

NEW

Directions

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A hub of activity

The Transition Office moves towards implementation

Debbie Fischer, Assistant Deputy Minister of Transition, and the Transition Office team have accomplished a great deal over the past few months.

The team has selected senior project leaders, and has been working closely with staff throughout the ministry to develop an overall transition plan and structure — and a strategy for implementing them — through to the end of 2007.

“There has been a tremendous amount of work done so far,” said Fischer after a recent day-long planning session. “And it has been very gratifying to see that a number of projects we indentified at the start of the transition are moving ahead smoothly. Now, we’re doing a lot of detailed work to understand current roles and future roles and how we move forward and identify priorities, so that we can maintain the business and not jeopardize the work that needs to get done. The ministry has a huge agenda and we want to do it right and have the right support.”

The next major task for the Transition Office is to finalize the plan for moving the ministry’s transition forward. This plan will be announced to staff in October of this year.

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N E X T S T E P S :

The Transition Office moves forward

One key to making sure that everything is accounted for and nothing falls through the cracks is the structure of the Transition Office. Three groups, in particular, will act as Fischer’s advisors as her team develops and implements an integrated plan to transform the ministry from its current programmatic structure into a horizontal, network-based organization that supports stewardship. These influential entities are the Transition Steering Team, the Change Network and the Project Management Office.

Transition Steering Team

The Transition Steering Team comprises all of the ADMs and other members of the senior management team who report directly to the Deputy Minister, such as the Communications, Information Technology, and Legal leads. They have a pivotal role in Fischer’s decision-making process.

“My role is to bring recommendations to them and facilitate the process based on the decisions made,” said Fischer. “But the senior management team have to sponsor the whole initiative and to provide leadership and support throughout their divisions and the ministry.”

Change Network

The Change Network, led by Steve Pinkus, program manager of the Project Management Office, is a core group of senior “change agents,” representing each division, who meet weekly as a group and work individually to share information, provide input, disseminate information, and help implement change-related activities throughout the ministry. (Membership of this group was announced in the June edition of *NEW Directions*.)

“They’re a great focus group because these are people who are on the ground. They are engaged and have huge sensitivity around the things that we need to do,” Fischer said. “They’re our strongest advisors and they can really help us as we move forward.”

Project Management Office

Meanwhile, the Project Management Office is responsible for keeping the Transition Office’s mandate on track — and that involves overseeing people, process and technology changes that will enable the ministry to achieve its stewardship objective.

“We want to make sure that methodologies are applied consistently and the timing of when they’re done is appropriate,” said Fischer. “In a project of this magnitude, you have to have a Project Management Office.”

One of Pinkus’s first tasks as program

manager for the transition was to design the project plans relating to:

- All organization design, process and human resources transition activities required to set up the future ministry
- All redesigned processes required to ensure the future ministry aligns with the future stewardship vision and system changes
- All technology strategy and infrastructure changes required to support the future ministry
- Ensuring the current organization is managed throughout the transition
- Processes linking the ministry to current transfer payment agencies and LHINs
- Sustainable cultural change initiatives to meet the stewardship vision

Despite the scale of the project and the hurdles that are part of any transition, Fischer and Pinkus are confident the structures they have put in place and the excellent input they are receiving from all areas of the organization will help them build a strong and sustainable future ministry.

Look for a detailed description of the Transition Office’s structure in an upcoming issue of *NEW Directions*, and read on to get an inside look at what some of the program leads in the office are already doing to move the ministry towards its new mandate.

ACUTE SERVICES AND COMMUNITY HEALTH DIVISIONS INITIATIVES

Ron Buckle expedites three priority projects

When Deputy Minister Ron Sapsford announced the ministry’s new stewardship mission and mandate, he indicated that the ministry would retain some of the functions currently performed by employees in the Regional Offices. Since that time, a great deal of work has been completed and is still underway to ensure a seamless transition of these functions and to define the roles of the ministry and the LHINs.

