



Dedicating resources to support quality in the South West

Universal healthcare is a gift that was given to us by the previous generation and it is an institution worth fighting for. While we are still seeing increases to health spending, we know we need to change the way we are doing business in order to make our system sustainable for future generations.

That was the message delivered by The Hon. Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care at the South West LHIN's first annual Quality symposium this past spring – a similar message, on a more global scale, was delivered by keynote speaker Jim Easton of the United Kingdom's National Health Service.

Research shows that poor quality health care is costly. Hospital-acquired infections, adverse drug events, patients with chronic diseases who not always receive the optimal care required and the cost of avoidable admissions is high. We also know quality improvement initiatives can reduce costs, says Michael Barrett, Chief Executive Officer of the South West LHIN. "To do this, it does require careful planning, leadership and expertise and a sustained relentless focus on high quality implementation."

Ontario's *Excellent Care for All Act* (ECFAA) aligns well with the goals the South West LHIN set out in its Blueprint Vision 2022 and Integrated Health Service Plan. "What that strategy means is that the patient/client/resident will be at the centre of the health care system, decisions about the patient/client/resident care are based on the best evidence and standards and that we are focused on quality of care and best use of resources. The main goal is to ensure we get better and better at what we do," Barrett says.



Quest for Quality

Access to Care

In addition to ECFAA legislation, all 14 LHINs have identified a number of inter-related initiatives that the LHINs are collectively implementing to improve quality and access. All of these initiatives will have a direct impact on emergency room wait times, alternate level of care (ALC) and the patient/client/resident experience.

"The South West LHIN is working with our health service provider partners to implement these initiatives under the banner of access to care" Barrett said. That includes a number of different components. One of which is Home First, a philosophy to ensure the ultimate destination for patients, residents and clients is home.

"It is a massive culture change that we need to undertake to make sure that everyone – including hospitals, CCAC, community support providers, mental health and addictions, long-term care, community health centres, and primary care

are actually changing that philosophy to ensure that patients are cared for close to home, in their home,” he said.

The LHIN has dedicated resources to assist with this cultural shift, with the South West Quality and Process Improvement program (QPI) which is housed at the South West CCAC.

QPI

The goal of QPI is to support and foster an environment of continuous quality improvement across the South West LHIN, says Lana Dunlop, QPI program lead. “It’s up to all of us to create what Health Quality Ontario calls ‘a high-performing health system committed to continuous improvement – a system that is there for you when you need it, and involves you in maintaining and improving your own health.’” There are many evidence-based models and tools to support quality improvement in health care. The QPI team provides expertise, resources, knowledge, coaching and other services to quality improvement teams.

“I’m very proud of the QPI team. Our three improvement coaches and one data analyst represent a rich resource to the health system. They have complimentary experience in diverse areas, including emergency management, team leadership, information and documentation flow, hospital performance management, and financial analysis. They work together cohesively, building on each other’s strengths,” Dunlop says.

Sustaining lessons learned from Partnerships for Health (PFH)

A concerted three-year program designed to improve care for people with diabetes through partnerships with primary care in the South West LHIN was very successful, with 73 primary care teams taking part. In all, improvements were made in 10 of 11 clinical outcomes.

Lessons learned from the program which focused on building partnerships between primary and community care,

engaging patients in self-care, and making better use of information technology are now being embedded in the QPI program.

Now known as “Partnering for Quality in Chronic Disease Care,” QPI Improvement Coach Tamara McAllister is working with PFH teams to sustain and ultimately spread their great work. She is in the process of visiting sites to assess where they are today and how they can move forward.

“Our focus is on sustaining the quality work and supporting organic spread,” McAllister says.

