will need to rely on a comprehensive information management system used by all mental health providers. This can be a useful tool for planning, monitoring and evaluating regional mental health

services. In cooperation with the Chiefs of Ontario Office, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term, and Aboriginal Health, the Aboriginal Forum took place on January 25, 2002 in Sioux Lookout, Ontario. The purpose of the Aboriginal Forum was to create a vehicle for Aboriginal people to provide information, direction and recommendations regarding Aboriginal mental health. Aboriginal community members involved in providing services for the mentally ill were invited to share stories about their experiences with mental health issues in their communities. This was a valuable exercise for increasing the Task Force's understanding of mental health issues in the Northwest.

Underserved Area Program (UAP) Undergoes Review

The Underserved Area Program (UAP) was established in 1969 to assist underserved communities recruit health care professionals. Despite the success of the program, the health human resource situation has been changing and problems associated with physician recruitment and retention keep growing. The components of UAP represent a collection of government initiatives to recruit and retain health professionals to rural and underserved communities. These programs include physician locums, visiting specialist clinics, physician incentive programs, etc. that primarily focus on physician recruitment initiatives.

Eiji Tsubouchi, Chair, Northwestern Ontario

District Health Council, is one of the DHC representatives on the UAP Review Working Group which is looking at the various UAP components such as physician recruitment and retention, the designation of communities as underserved, and the direction of the program in the future. The Chair of the Working Group is Dr. Joshua Tepper. Among other key stakeholders on the committee are the Ontario Medical Association (OMA), Ontario Hospital Association (OHA), Professional Association of Interns and Residents of Ontario (PAIRO) and Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO). The consultant's final report to the Working Group is expected in fall 2002.

Our Volunteers: The Key to our DHC System

Volunteers are the backbone of the DHC system. We have been fortunate to work with so many committed volunteers over the past year. With NWODHC's region covering almost 60% of the landmass of Ontario, our volunteers travel significant distances over a vast and rugged geography to attend DHC activities and meetings. This involves tremendous time and personal commitment! Our volunteers provide valuable input at community, district and regional levels. We appreciate the skills, knowledge and expertise they bring to the development of studies, reports and recommendations which impact planning of the health system in Northwestern Ontario.

We are constantly awed by the enthusiasm and dedication of our volunteers to planning for the health system in Northwestern Ontario. Their commitment inspires us to constantly improve and seek new ways to address the changing needs of our health system.

Our volunteers make a difference! We wish to extend a tremendous thanks to the many individuals who were involved in Council, committee, task and work groups of the Northwestern Ontario District Health Council over the past year.

Environmental Scan Focuses on Northwestern Ontario

The Environmental Scan 2001/02 provides an overview of major political, economic, environmental, social, and technologic factors that impact health and the health care system highlighting a Northwestern Ontario perspective. Feedback regarding the scan include such comments as "the amount of data that you collected is simply staggering; a well-researched and comprehensive scan; it will serve as a key resource for a great variety of people and organizations working on health issues in the Northwest".

The DHC released the environmental scan in the spring of 2002. The goals of this report are to increase knowledge about the health system, to communicate emerging local and global trends in health care, and to serve as a stimulus for future research, discussion, and planning. Data sources for the scan included a literature review, an internet review, and interviews with key informants in Northwestern Ontario. The Environmental Scan 2001/02 represents a strategic document as the DHC pursues various planning initiatives.

Northwest Health Network

The Northwest Health Network is comprised of all Northwestern Ontario hospitals and other community-based health agencies in the region. The hospitals have a long history of working together to address health needs of Northwestern Ontario residents.

Over the next year, the Network will deal with future service planning for the Northwest. The District Health Council is a member of the Northwest Health Network.

DHC Focuses on Council Development

Over the past year, the Northwestern Ontario District Health Council focused on governance as one of its strategic directions. At its 2001 retreat, Council explored principles and best practices of governance. The retreat and report on governance, a governance policy, and a comprehensive orientation manual were some of the results of extensive Council work in this area.

French Language Health Services

Work of the French Language Services (FLS) Task Group includes the review of *French Language Services Implementation Plans* of transfer payment agencies to be submitted to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. The group was also involved in the development of a *Regional French Language Health Services Plan for the District Health Council*. The French Language Services Task Group is responsible for developing and/or maintaining mechanisms to ensure that the needs of the Francophone population are integrated into health system planning activities in Northwestern Ontario. The work of this Task Group is intended to improve health services for French-speaking Northwestern Ontario residents.

Long-Term Care Work Progresses

Building on directions in the *Long-Term Care (LTC) Services Plan for Northwestern Ontario*, the DHC's Long-Term Care Task Group will be working on priority areas established in 2001 and validated over the past year. The *LTC Service Plan* contains recommendations intended to improve long-term care services throughout the region.

One of the priority areas for 2002/03 is supportive housing. A Northwestern Ontario Supportive Housing Study will commence in fall 2002. Other areas of focus include a *2002/03 Regional Long-Term Care Service Plan* resulting in updated recommendations regarding long-term care services in the Northwest.

NWODHC Reports

The following reports were produced by the NWODHC. They are posted on the NWODHC web site at www.nwodhc.com.

Or, you may wish to contact the DHC office by calling (807) 623-6131, toll-free at 1-888-227-3519, or by e-mail at planning@nwodhc.com.

