



Community mental health planning underway

The South West LHIN is taking steps to ensure that community mental health and addictions providers and the public are involved in coming changes to the health care system, working closely with the South West Addictions and Mental Health Coalition. As some long-term services are divested out of the hospital setting, community capacity needs to be planned appropriately in this part of the province, so those who need support can count on getting the right care in the right place.

Planning launched by the LHIN will help mental health and addictions providers create a new system that emphasizes care in the community as opposed to a hospital setting as in the past. Recommendations from the planning report will lead to new investments and changes in the system for clients who will be moving from regional mental health centres run by St. Joseph's Health Care, London. This transfer of services to community providers is the final step in a long-term transformation of the health care system that has been ongoing for several years.

Mental health and addictions services are an area of focus for the South West LHIN in both its three-year Integrated Health Service Plan and Health System Blueprint.

In order to ensure the transition is seamless, the coalition is leading a community capacity project that will identify:

- current service levels and offerings
- prevalence rates and how we measure system performance
- the LHIN's different needs by geography and population (e.g. seniors, rural)
- opportunities for integration of the system

The project will also help guide the South West LHIN's decisions around:

- Where investments could be made to strengthen existing services
- Where investment may be needed to create new services and capacity to fill gaps and provide necessary resources
- Where changes can be made to better coordinate existing programs and services resulting in improved outcomes for individuals and families

Jim Whaley – who has a tremendous amount of experience in the mental health and addictions sector – has been retained to complete the project.

The LHIN will receive a report from him in September and recommendations will go to the South West LHIN Board this fall for approval. Once approved by the LHIN Board, providers and partners in the community can continue building out the service offerings and capacity to ensure that treatment options are available for all who need them.

Communications and engagement are important parts of the process for the LHIN as it is committed to engaging with all communities and stakeholders who want to have input into the planning process. The South West LHIN Board hosted a community meeting that over 90 people attended on May 25 (pictured).

Videos of the May 25 presentation are available [here](#).



How is access to cancer surgery being improved?

The Cancer Surgery Improvement Project was created in response to the long wait times for cancer surgery in the South West LHIN. A significant issue related to the long wait times was poor data quality, and the lack of sophisticated processes to utilize wait time data in decision making in the queuing of more than 40,000 completed surgeries in London per year.

Funded by the LHIN, the project aims to improve access to cancer surgery across the LHIN, starting with Urology. The project may also result in the redistribution of cancer surgeries to other communities in the South West and neighbouring LHINs so people can have their surgery closer to the communities in which they reside. Lessons learned from this project will be used to improve access to cancer surgery for other disease sites where applicable.

As of March 31, 2010, the South West LHIN reported the longest waits for cancer surgery in the province, a trend that has been ongoing for the last two years. London Health Sciences Centre and St. Joseph's Health Care London provide approximately 74 per cent of the South West LHIN's cancer surgeries and continue to fulfill and exceed contracted volumes of surgeries.

The overall goal of the Cancer Surgery Improvement Project is to improve access to cancer surgery in the South West LHIN. We also hope to:

- Decrease cancer surgery wait times

- Increase utilization of cancer surgery capacity
- Distribute cancer surgery across the LHIN

An early task of this project will be to map processes to determine where the bottlenecks are and where opportunities for improvement may lie. It may result in such process changes as:

- Implementing a coordinated referral and access system. This will impact all entry points into cancer care, including primary care and referring specialists
- Processes for allocating or scheduling surgeries
- Processes for referring and diagnosing patients

You can get the latest information on this project visiting the South West LHIN [website](#).

High risk seniors project earns top marks

A pilot project in London that assists seniors 75 and older living at increased risk to return home after an acute care episode is getting top marks from clients and service providers alike.

Knowledge gained from the pilot project are being used to help inform implementation of the South West LHIN's Home First initiative, as well as to enhance strategies to align and strengthen community services across the area in order to improve access to care.

Under the high risk seniors program, clients like Chester Telford of London, who was struggling to look after his wife, Eunice, after she had a stroke, are seeing huge benefits.

"We were offered a bed in long-term care but we turned it down because we were getting along so well without it under this program," Chester says.

