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Executive
Director

Fall is now upon us and for those of us funded through the LHIN, we are reviewing our financial situation to be sure we end the budget year on March 31, 2009 within our budget allocation. We are faced with growing demand for services, diminishing human resources and a global financial crisis.

These are not easy times and consequently we must all work together towards one common purpose: *"To provide the residents of NSM LHIN with high quality, integrated services funded by the MOHLTC (LHIN) at the right time, in the right amount, at a responsible cost within a larger environment that we must collectively influence."*

I am convinced that if we are to meet the needs of the residents of the North Simcoe Muskoka LHIN that we must leverage each others capabilities and resources in strong partnerships that maximize our joint resources for the good of those we serve.

This issue features tools we can all benefit from—a web site, a telephone number and email options where you and everyone in the North Simcoe Muskoka LHIN can receive Information and Referral on thousands of organizations in our area. I hope you will find it useful.

We are pleased to be a partner with Community Connections and congratulate them on this significant achievement.

Together, we can achieve our common purpose.

Connecting People to Services

One of the primary service functions of Community Care Access Centres (CCAC) is to provide Information and Referral services to the community. Information & Referral services provide a connecting point for individuals to access services they need. Information & Referral has often been the forgotten mandate of the CCAC, with some people viewing it as a simple "add on" service provided when CCAC staff are serving its clients or are answering phone calls from individuals seeking information about CCAC services. The value of Information & Referral services is much more significant than this. The CCAC has a legislated responsibility for meeting the public's need for timely and accurate information about services and to provide assistance in navigating the system, connecting individuals to organizations who provide the services that they require.

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Visit the North Simcoe Muskoka Community Care Access Centre website at www.nsm.ccac-ont.ca

Connecting People to Services *(continued)*

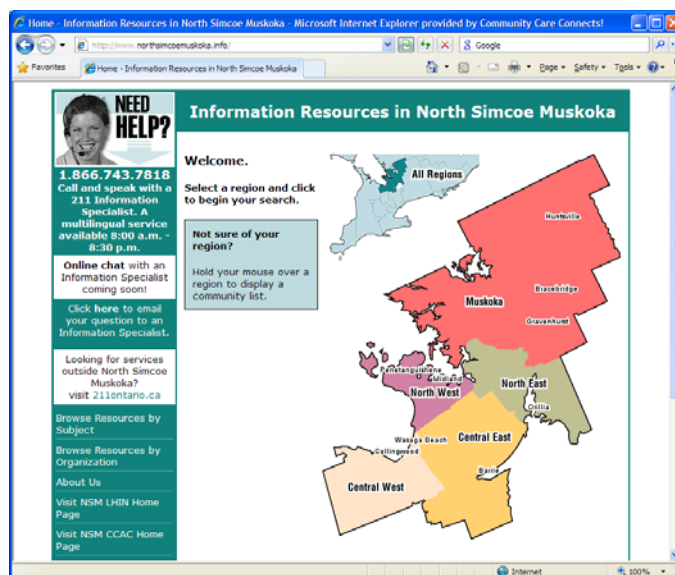
North Simcoe Muskoka CCAC and Community Connection have formed a unique partnership to create a single, seamless solution to public Information and Referral services in the North Simcoe Muskoka region. Community Connection has decades of experience in the area of community information and referral and community database management. They are an accredited 211 service provider with an established call centre staffed by Certified Information and Referral Specialists. Community Connection partners with Information Barrie, Information Orillia and Community Link North Simcoe to maintain a database repository containing thousands of up to date records about organizations providing services in the North Simcoe Muskoka catchment area. All database records are updated annually, at a minimum. The partnership between North Simcoe Muskoka CCAC and Community Connection builds upon existing system capacity, eliminating the duplication of activities that would be required if multiple Information & Referral services were offered to the community.

There are eight 211 service providers in Ontario. 211 is a three digit phone number to access free, confidential, multilingual information about community, social, health and related government services available to residents. The 211 service is currently available to residents of Simcoe County but will be expanded to the Muskoka region in November. Individuals who do not have access to the 211 phone number can access 211 services by dialing (866) 743-7818, which is a toll free phone number. The 211 service will be made available to all residents in Ontario by 2011.

Information & Referral services in North Simcoe Muskoka are now offered through several channels to ensure people receive the help they need. These channels include a 7 day a week multilingual telephone help line, online searchable directories and e-mail options. Individuals seeking information about health and human services provided in North Simcoe Muskoka are encouraged to access information on-line or by calling a 211 Information Specialist. This includes staff at partner agencies who are trying to assist their clients' access services.

211 Information Specialists have a good understanding of CCAC services. If it is identified that a caller requires CCAC services they will be transferred to a CCAC Client Care Coordinator to arrange for services. These protocols will ensure callers are directly connected to the appropriate personnel the first time they call.

A new web site has been launched called Information Resources in North Simcoe Muskoka which can be accessed at www.NorthSimcoeMuskoka.info (see image of home page on right). Individuals can do independent on-line searches or send an e-mail to a 211 Information Specialist. In the near future individuals will be able to chat on-line with a 211 Information Specialist. Searches can be done for the entire North Simcoe Muskoka region or by specific planning area. If a user identifies errors or missing information in the database, they can contact Community Connection directly from within the on-line solution so that the necessary updates to the record can be made.



Questions or Comments?

Please forward any comments, questions or mailing list updates to Jamie.Irving@nsm.ccac-ont.ca or call NSM CCAC Communications at 705.726.0039 Ext. 2210.