Ron Buckle is working with the Acute Services and Community Health Divisions to develop a transition plan for the Regional Offices and to oversee three priority projects that will determine how certain job functions that are not moving to the LHINs will be carried out under the ministry’s new business model.

“The Acute Services and Community Health Divisions are currently staffed by more than 1,300 people who manage more than \$20 billion in expenditures as they transfer money to all of the hospitals, nursing homes and other agencies in the province,” explained Buckle. “My role is to understand the current state processes and plan for the smooth transition to the future state divisions in full compliance with existing collective agreements and the human resources policies of the Ontario Public Service.”

The three projects will be staffed by teams — the first of several others to come — who will also assess and make recommendations on the integration of service delivery with the LHINs. Each project will be led by a ministry lead, and sponsored by an Assistant Deputy Minister who will ultimately have responsibility for this area within the new organization. ■

Here is a look at the structure and scope of these three priority projects underway in the Acute Services and Community Health Divisions:

Financial Transaction Processing Function

Ministry Lead: Pier Falotico
ADM Sponsor: Dawn Ogram

The finance function currently operating out of the Regional Offices and one corporate office ensures that the ministry's 3,000 transfer payment agencies receive their funding. In the future, the LHINs will be responsible for making funding decisions for transfer payment agencies, with the exception of ministry-retained programs. The ministry will provide a service to the LHINs for programs under their management and will provide a service to the ministry's Health System Accountability and Performance Division for ministry-managed programs.

"First, we prepared a report that talks about the current state of affairs, the future state of affairs, what our role will be in relation to the LHINs and what our financial transactional functions will be," said ministry lead Pier Falotico. "The next steps are to develop an organizational plan and a work plan. We need to document what the process is going to be, what the communication is going to be, what the database is going to be, and many other aspects of the transition."

Compliance Inspection and Enforcement Function

Ministry Lead: Marnie Weber
ADM Sponsor: Hugh MacLeod

The current compliance functions operate out of seven Regional Offices, one corporate office, and six satellite offices. The ministry will continue to be responsible for all long-term care compliance and inspection processes and the new interfaces across the ministry. These important ministry roles will assist long-term care homes as they ensure that their residents continue to receive quality care as the compliance inspection and enforcement functions are integrated into the Health System Accountability and Performance Division.

"There is a group of activities that need to migrate from the Regional Offices and the existing corporate structure into Hugh MacLeod's division," ministry lead Marnie Weber said. "It's very important that there be no hiccups or glitches to the field because we have a legislative requirement to perform these functions.

They must be done on an annual basis and people must have confidence that the ministry, even during the transition, is keeping its eyes on the street."

LHIN Relationship Office

Ministry Lead: Carrie Hayward
ADM Sponsor: Hugh MacLeod

This project will focus on identifying, designing and implementing the new business processes and structures that will support the ministry's working relationships with the LHINs.

"It's getting a sense of what's been done so far and mapping out a plan that's linked to creating the organizational structure and processes for the future," explained Jan Campbell, transition program project lead, who is working closely with ministry lead Carrie Hayward in the LHIN Relationship Office. "Our goal is a smooth transition leading up to the implementation of the branch responsible for LHIN relationships and accountability for the ministry." ■

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HUMAN RESOURCES TRANSITION

An update from Jean Cormier

As director of Strategic Human Resources and Ministry Transition, Jean Cormier is responsible for all human resources aspects of the transition — and she is well aware of the challenges involved. Along with many activities, Cormier said she will be "developing organizational competencies that comprise both stewardship and technical capabilities."

Among other things, she will be leading the team that will determine how the current staff can best be aligned to the new accountabilities of the ministry. Cormier will also be deeply involved in developing the new organizational structure, as well as the learning programs that will enable the ministry to realize its vision of becoming stewards of the health care system of Ontario.

"We want to have the right people in the right roles at the right time to achieve the ministry's objective and to build an organizational framework in which employees can thrive, do interesting and meaningful work and be employed in a great environment where they know that their contribution is making a real difference in this province," Cormier said, adding, "It is our goal to tell people as early as possible in the process of any decisions that have been made so they can become involved, so they can contribute." ■