According to South West Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) Intensive Case Manager Diane Dodge, the program not only helps support elderly people in their homes (part of the South West LHIN's Home First philosophy) but it also helps reduce the risk for them of having to go to the emergency department or be admitted to hospital or require premature admission to long-term care homes throughout the city.

"That's the biggest plus," Dodge says. "The hospitals are as keen as we are to keep [alternate level of care (ALC)] numbers down. With the added support, this high-risk population is able to stay home and not have to apply to go into Long Term Care." ALC is the designation given when hospital patients (often frail elderly) remain in acute care beds awaiting other levels of care such as long-term care.

In addition to intensive case management services through the South West CCAC, clients also receive home visits from a nurse practitioner who assists with ensuring medications are up-to-date and used properly, particularly upon return home from hospital. Clients may also get as many as four visits a day from a personal attendant and access to a 24-hour pager in case of crisis (to be used in case of situations such as incontinence, falls, etc.) as part of enhanced supports for daily living (SDL).

The extra support not only improves the quality of care for the clients, says June Carson, SDL team lead with Cheshire London; it reduces the burden of responsibility placed on family members.

"Caregiver burn-out does happen and when that caregiver gets ill, it leaves someone at risk," Carson says. "If it wasn't for the supports for daily living program, a lot of [clients] would end up back in hospital, still in hospital or going to long term care."

Claudette Pulcine, an SDL personal attendant, agrees. "I find it benefits them greatly," she says. "We are there for them; for whatever they need. There's no doubt it helps them stay in their homes."

The CCAC and Cheshire London received funds from the South West LHIN. To learn more about the project, visit

the High Risk Seniors Project [page](#) on the South West LHIN's website or view the video on our [YouTube channel](#).

Even more great information available on thehealthline.ca

The South West LHIN, in partnership with the South West CCAC, has just launched a redeveloped version of [thehealthline.ca](#) - a key database of health care information for the South West LHIN's geography. Since 2002, thehealthline.ca has been one of the most complete online resources in the province to find health care resources in the South West region. However, it did not always have a complete listing of the services provided by many of the hospitals and community agencies.

To improve the site, a multi-month Programs and Services Inventory Project was launched to catalogue all the services provided by transfer-payment agencies in the South West LHIN. This required collecting new and detailed data from over 150 service providers and resulted in the database doubling in size to over 5,000 listings.

The new information on thehealthline.ca now includes robust details about each service provider and allows users to search for specific services without knowing the names of the providers. You can also search by postal code or service type. Health care providers also have the option of having a video and brochure uploaded to the site to help them provide more information about their services.

In addition new fields were added that are of use for health care providers and planners who can now use this tool to do more in depth research on programs and services in the LHIN. With approval by the thehealthline.ca, providers can update their own profiles to ensure ongoing accuracy and self-management of key information.

"The amount of detail has increased tremendously," says Diana Tamblyn, Lead Content Developer for thehealthline.ca. "We hope everyone in the South West, health care providers and the general public alike, find that the new information will be a valuable tool for learning about health care options across the LHIN."

Launched in 2002, thehealthline.ca has rapidly become an important resource and in 2010 received 1.3 million visits. For more information contact editor@thehealthline.ca

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Alzheimer Outreach Services provides quality dementia care services

Editor's Note: From time-to-time, Exchange will include submissions about our health service providers. We will begin with a feature on Alzheimer Outreach Services. Interested in submitting a story? Send it to Julie.White@lhins.on.ca

Best Practices Followed

Alzheimer Outreach Services of McCormick Home (AOS) has provided Alzheimer Disease and related dementia care services for individuals and families in London for more than 25 years.

Its evolution dates back to Parkwood Hospital, which was formerly governed by Wisdom, Compassion, Achievement (WCA), a London health and human services charitable organization that once owned and operated both Parkwood Hospital and McCormick Home, a long-term care home known for its quality care and services.

The WCA is one of Canada's oldest charities, founded in 1874, with a long and proud tradition of providing compassionate care to the elderly and vulnerable. The WCA still owns and operates McCormick Home, as well as

Alzheimer Outreach Services, which are both located at 2022 Kains Road in West London.