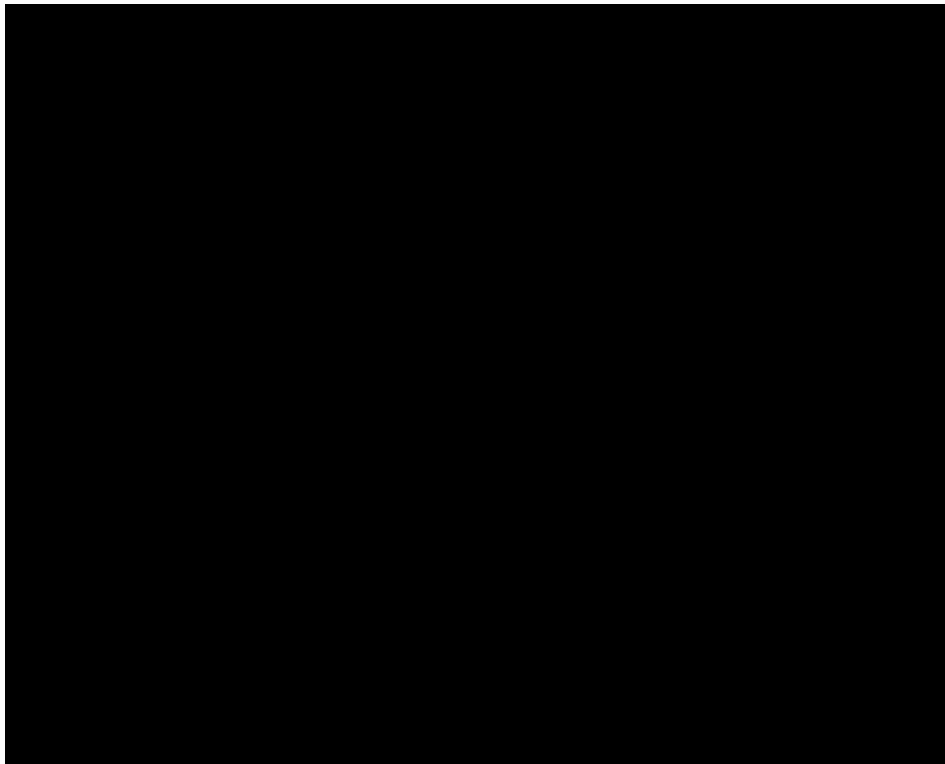
“These teams have had great successes to date, but some face challenges in sustaining the momentum. We’re here to help.”

QPI has also launched a region-wide working group to identify outcome indicators for diabetes.

Quest for Quality website

The QPI website, www.questforquality.ca provides information and inspiration to providers engaged in the quality improvement process. The site provides links to tools and templates, and will also enable data collection and reporting of

priority quality projects.



Ribbon cutting at new Woodstock General Hospital

On August 26th, The Honorable Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, joined hospital officials, staff and invited guests from across the South West LHIN to celebrate the grand opening of the new Woodstock General Hospital (WGH) – a state-of-the-art facility designed to provide acute in-patient, ambulatory, rehabilitation and complex continuing care programs and services to residents of Woodstock and Oxford County.

“I’m thrilled that the brand new Woodstock General Hospital will bring state-of-the-art health care so close to home for the people of this community,” Matthews said, drawing applause when she announced additional funding to both help the facility through 2012 and operate a new MRI machine.

“I know people have been waiting for this hospital and I’m pleased to see how the hard work and dedication of so many has come together.”



At three storeys high and 350,000 square feet, the new hospital has capacity for up to 178 beds and is more than double the size of the community's current facility. The new hospital will allow health care professionals to offer cardio-respiratory services, pharmacy and laboratory services, a new inpatient rehabilitation program, diagnostic imaging and a maternal/child/woman's health unit.

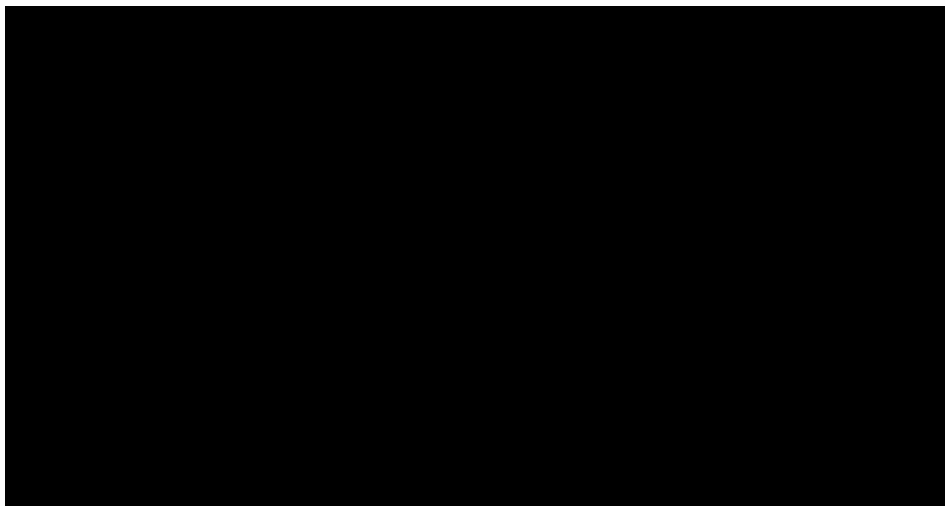
"We are very excited about our new facility," WGH President and CEO Natasa Veljovic told the crowd before a ribbon cutting ceremony timed to coincide with a thunderous fly-over.

