



New Innovative Partnership, Better Access to End of Life Care

A much needed 10-bed residential hospice for London is a step closer to reality with the announcement of a new partnership in palliative care. Hospice of London and the St. Joseph's Health Care Society have agreed to integrate the operations of Hospice of London into a new corporation wholly owned and operated by the St. Joseph's Health Care Society (the Society). This new corporation will continue to provide the services currently offered by Hospice of London (volunteer visitation and day programs) and, in addition, would move to develop a new 10-bed residential hospice based on the experience of the Society in developing and operating such a facility in Sarnia.

This new entity brings together two organizations with a history and tradition of respectful, holistic patient/client centred care with a focus on the future of delivering quality end of life care in the community.

"This partnership will provide a broader mandate, strong governance and resources that will ensure that hospice services remain a valued service to the community; but will provide the platform for transformative growth of palliative services in our community," explains Neil Johnson, Chair of the Hospice of London Board of Directors. "Hospice services will benefit from the breadth of relationships the Society has in the community and allow the new hospice to take on a strong leadership role in community hospice palliative care."

For over 25 years, Hospice of London has provided palliative, caregiver and bereavement support to hundreds of clients and families in the City of London. Hospice is proud of its history and of its staff and volunteers who tirelessly provide compassionate care and support in our community.

In 2005, the Society sponsored the establishment of the St. Joseph's Hospice Resource Centre of Sarnia Lambton. This hospice resource centre began by providing illness, caregiver and bereavement support through various programs including walking companions, educational lunches, complementary therapies, research and library resources and a children's program.

With the support of the Society, the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care and a successful local fundraising campaign, \$6 million was raised to build a 14,000 square foot facility in Sarnia. In December 2009 the first resident was welcomed into the new 10 bed residential hospice.

"We are delighted to enter into this partnership which will bring exciting change and opportunity to the community of London and Middlesex," says John Callaghan, Executive Director of the St. Joseph's Health Care Society. "We see the need in this community for a residential hospice and we know from first-hand experience in Sarnia how transformative these services can be for clients and their families who are facing life threatening illnesses."

"While this integration obviously signifies change, both organizations are committed to making the process of forming a new corporate entity as seamless as possible to Hospice of London staff, volunteers, clients and families, donors and our community," says Jayne Graham Executive Director of Hospice of London. All aspects of the operations at Hospice will remain the same until the new corporate entity is formed which is expected to be completed in January 2012.

Both the Society and the Hospice of London Boards are committed to the Hospice of London name and brand, recognizing its association with a 25 year plus history and heritage of care in addition to the name and brand of the Society. Both parties are also committed to working with the community and other health care providers as this partnership moves forward into the new Hospice of London.

"I'm delighted to see Hospice of London and St. Joseph's Health Care Society form a partnership that will provide greater access to care for the people of London," says Deb Matthews, Ontario Minister of Health and Long Term Care. "This collaborative effort will expand palliative care, and will ensure that people and their families receive compassionate and high quality health care at the end of their lives."

The South West LHIN Board is pleased to see two established and well respected organizations joining forces to deliver quality end of life care by expanding the services to meet community needs.

"Integrations like this represent the kind of collaboration needed to ensure quality health services remain available in a sustainable way," says Jeff Low, Chair, South West LHIN Board of Directors.

Both Hospice of London and the St. Joseph's Health Care Society are excited about the opportunities that this new partnership affords the new Hospice of London, to enhance current palliative services, expand to meet community needs and to achieve the vision of a residential facility.

Health Care Connect passes milestone

More than 10,000 orphan patients in the South West LHIN have been connected to family physicians in the past two years, thanks to Health Care Connect and the dedicated efforts of the program's hard-working registered nurses.

South West Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) CEO Sandra Coleman called the number "a major achievement" and said it would never have been reached so quickly without the determination, patience and passion shown by staff members who worked "day in and day out to connect people with the care they need." *[story continues below]*



South West Care Connectors (l to r): Anna Ackland, Janice Ross-Greenside and Andrea Fisher. Absent: Sherri McRobert

"The health care experiences of 10,000 clients are better as a result of their efforts," Coleman said of Care Connectors Anna Ackland, Janice Ross-Greenside, Andrea Fisher and Sherri McRobert. "In the two years this program has been in place, they've built relationships with physicians and many other partners in the South West and have been tremendous ambassadors for the CCAC in the process."