Beginning in the mid-1980s, a day program for individuals with Alzheimer Disease began to be offered at Parkwood Hospital. In 1991, these services were moved to McCormick Home on Victoria Street. The goal was to remove the program from a hospital setting to a more community based one, to give the program less of a medical focus, and to make it more inviting to people living within the community.

In 2006, with the support of many community donors, the WCA built specialized program space for AOS as part of the rebuilding of McCormick Home. Today, AOS continues to provide services to individuals with Alzheimer disease and related dementias (ADRD) and their caregivers. Services include a day program, featuring a variety of therapeutic and recreational activities for persons with ADRD and family support programs to allow people to remain living safely in the community.

Funded primarily by the South West LHIN, the AOS day program is now the largest of its kind in Ontario, with transportation for clients provided by the Boys and Girls Club of London. While providing customized activities for people with ADRD based on their individual needs, it also offers much needed respite for caregivers of loved ones with ADRD.

The services originally offered at AOS have grown and developed over the years, implementing best practices in dementia care. AOS has had inquiries and visitors from across the country, as far away as Europe and South America who have expressed interest in its services.

In addition to its highly popular day program, AOS also offers support groups for individuals in the early stages of Alzheimer Disease, both a weekend and overnight respite program, individual and family counseling, caregiver support groups, seminars and workshops, as well as specialized services for persons with Frontotemporal Dementia (FTD). Specialized services for families coping with Lewy Body dementia are currently in development.

The AOS staff is a team of dedicated, experienced professionals including social workers, nurses and recreational therapists, as well as more than 40 volunteers with a passion for assisting individuals with ADRD. AOS also has a Resource Library, which is available to the public and features an extensive collection of ADRD related resource materials and activity kits to stimulate communication between a person with ADRD and his or her caregivers.

At its core, AOS is all about helping people with ADRD and their caregivers achieve the best possible quality of life. "We recognize the variety of needs of individuals and families who have a diagnosis of Alzheimer Disease or related dementia, and are very passionate about helping them achieve the best possible quality of life, and to help them remain living in the community for as long as possible," notes Magdalen Carter, Director of Alzheimer Outreach Services.

While an important goal of AOS is to help those with ADRD remain in the community, AOS also helps them achieve a successful transition into long term care (LTC), when that becomes necessary. Given its close relationship with McCormick Home, AOS is uniquely positioned to help with this transition.

"For those who need to move to long term care, we work with individuals and their families to make this transition as smooth as possible", says Carter. "Being so closely aligned with McCormick Home also provides AOS with the opportunity to explore new models of care based on the best available research and practices in dementia care."

Submitted by Ruth Adams, Director of Communication, WCA

South West innovation featured at eHealth 2011

Technological innovations underway in the South West LHIN were front-and-centre at last month's eHealth 2011 conference in Toronto where local staff presented three homegrown success stories to a diverse audience of health care professionals from across Canada.

The LHIN's Chief Information Officer and eHealth Lead, Glenn Lanteigne, was joined by South West Community Care Access Centre Senior Director Gordon Milak and Sensory Technologies President Patrick Blanshard in a panel discussion on eShift - a CCAC project that uses technology to extend the reach of health care services, dollars and personnel.

"It was an honour to be able to share the eShift success story with such a distinguished crowd," Lanteigne said of the initiative that connects an enhanced-skill Personal Support Worker providing overnight home care to clients with complex health care needs to a nurse working remotely via a web-enabled phone.

The South West LHIN also presented a poster entitled "Optimizing the use of available technology to support the delivery of collaborative care" highlighting the highly successful Partnerships for Health initiative that engaged health care teams to transform the way they provide care to those with chronic disease.

A second poster was presented on thehealthline.ca; an innovative web portal that puts accurate and up-to-date information about health services at the fingertips of consumers and health providers across South West Ontario.

For more information on eShift, visit the South West LHIN's [eHealth pages](#) or [click here](#) for a video on the project. The Partnerships for Health website can be found by [clicking here](#) or visit <http://thehealthline.ca>.