"In addition to a wonderful new building that provides improved privacy and infection control, we have installed advanced equipment and wireless technology to provide our healthcare professionals with the tools they need for enhanced patient care."

WGH broke ground on its new facility in November 2008 and construction was completed in June 2011, on time and on budget. Since then, hospital staff and vendors have been preparing for occupancy of the new facility, which will take place on November 20, 2011.

Up to 200 new staff members and allied health professionals are expected to be hired once all beds and services are opened. An estimated 10 new doctors will also be needed to accommodate the increase in inpatient beds and new services.

For more information on the new WGH, [click here](#) (pdf) or visit their website at www.wgh.on.ca. Did you miss the grand opening? [Click here](#) for full video coverage.





1st of its kind eating disorder program announced in London

More help is on the way for Southwestern Ontario residents who are living with an eating disorder.

On Tuesday, August 23rd, The Hon. Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, announced that London will be the home of Ontario's first-ever publicly –funded residential treatment facility for adults with eating disorders.

The program will be located at the London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC) as well as the Western Ontario Therapeutic Community Hostel (WOTCH) and will feature up to four inpatient hospital beds for those needing intensive treatment, a day treatment program for 20 full-time and 32 part-time patients, and an eight-bed residential facility. There will also be outpatient support for patients after they leave the residential program.

The program will help 100 people per year at a cost of \$2.4 million annually.

"I'm enormously proud that this new, first-ever Ontario program will give people living with eating disorders not only excellent care, but also hope and peace of mind knowing that help is close by," said Minister Matthews. "I know these specialized supports will save lives."

According to officials, often times the alternative is to send patients out of country for care. Not only is this treatment expensive, but patients lose the continuity of care once they return home.

"We are going to provide care for people earlier, closer to home," said Minister Matthews. "We can send people away and they can get on the right track, but when they come home, they just don't have the support to stay on the right track. Now they will."

The program is also unique in that it will offer treatment to adults who traditionally don't have access to such services. The current child and adolescent eating disorder program at LHSC is for those under the age of 18.

"Early intervention is so important, but we know there is a group of individuals who need care into adulthood, and there are adults whose eating disorders begin in adulthood," said Dr. Sandra Fisman. "The mortality rate for adults with eating disorders is up to 20 per cent, and those deaths happen in the prime of life."

"This has been a long time coming for the whole team," noted Dr. Robby Campbell, noting his delight with the announcement.

"Continuity of care is so important," and the London model supports that, enabling equal access to care for all patients, he said.

The new program will help patients from not only London, but also Middlesex, Elgin, Oxford, Perth, Huron, Lambeth, Kent, Grey, Bruce and Essex counties.

Watch the full video of the announcement on the South West LHIN YouTube channel.



Redevelopment of St. Thomas Elgin General gets green light

A “gem” of a hospital is about to become even more precious. On August 24, The Hon. Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care announced a major capital redevelopment project has been approved for St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital (STEGH).

“This is a gem of a hospital,” the Minister said, following a tour of the existing facility, complimenting staff for their dedicated service. Funding for the STEGH redevelopment is in the government’s fiscal plan, she noted, announcing the project that includes:

- A new 15-bed acute mental health inpatient unit
- An outpatient mental health day hospital
- A new emergency department
- New ambulatory care and surgical services departments
- And improvements to the main entrance and other infrastructure improvements.

Dr. Nancy Whitmore, Chief of Staff at STEGH, noted that it was an “exceptional day” and the redevelopment would improve “our ability to provide safe, high quality care for patients for years to come” and will help “integrate mental health care into our day to day functioning.”

Also in attendance were MPP Steve Peters, Mayor Heather Jackson-Chapman and Elgin County Warden Dave Mennill and South West LHIN Board Chair Jeff Low and Vice Chair Linda Stevenson.