Health Care Connect is a province-wide initiative that helps Ontarians without a family health care provider find a doctor or nurse practitioner. The program is funded by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care with program-specific dollars that flow through the LHIN to the CCAC.

Provincially, more than 100,000 people have registered with the program. Between February 12, 2009 and June 30, 2011, 62.1% of them had been connected to a provider and 78.4% of high-needs patients received the referrals they were looking for. Approximately 10% of that total were handled by the South West CCAC's Health Care Connect team.

Physicians in the South West LHIN who want more information about Health Care Connect can do so by dialing 1-800-811-5146.

If you don't have a health care provider you can register with the Health Care Connect program by visiting www.ontario.ca/healthcareconnect or by calling 1-800-445-1822. Telephone services are available Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in English and French with 120 other languages available, as required.

Preventing Falls in Grey-Bruce

The Aging at Home-funded Grey Bruce Falls Prevention and Intervention Program includes a number of initiatives to help seniors prevent a fall before one happens.

Firstly, the emergency departments in both the Wiarton and Markdale sites of Grey Bruce Health Services are now conducting a falls risk assessment upon admission to patients who are 75 years of age and older. When the software

detects the patient's age, a screen prompts the triage nurse to ask a series of questions to determine if he or she is at risk of having a fall. If the answer to 3 or more of the questions is yes, the patient is automatically referred to the South West Community Care Access Centre (CCAC).

"On an admitted patient, we will ask how many falls have [they] had in the past three months or how many trips to the emergency room - but you don't always know if they are accurate," says Susan Coleman, a nurse at the Markdale GBHS site. "At least this way we know the question is being asked here and the referral is made."

The program will soon be available at the Grey Bruce Health Services' Southampton and Meaford sites.

Referrals are also coming to the CCAC from Grey County EMS via their newly created Community Referral EMS (CREMS) program. When paramedics are called to a home, they are able to assess whether the resident's surroundings are putting them at a higher risk of falling. Those high-risk clients are now being referred to a CCAC case manager before a problem starts.

"[We're] always looking for those hazards which might cause people to fall or have further health issues," said Grey County paramedic Darren Clock. "People that would never be transported to hospital before because they have a tiny abrasion and their vitals are fine, those are the people that we're getting into the system which is helping prevent that big fall that's going to break a hip."

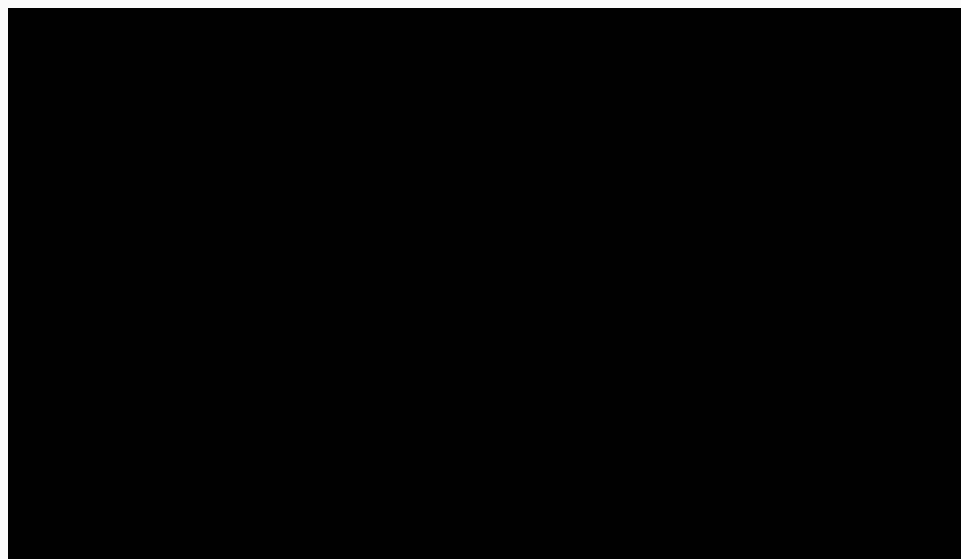
Since the program launched in the spring, Grey County EMS is averaging seven referrals to the CCAC per month.

Finally, future Personal Support Workers (PSWs) are now being trained in falls prevention. This September, PSW students enrolled at the Georgian College Owen Sound campus took a one-day course that will help them spot which clients may be at risk of having a fall. They also completed training in the Home Support Exercise Program (HSEP). With the HSEP training, they will be able to help seniors stay strong, flexible and most importantly, on their feet.

