

ENTHUSIASTIC PROVIDERS SHAPE SHARED VISION FOR MATERNAL CHILD SERVICES

PHASE 2 PLANNING WILL IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS PRIORITIES

The African proverb 'it takes a village to raise a child' fittingly describes the swell of community support we're seeing behind the developing vision for Maternal Child Services in the Central West LHIN.

Following a year that saw the development of a detailed assessment of existing Maternal Child services across the LHIN, health service providers demonstrated that they're ready to take services to the next level at a planning session held on January 29th. And that's great news for local residents who rely on these services throughout the LHIN.

Forty people representing maternal child services offered through hospitals, public health, and community agencies attended the session hosted by the Central West LHIN, further reinforcing the passion people have for this particular health care priority.

It is one of five local health priorities outlined in the LHIN's Integrated Health Services Plan (IHSP).

With the highest birthrate in Ontario, the Central West LHIN welcomes over 10,000 new lives into the region each year, and represents 9.1 percent of all the low birth weight babies in the province. The people behind those statistics are the ones who have the most to benefit from changes to existing maternal child services.

In her opening remarks, Central West LHIN CEO Mimi Lowi-Young applauded the groundswell of activity that has taken place in Phase 1 planning for maternal child services – an effort that tapped into local community perspectives to better understand where gaps exist within the current service offerings for mothers, infants and children.

"The good news for local residents is that we have a committed and hard-working group of health



Central West LHIN CEO Mimi Lowi-Young applauds the groundswell of activity that has taken place so far in planning for maternal child services.

"What parents said they want from us is better access to information, education and support, more prenatal and postnatal programs and access to practical items like baby clothes and supplies."

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service providers in our LHIN who have experience working together and who appreciate the positive health outcomes that can be achieved when we do," noted Lowi-Young. "What parents said they want from us is better access to information, education and support, more prenatal and postnatal programs and access to practical items like baby clothes and supplies."

LOOKING BACK AT PHASE 1

The Central West LHIN recognized early on that to move forward, you first have to look back. That's why Phase 1 planning involved interviewing and meeting with key stakeholders including parents and health service providers, completing a comprehensive profile of existing maternal child services, documenting the development of maternal and newborn policy in Canada and Ontario, reviewing provincial and national maternal and newborn trends, and reviewing the most recent recommendations for maternal child care in Ontario.

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"Before we can collectively build a better integrated system that serves mothers, children and their families, we need to understand what is working well in the current system, where the gaps exist, and where the potential opportunities for improvement are," says Brad Campbell, who facilitated the January 29th session.

Campbell noted that the local focus on maternal child services is in sync with work being done at a health system level in both Ontario and Canada.

Advance interviews conducted with 30 people the week prior to the session revealed evidence of a strong foundation upon which to further improve maternal child services within the LHIN:

- People across the health system committed to addressing issues and improving the overall system and continuum of care
- Dedicated staff committed to delivering high quality health care services
- Existing formal and informal partnerships/relationships between health service providers
- A wealth of well-established programs and services upon which to build a strengthened maternal child program



(Left and above) Attendees representing maternal child services from across the Central West LHIN pool their ideas to help create a shared vision for maternal child services.

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These interviews identified several potential improvement opportunities including improved supports to help community residents more easily locate appropriate services within the local health system, expanding key programs to increase access to important services such as prenatal care, further developing programs based on high priority needs and reducing existing barriers to accessing services.

DEFINING A VISION FOR MATERNAL CHILD SERVICES

Campbell used this information to set the stage for participants to start thinking about a shared vision for Maternal Child Services within the Central West LHIN.

Working in small groups, participants were asked to reflect upon the current system and to brainstorm ideas for what future services might look like.

Participants envisioned a set of well integrated services that respect diversity, provide easy access to women and children, and generate positive health outcomes.



Facilitator Brad Campbell confirms that the planning for maternal child services that is being done locally is in sync with work being done at a health system level in both Ontario and Canada.



The Central West LHIN's Nazira Jaffer, Senior Consultant, Planning and Integration highlights some of the feedback received from consumers during Phase 1 of maternal child planning.

Based on the feedback provided by community residents, service providers and other key stakeholders in the previous year, participants envisioned a set of well integrated services that respect diversity, provide easy access for women and children, and generate positive health outcomes.



The vision planning session revealed creative and inspired thinking from the maternal child services representatives in attendance.

MOVING PHASE 2 INTO ACTION

Phase 2 of Maternal Child Services planning is all about identifying short, medium and long-term action plans that will help the Central West LHIN move forward towards achieving this vision, and then implementing those plans in an integrated and coordinated fashion across the LHIN.

To that end, session participants supported the creation of an umbrella group to oversee the development and implementation of actions plans that address gaps and key priorities within Maternal Child Services. This umbrella group will report directly to the Central West LHIN and will include working groups designed to address specific gaps and priorities.

With momentum building during this planning session, Lowi-Young reaffirmed the Central West LHIN's commitment to translating thoughts into action.

"Further enhancing Maternal Child Services remains a priority at the Central West LHIN," notes Lowi-Young. "Building upon the work completed in Phase 1 and upon the ideas generated at this session, we look forward to working together with health service providers and consumers in the weeks and months ahead as we move forward with Phase 2."

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