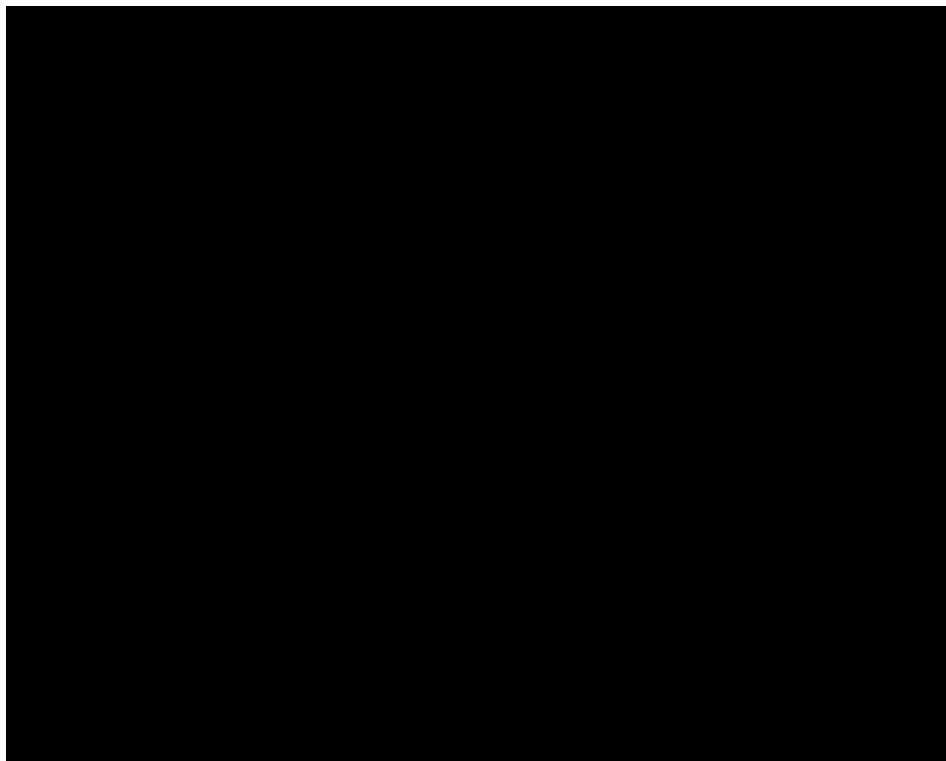
In a fitting testimonial that builds on STEGH formidable performance accomplishments, -- lowest emergency room wait times in the South West LHIN, balanced budget for six years, low diagnostic imaging wait times – Minister Matthews was able to meet a patient recovering from surgery who was a retired medical doctor who commented he has, “never been in a hospital where patient care is such a valued attribute.”

“I know how important this expansion is to the people of this community and I’m proud to see it move forward,” the Minister said. “For area residents, these new upgrades mean faster and better access to high quality health care services much closer to home.”

STEGH is a 166-bed community hospital that serves families in the St. Thomas and Elgin County and surrounding area, providing 8,000 surgical procedures and 40,000 emergency visits per year.

In announcing the redevelopment project, the Minister also thanked representatives from the South West LHIN “who have worked very hard to ensure the right combination of health care services are in the right places in southwestern Ontario.”

[Click here](#) to see a video of the announcement event on our YouTube Channel.



Hospital redevelopment approved in Kincardine

Just a week after announcing the redevelopment of the Wingham General Hospital, Huron-Bruce MPP Carol Mitchell made another announcement that will improve access to health care for Bruce County residents, closer to home.

MPP Mitchell delivered the news that the provincial government is supporting redevelopment at the South Bruce Grey Health Centre’s Kincardine site.

The project will connect the hospital to the Family Health Team, redevelop the emergency department, and expand ambulatory care services, education and diagnostic imaging. New plant and building services departments will also be created.

