



**“Health is our greatest wealth as human beings.
It is the most important aspect of our lives.”**

That's the reason Christine Sri gave for attending the Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network's Seniors' Action Planning Day on June 19.

She wasn't alone. Nearly 270 people, including 98 seniors and 97 healthcare providers and 42 participants who identified as “other” joined her. Their task was to determine the changes that would lead to the participants' desired outcome: a quality health care experience.



Christine Sri

“Since we're planning a new health care strategy with the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), I feel older people need a concerted voice in the planning,” says Christine Sri. “I represent two seniors' groups of which I am a member: Connections 55, a group of older people from Ceylon/Sri Lanka, and the Retiree Club of the LCBO workers. We are all concerned about health issues. I enjoyed the planning day very much. I

felt the speakers were excellent and directed activities well. We managed to get at some very practical points on what should be done next.”

“Very worthwhile day. Would be happy to help in other ways to advocate for continued specialized geriatric services that reactivate and rehabilitate and support efforts to keep seniors at home.”

– Helen Leven, University Health Network

Full summaries of input to all action planning days will be posted on our web site at www.lhins.on.ca Executive summaries also have been sent to all participants of each day.

Planning days

feed Integrated Health Service Plan

Action planning days for three areas of focus of the first Integrated Health Service Plan – Rehabilitation, Seniors' Care and Mental Health and Addictions – were designed to reflect principles of the Toronto Central LHIN's Community Engagement Strategy. They were to be: *inclusive, timely, appropriate, accessible, responsive, transparent, balanced & equitable and accountable.*

Partly designed to inform and educate participants about the purpose of the LHIN and scope of its activity for the coming year, the planning days were also opportunities to gather input, discuss perspectives and involve stakeholders in determining priorities for the first Integrated Health Service Plan. They gave us a way to tap into local knowledge on how to make Ontario's health care system work better for residents.

One of the goals of the Community Engagement Strategy is to focus on the people who use the health care system. This was reinforced in the



The Mental Health and Addictions Action Planning Day was a fabulous day. The cultures, themes and positive initiatives. It set the platform for opening doors, integration and good relations. Only comment: it really stunts everyone when the screen and commentator say repeatedly, "we have no money."

Planning days (continued)

action planning days by putting consumers at the centre of the plan, using their personal experiences as a way to uncover the strengths and gaps within the current system and identify priorities.

That's why ensuring that more than 860 family caregivers and consumers of health care services had the opportunity to participate in 34 pre-meetings to learn more about LHINs and how they could be involved in changing the health care system. Having community agencies host those meetings helped both to bring residents/survivors/consumers to the table on action planning days with health service providers as equal partners and to enhance the dialogue between providers and consumers.

Meetings were conducted in many languages to boost accessibility, balance and equity. We worked to ensure representation from populations whose voices and views may not have been heard in the health system.

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and on setting direction (see *evaluation quotes throughout this newsletter*).

"This is really about partnering with health care providers, consumers, families and community agencies, not about LHINs creating all kinds of committees," says Laura Pisko-Bezruchko, Senior Director, Planning, Integration and Community Engagement. "We are looking for leadership in the field to initiate the integration initiatives that will ultimately improve both access to and quality of care."

"I am so glad to have been asked to participate in this action planning day. I feel I did contribute and I learned so much more. Plus I met such understanding people. Please ask me again."

- Rehab client

"It was an excellent day. I think seniors appreciated being consulted. The manner of prioritizing next steps later in the afternoon became difficult with the technology and some of the language. But I thought the design of the day was good and the "tell me a story" approach was the right way to start the day with positive examples. It was very satisfactory altogether and I look forward to the report."

- Mary McGowan, Executive Director,
Neighbourhood Link Support Services

The View From Here

Just over a year ago, Toronto Central LHIN took its first steps on Ontario's health care system transformation journey. The announcement of the appointment of its Chair, Vice-Chair and Chief Executive Officer was the first exciting milestone on the path.

It is therefore with very mixed emotions that we report that board Chair Penny Thomsen spoke with Health Minister George Smitherman early this year and indicated her intention to resign in July, 2006 for personal reasons.

"While I will miss the interactions with those I have met in the past year, I know that the Toronto Central LHIN will be well served by its board and staff," says Penny, who will be heading out to a new home in British Columbia at the end of July.

"I would like to thank Minister George Smitherman for his confidence in appointing me to this position. I also would like to acknowledge the support and the warmth with which the Toronto Central LHIN residents and the health care community have welcomed and received me.

Daniel Sullivan, Vice-Chair of the Toronto Central LHIN Board of Directors, and Barry Monaghan, Chief Executive Officer of the Toronto Central LHIN, have provided wonderful advice and support to me in this first exciting and challenging year. I will follow closely the progress of the Toronto Central LHIN and wish everyone well as they continue the journey."

The announcement of a successor is expected soon.



Penny Thomsen

Chair, Board of Directors

Toronto Central LHIN