



## WWLHINformation

BULLETIN TWO  
July 2008

### OUR FIRST YEAR IN REVIEW | April 1, 2007-March 31, 2008



Sandra Hanmer, CEO  
Kathy Durst, Chair

It has been an exciting year of 'firsts' for the Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network (WWLHIN). We have just ended our first year of having the responsibility for planning, coordinating, integrating and funding our local health services.

For the WWLHIN these health services are provided by our eight hospitals, 35 long-term care homes, 30 community support services programs, the Waterloo Wellington Community Care Access Centre, four community health centres and 21 mental health and addictions services and programs. Our budget in 2007-08 was just under \$800 million.

Our health care system is complex and inter-connected; decisions made in one area may have an affect on another area. Therefore, for the first time ever, a system-wide approach was taken to operational planning for our local health care services. We brought health service providers together to share information about what they do, how they do it, what it costs, what their challenges are and to look at gaps, opportunities and partnerships. With this input we were able to make well-informed decisions and plan for the entire WWLHIN area.

Our plans and investments always reflect the priorities of our community. As articulated in the Integrated Health Service Plan\* these priorities are to improve access to services and reduce wait times, promote healthy lifestyles and prevent illness, have a system that is effective and invests our dollars efficiently and plan a system that meets our needs now and in the future.

### HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR FIRST YEAR

Focusing on our seniors, the **Aging At Home Strategy** is a \$37 million investment (over three years) aimed at providing seniors with a suite of services to enable them to live as independently as possible, for as long as possible, in a safe home of their choice. The WWLHIN invited health service providers, organizations and groups to submit ideas to support the strategy and 88 responses were received and reviewed! Our board approved 19 initiatives representing a first investment of \$20 million. The remaining dollars will be allocated in years two and three.

We made investments totalling \$1,375,000 through the **Urgent Priorities Fund**. The projects that we supported include:

- An advanced wound prevention and management program that will help improve care to patients and prevent readmission to hospitals.

More information about our activities in 2007-08 are available in the **Year In Review, 2007-2008 Annual Report for the WWLHIN** that will be available early in September on the website [www.wwlhin.on.ca](http://www.wwlhin.on.ca) or by contacting the office for a print copy.

- The creation of a residential addiction treatment program for youth ages 13-18 through Ray of Hope, a local organization that provides a publicly-funded treatment option close to home.
- Of benefit to both the patient and health care professionals, e-Health initiatives are being advanced that will support the development, integration and sharing of electronic health records and other information.

**Impressive Improvements in Wait Times!** One of our community's priorities is improving access to services and reducing wait times. Throughout the province, there are specific measurements used to determine if wait times are improving. These include wait times for cancer surgery, cardiac by-pass procedures, cataract surgery, hip and knee replacements, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and computed tomography (CT) scans. We saw improvements in all areas!

Wait times for cancer surgeries and cardiac bypass surgery in the WWLHIN represent some of the best results in these areas in the province. The lengths of time people are waiting for cataract surgeries, hip or knee replacements has been reduced by 50% or more compared to last year.

There was also a 50% reduction in wait times for MRI and a 20% reduction for CT scans. While these are significant achievements, more plans are being made to bring these wait times down to achieve the provincial benchmark.

**Integration Initiatives** — Both the WWLHIN and its health service providers have an obligation to identify integration opportunities to increase efficiencies and reduce costs. Three of the integration activities supported by the WWLHIN were the merger of four community support services agencies, the creation of a WWLHIN-wide vascular surgery program and our hospitals working together on a money-saving supply chain initiative.

KW Friendship Group, R.A.I.S.E. Home Support for the Elderly, Meals on Wheels Kitchener-Waterloo and Cambridge Community Support (Meals on Wheels) are planning to merge their services for seniors creating '**Community Support Connections; Meals on Wheels and More!**'. We expect the merger of these agencies to be completed early in fiscal 2008-09.

After much consultation, the WWLHIN recently made a decision to create a WWLHIN-wide **vascular surgery services program**. Experts in the field support developing vascular centres of excellence as providing better services and outcomes for patients. To that end, the decision was made to integrate vascular services with Guelph General Hospital taking the lead in providing all general elective vascular services. St. Mary's General Hospital will specialize in cardiovascular and thoracic services and Grand River Hospital will provide vascular access services for dialysis patients. All three hospitals will continue to provide emergency vascular services.

Area hospitals – Cambridge Memorial, Groves Memorial, Guelph General, North Wellington Health Care, St. Mary's and St. Joseph's Health Centre as well as hospitals in Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant came together to support the '**Focus on Healthcare Supply Chain Integration** (FOHSCI). By consolidating, aligning sourcing and logistics, financial resources may be freed-up and redirected to patient care activities.

## MOVING FORWARD

We look forward to more 'firsts' throughout 2008 and into 2009 as we continue with our unwavering commitment to ensuring our community has the very best in health care!

We will continue to ensure that your voice is heard as we 'refresh' the Integrated Health Service Plan. We will move forward with the Aging at Home Strategy, e-Health initiatives, reducing wait times and identifying integration opportunities. We will encourage new and innovative partnerships that may involve non-traditional partners in health care such as the business and academic communities, research institutes, faith and multicultural organizations and the retirement community. We will look at our primary care resources to establish the best links.

We will, together, transform our health care system so we 'Live and Live Well in Waterloo Wellington', now and in the future.

*\*The Integrated Health Service Plan is available on the website ([www.wwlhin.on.ca](http://www.wwlhin.on.ca)) or contact the office for a copy.*

## LIVE AND LIVE WELL IN WATERLOO WELLINGTON

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