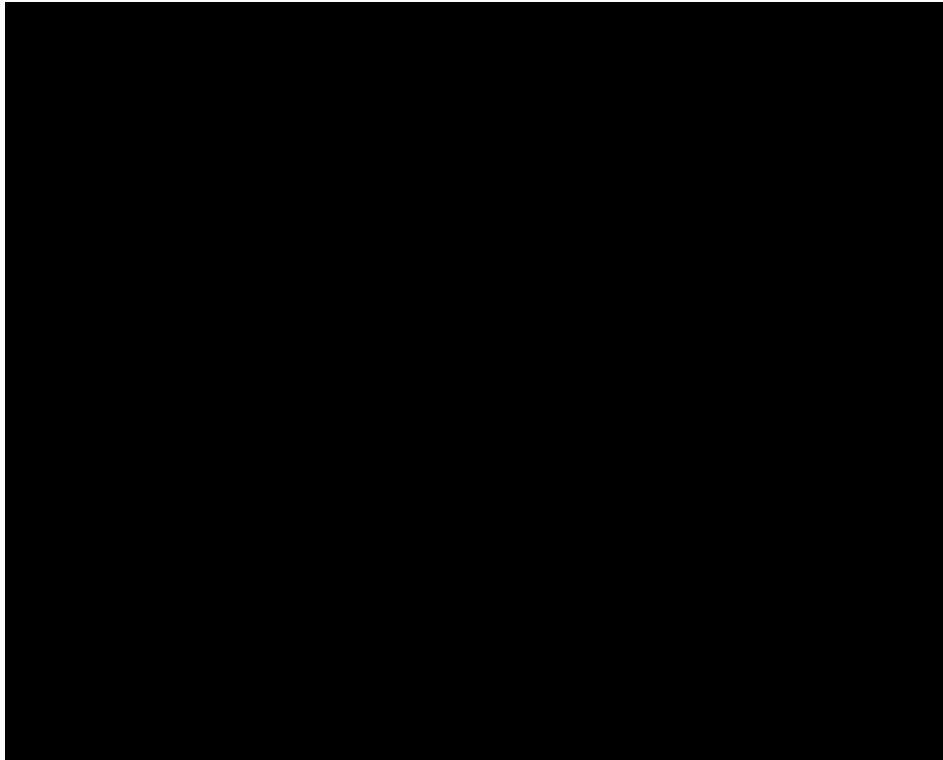
Tendering is set to begin in 2015.

“The redevelopment will improve health care for our patients, it will improve our physician recruitment, and it will provide a better working environment for our staff,” said Don Bushell, Chair of the South Bruce Grey Health Centre.

Dr. Lisa Roth, site chief at the Kincardine site, speaking on behalf of physicians at the site noted, “this is thrilling news.”

Over the last year, the health care in our community has really started moving forward in a positive direction and this is part of it, she stated.

"With these redeveloped facilities, all the wonderful staff here at the Kincardine Hospital will be better able to ensure the local residents get the right care in the right place at the right time," said Gerry Moss, board member of the South West Local Health Integration Network. "I look forward to the teamwork that is going to happen over the next several years until we get that shovel in the ground."



eHealth Ontario launches 2015 Blueprint

eHealth Ontario recently launched Ontario's 2015 [eHealth Blueprint](#) (pdf) – the conceptual design for planning and delivering the province's electronic health record (EHR).

Putting patients at the centre is the point. The blueprint enables solutions to be created that help gather patient information so that they, and their health care providers, can have anytime, anywhere access to a whole patient view.

A key component of the blueprint is ensuring privacy of the health information. The blueprint incorporates *Privacy by Design* – a series of foundational principles developed by Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner – which extend to IT systems, accountable business practices as well as physical design and networked infrastructure.

The blueprint takes into account the considerable body of work already done across health care in developing and implementing local ehealth solutions. Utilizing standards, it provides the foundation to ensure these systems are able to exchange, and use the information that has been exchanged. The approach is based on the development of regional hubs of information to allow for local innovation and collaboration. These hubs will be able to communicate with a central provincial hub.

Its main purpose?

"Enabling all of us in this province to receive better care," says Fariba Rawhani, Vice President, Architecture and Planning. "The blueprint is based on the understanding that no one organization can deliver Ontario's EHR by 2015 on its own. As well, it recognizes that like other sectors, there is a person or patient at the centre of why we do what we do."

"Collectively, our job is to deliver solutions that help gather a patient's information so that they, and their health care

providers, can have anytime, anywhere access to a whole patient view, not fragmented bits of disparate information. Ontario's 2015 eHealth Blueprint will help us to achieve this important goal."

Developed in consultation with a wide range of providers, delivery partners and opinion leaders across the province, the blueprint aligns with Canada Health Infoway's (CHI's) national blueprint and incorporates a range of significant learnings from other jurisdictions.