"Grey and Bruce [has a] very rural population that is supported heavily by its PSWs," says Sarah Milne, a health promoter with the Grey Bruce Public Health Unit. "So, this is a much needed program to look at the preventative component of falls prevention."

One in three seniors over the age of 65 will fall at least once a year, and 40 per cent of nursing home admissions occur as a result of falls.

To learn more about the Grey Bruce Falls Prevention and Intervention Program, please watch the video below





Caring in crisis

When disaster strikes, it's up to a team of dedicated health care professionals to ensure the safety and wellbeing of others. But what happens when that disaster turns their lives upside down as well? They get down to work.

That's what happened on Sunday, August 21st when an F3 tornado ripped through the town of Goderich carving a path of destruction and leaving one man dead.

Without knowing the full extent of the damage, staff at the Alexandra Marine and General Hospital (AMGH), Maitland Manor and the South West Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) sprung into action to help take care of patients, clients and community members.

The tornado touched down at around 3:50 pm with only 12 minutes of notice. By 4 pm, the first of the "walking wounded" came through the emergency department doors. However, getting there wasn't easy.

"The main thing was the concern about people that were potentially wounded but weren't able to get access to the hospital because of the roads, fallen trees, [and] power and gas lines that were [broken]", said Cheryl Taylor, Director of Patient Care Services at AMGH.

That also meant staff struggled to get into work, but stories emerged of the workers who went to great lengths to make sure patients and clients were taken care of.

"We had one staff [member] specifically that had just worked a 12-hour night shift the night before," says Maitland Manor Executive Director Angie Dunn. "She lives outside of town and she actually drove to the outskirts of town and couldn't get through because all the roads were closed, [so she] parked the car outside of town and she walked all the way through town to come to work and help."

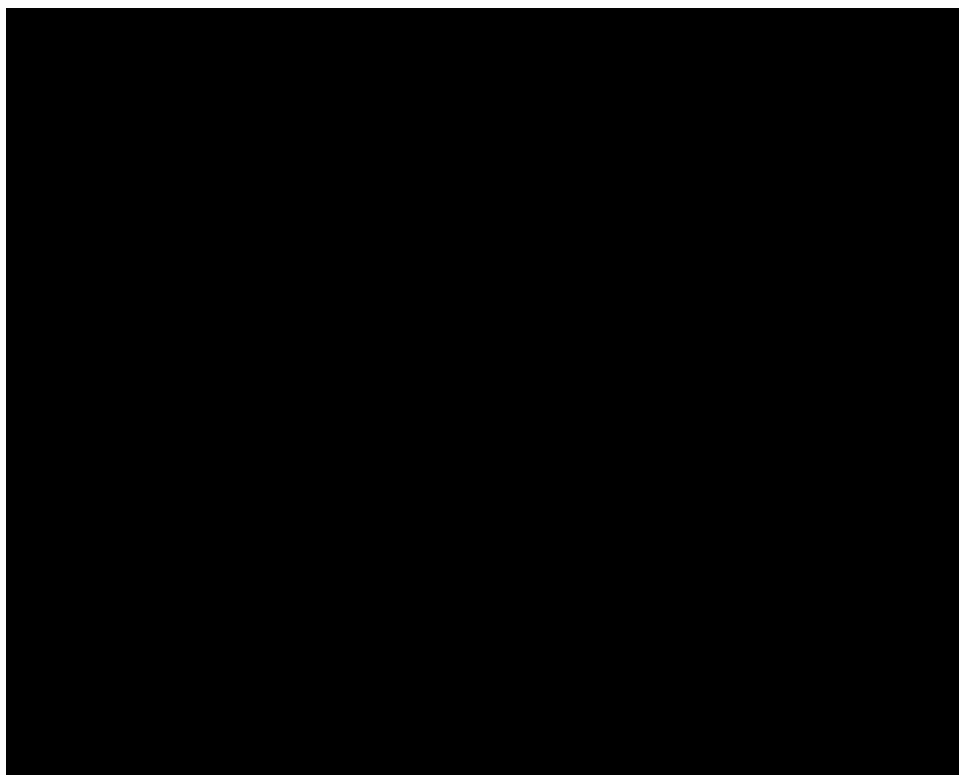
Not only did employees make sure they got into work, but they left behind their own families and destroyed homes to do so.