- *Environmental Scan 2001/02, April 2002*
- *NWO Health System Monitoring Report, 2002: A Technical Report*
- *Northwestern Ontario District Health Council 2002/03 Operating Plan*
- *Northwestern Ontario Injury Prevention Inventory, May 2001*
- *Northwestern Ontario Emergency Department Inventory, May 2001*



DHC Committee/Task Group Membership 2001 - 2002

Executive Committee

Rene Larson
(Chair, to July 01)
Eiji Tsubouchi
(Chair, from July 01)
Andrew Skene
(Vice-Chair)
Dave O'Brien
(Treasurer, to Sept. 01)
Paulina Chow
(Treasurer, from Sept. 01)
Cliff Bowles
Tammy McEachern
Hughes
Louise Sawchuk

Council Recruitment and Development Committee

Cliff Bowles (Chair)
Janice Lessy
Tammy McEachern
Hughes
Louise Sawchuk
Andrew Skene
Eiji Tsubouchi

Bylaw Review Committee

Fran White (Chair)
Cliff Bowles
Rene Larson
Andrew Skene
Eiji Tsubouchi

Audit Committee

Dave O'Brien (Chair)
Cliff Bowles
Paulina Chow
Rene Larson
Eiji Tsubouchi

Mental Health Operating Plan Review Task Group

Emile Blouin
Maurice Fortin
Jim Gillespie
Joyce McMeheh
Louise Sawchuk

Emergency Health Services (EHS) Committee

Eric Rutherford (Chair)
Robert Beatty
Peter Bergsma
Lynne Bisset
Bill Blower
Jeannette Cawston
John Coupland
William Graham
Janice Lessy
Tuija Puiras
Bonnie Zabirka

French Language Services Task Group

Joanne Ranger (Chair)
Mario Audet
Emile Blouin
Diane Breton
Denyse Culligan
Don Edwards
Marlene Pavletic
Janet Sillman
Eiji Tsubouchi

Long-Term Care Task Group

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Alice Bellavance
Paulina Chow
Patrick Farrell
Judi Gryschuk
Mary-Ellen Hill
Wendy Kirkpatrick
William Martin
Norm Poolton
Tuija Puiras
Olga Samparo

Hospital Operating Plan Review Task Group

Cliff Bowles (Chair)
Brock Chisholm
Paulina Chow
Lori Marshall
Susan Pilatzke
Bruce Sutton
Edda Swan

Environmental Scan: 2001-2002 Reviewers

Lesley Brown
Bruce Cunningham
Siobhan Farrell
Mary-Ellen Hill
Diane Hiscox
Kathie Kolisnyk
Ken McGeorge
Dr. Terry A. O'Driscoll
Susan Pilatzke
Ron Saddington
Leni Untinen
Linda Wiens
Heather Woodbeck

NWO Health Human Resources Study Research Working Group

Dr. Bruce Minore
Anne Ross
Judith Harris
Debbie Sargent
Evelyn Gillson
Valerie Gosse
Cyndi Cossais
Shiela Shaw

NWO Health System Monitoring Report 2002 Work Group

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Judi Gryschuk
Kevin Holder
Scott Henderson
Chris McClelland
Dr. William Montelpare
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Wade Petranik
Heidi Greenwell
Dr. Pete Sarsfield
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NWO Health Human Resources Labour Market Working Group

Carol Brown
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Marg Scott
Bob Griffiths
Sara Williamson
Dr. Lorne McDougall
Sue Berry

NWO Health Human Resources Study Advisory Committee

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Tracy Buckler
Tara Friske
Valerie Gosse
Judith Harris
Dr. Bruce Minore
Kevin Holder
Judi Gryschuk
Rob Rupert
Dr. Pete Sarsfield
Donna Lyons
Gerry Martin
Shiela Shaw
James Kraemer
Tuija Puiras
Laura Kokocinski
Louise Sawchuk
Janet Sillman
Jim Restall
Debbie Sargent
Scott Potts
Sara Williamson
Cyndi Cossais
Dr. Mary Louise Hill
Andrew Skene
Bill Bartley

Emergency Health Services

The NWODHC's Emergency Health Services (EHS) Committee supported injury prevention activities in the Northwest. As well, the EHS Committee played an important role in emergency health care service planning in Northwestern Ontario. Two reports were produced by the committee: *NW Ontario Emergency Department Inventory, May 2001* and the *NW Ontario Injury Prevention Inventory, May 2001*. They have proven to be valuable planning resources for regional and provincial organizations. Additionally, the Committee established linkages with a variety of emergency health stakeholders including the Regional Trauma Advisory Committee and the Base Hospital Regional Utilization Committee.

In early spring, the NWODHC's Emergency Health Services (EHS) Committee, held its final meeting. With the reorganization of the Emergency Services in the North Region by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC), a newly formed committee will address these planning needs from a regional perspective.

Visit Us Online!

The DHC officially launched its web site in 2001. The site is intended to inform the public about the activities of the DHC, and to serve as a resource for those interested in health planning. The web site address is www.nwodhc.com.

NWO DHC Staff

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Summarized Statement of Core Operating Fund *Revenue and Expenditures*

	2001/2002 Budget	2001/2002 Actual
Revenue:		
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care	\$838,927	\$838,927
Interest		16,715
Total Revenue	\$838,927	\$855,642
Expenditures:		
Salaries and Benefits	\$543,745	\$550,276
Operating Expenses	295,182	302,797
Total Expenditures	\$838,927	\$853,073
Ending Surplus		\$2,569

Note: This financial summary is an excerpt from the audited financial statements prepared by Buset and Buset Chartered Accountants. A copy of the complete audited financial statements is available from the DHC.



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The Northwestern District Health Council welcomes responses to this report

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