Regional technology hubs like cSWO (connecting South Western Ontario) will allow locally developed solutions to be integrated and delivered region-wide. These technology hubs will serve as the backbones for developing and implementing solutions aimed at defined geographic areas. They will work with all health service organizations to create and implement local solutions, which may eventually get migrated and released on a provincial level depending on the need for a specific solution across the province.

The 2015 blueprint is part of a broader program to effectively deliver on the province's commitment for an EHR by 2015. While the work to share the blueprint continues into the fall, parallel work is underway on developing a governance structure, building an eHealth asset inventory to reconcile the investments already made across the province and creating the logical architecture to define the specifics of what needs to be built and how. An EHR roadmap is also in development.

For more information on the South West LHIN's ehealth strategy, see the [February 2011 edition](#) of e-Exchange.

Better care for patients with hip and knee osteoarthritis

The South West LHIN and the Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry are working with family physicians and surgeons to develop continuing education materials to strengthen family physicians' understanding for managing hip and knee osteoarthritis.

The goal of this educational program is to help family physicians and surgeons make the best clinical decisions about the right time to request a consultation for hip or knee replacement surgery for their patients. This work builds on a three-pronged strategy in support of joint replacements. In addition to the guidelines, a patient education website (<http://jointreplacement.thehealthline.ca>) and common hospital order sets for physicians have been rolled out.

The need for the new educational materials that support decision-making for optimal management of patients with osteoarthritis of the hip or knee for physicians was identified during focus groups with family physicians and surgeons last year. Physicians are currently being polled as to their educational needs for osteoarthritis management and can respond online at:

<https://rabbit.vm.its.uwo.ca/CPDreg2/Default.aspx?functionType=specificEvent&autoeventID=328&specialNeedsAssessment=Y&eventTypesToDisplay=Needs%20Assessment>

Staffing Announcements at the South West LHIN

Cathy Goetz-Perry has joined the South West LHIN team as a **Planning and Integration Lead**. Cathy's portfolio will focus on Chronic Disease Prevention and Management. Cathy has extensive experience and expertise in chronic disease prevention and management, patient self-management, self-management support and health promotion. Cathy has a Masters of Nursing and most recently completed her Ph.D. at the Faculty of Health Services School of Nursing - McMaster University. Cathy recently did work for South West LHIN on the Aboriginal Primary Health Care Strategy and the Aboriginal Aging at Home Project. Previous to this, Cathy has worked as Executive Director for VON – Grey Bruce, VP Patient Care Services at Louise Marshall Hospital in Mount Forest and as a Project Consultant with OHA Hospital Employee Relation Services.

Carol Mulder has joined the South West LHIN team as the new **Alternate Level of Care Lead** ("ALC Lead"). The primary focus of this position will be to coordinate and align various initiatives and actions aimed at improving ALC in order to achieve the LHIN's goals and reach confirmed performance targets. Carol brings almost 20 years of experience in health care to the role of ALC Lead and her work has focused on the use of existing data to improve the quality of health care. Most recently, she was on faculty at the University of the West Indies in Barbados, teaching graduate and undergraduate students in medicine and public health. Prior to that, she maintained an active consulting practice in health care information management.

Teresa Lannin has joined the South West LHIN as the **Communications & Customer Service Specialist**. With a wealth of social media experience and experience working with people, Teresa will be an asset to our communications & customer service team. Teresa's responsibilities will include overall communications, customer service and social media work. Most recently with EastLink TV, (based in Listowel, covering Midwestern Ontario,) where she was an on-air host/videojournalist/production coordinator, she has also worked in television in Sudbury, as well as at A-Channel News, BX 93 and as a reporter/photographer at the Mitchell Advocate. Teresa has a Bachelor's of Journalism from Ryerson University as well as a post-grad certificate in Public Relations from Fanshawe College and webpage design from Conestoga College.

Bob De Raad has joined the South West LHIN team as the **Project Lead, Emergency Department/Critical Care Strategies**. Bob's portfolio will focus on integration and process improvement initiatives across the South West LHIN. Bob brings to the LHIN extensive experience and expertise in different roles in the Emergency environment in the community and tertiary hospital settings. Bob has a diploma in Nursing and is currently completing a Post-RN Baccalaureate Program in Nursing at Laurentian University, in addition to a Certificate in Healthcare Administration. Bob is being seconded to this role from Bluewater Health (BWH) in Sarnia, where he managed the physical move of the hospital emergency department to the new Norman Site location and represented BWH on the ESC LHIN ED/ALC Advisory Group.