"When the initial responders were coming in, we didn't know their story," said Richard Bedard, Director of Clinical Support Services at AMGH. "One of the employees lost her home, her car, all of her possessions. She escaped with the clothes on her back, but yet she came into work. That speaks to the ability of responders to put the community as a whole first before themselves."

"You want to say 'why did you come?'" said Taylor. "But you know why they did, because it's obviously why you're there too."

Luckily, neither the hospital nor Maitland Manor sustained structural damage as a result of the tornado. However, both dealt with power and natural gas outages for several days.

To find out more about how Goderich's health care professionals worked together in the wake of the tornado, you can watch the video below



Helping patients with cancer navigate the system

Following a bout of pneumonia last fall, Carole Hanks went to visit her family doctor in Owen Sound. During a routine checkup, the doctor noticed a wheezing sound in Carole's chest and sent her for additional testing. Though she admits to feeling tired, Carole was not prepared for the news she received. The tests revealed a mass at the top of her left lung. Further examination confirmed that the mass was a malignant tumour.

Unfortunately, Carole's story is not uncommon. According to Cancer Care Ontario, an estimated 25,300 Canadians will be diagnosed with lung cancer in 2011 and 20,600 will die of it. Lung cancer remains the leading cause of cancer death for both men and women.

In an effort to assist patients with lung cancer such as Carole, the South West Regional Cancer Program has launched the thoracic Diagnostic Assessment Program (DAP) in London and Owen Sound. DAPs have been mandated by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care via Cancer Care Ontario to help reduce the amount of stress experienced by the patient, and to coordinate care.

"The time from when my doctors suspected something was wrong, to my actual diagnosis was very nerve-wracking," admits Carole. "The DAP provided me with a nurse navigator who guided me through my journey. It was comforting to have one person looking out for me."

DAPs are characterized by patient-centered care and provide a single point of access for diagnostic services. They coordinate and streamline the referral and follow up systems, while establishing and monitoring quality indicators. Through the DAP, doctors are able to gain access to diagnostic tests and results for their patients in a timely manner.

"The implementation of the Program in London and Owen Sound will help to ensure patients receive care as close to home as possible," says Sue Stein, Nurse Navigator at the South West Regional Cancer Program. "Being close to

home with friends and family is important for patients faced with a distressing situation.”For patients like Carole, the DAP provided the supports necessary to deal with the unexpected journey that halted her life. “My nurse navigator was there to explain my treatment path to me,” says Carole. “She even came to visit me while I was in the hospital. It was great to meet face-to-face.”

The South West Regional Cancer Program plans to launch a colorectal DAP in the spring of 2012. Lessons learned through the thoracic DAP will be applied to the successful implementation of the colorectal program.

Submitted by Melissa Beilhartz, Publicity & Marketing Specialist with the South West Regional Cancer Program.

New 211 service to extend the reach of thehealthline.ca

The thehealthline.ca has extended its reach, thanks to 211 – a free, confidential, live-answer directory assistance service already listing government, not-for-profit and for-profit agencies elsewhere in Ontario.

On October 21, 211 became available to London-Middlesex residents too, thanks to the efforts of The United Way of London and Middlesex, London Community Foundation, thehealthline.ca and Information London. According to Michael Robbins, project coordinator for thehealthline.ca, health care data from the thehealthline.ca website makes up a big part of the local 211 package.

“Thehealthline.ca provides the London Middlesex services data for the new service,” Robbins explains. “To do this we created a data sharing tool and weekly we export approximately 1,200 of our 2,000 London and Middlesex service records to the Windsor 211 call centre. This is the data that the 211 phone operators rely on when answering calls.”

The 211 operators will be relying on it a lot; according to the service's most recent statistics, questions about doctors' offices and clinics, community health centres, assistive devices and support for chronic conditions were the most common of the 550,000 queries received from Ontarians living in other parts of the province.

“The surprising news to us in the research was when people feel their situation is urgent, 40 per cent of residents will turn to a health care provider first,” says Bill Morris, executive director of Ontario 211 Services Corporation. “211 can offer you suggestions for where to find help, explain the processes for successfully getting what you need and connect you to an agency, if you ask us to.”

With over 1 million visits in 2009, thehealthline.ca is already a very popular source for health services information; 211's launch in London-Middlesex means even more local residents will find the health care information they are looking for. To learn more, dial 211, point your browser to 211southwestontario.ca or visit <http://thehealthline.ca> directly.

