

WWLHINformation

Waterloo Wellington LHIN



Waterloo Wellington LHIN eNewsletter - June 27th, Edition

The WWLHINformation eNewsletter is a bi-weekly update to keep you informed of the latest news, events, and successes in health care across the WWLHIN as we continue working together to build an integrated and sustainable health system for residents in Waterloo Wellington.

As part of the eNewsletter, we are looking for your contributions. Are you looking for a new way to share information or invite the community to health care related events? Send your news and events with links to more information and we'll include it in an upcoming edition.

Please forward WWLHINformation to others who may be interested in local health care news and events. For new readers, to subscribe or unsubscribe, please send an email to connie.macdonald@lhins.on.ca.

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New Nurse-Performed Cancer Screening Launched at St. Mary's

Less-invasive procedure minimizes discomfort while maximizing patient outcomes

While there are many things you can do to improve your health, there are few things you can do today that can save your life. Cancer screening is one of them. When caught early, many cancers have a 90% survival rate.

Even so, out of the 160,000 local residents between the ages of 50 and 74 targeted for colon cancer screening, only 50% are being screened.

There are a number of different reasons for this. Some, despite public awareness campaigns, just don't know they should be screened. Others may be uncomfortable with the idea of a fecal occult blood test (FOBT), which is a simple take-home test kit, or a colonoscopy. Others are on a wait list for a colonoscopy.



“We have done a really great job of reducing the wait time for colonoscopies for those who have symptoms or who have had an abnormal FOBT. But we know we need to do more to help the general population who needs to be screened. The wait time can be up to a year for these patients,” said Dr. Sophie Wilson, Regional Primary Care Lead for the Waterloo Wellington Regional Cancer Program.

To reduce the wait time, St. Mary's General Hospital applied to be one of nine sites across the province to pilot a new nurse-performed colon cancer screening procedure called a flexible sigmoidoscopy. The procedure involves inserting a soft, flexible lighted tube, into the rectum and examining the lower third of the colon, where 60% of cancers occur. It requires no sedation and minimal preparation. People age 50 and over with no symptoms and average risk are eligible for the procedure, which is followed up with a colonoscopy if cancer or abnormalities are found.

Photo: Project Coordinator Nicole Menard and RN Jacqueline Edmondson demonstrate the procedure. [Click here](#) to read the full story.

Supportive Housing Provides Foundation for Better Health

New Addiction Supportive Housing program reduces health system usage and ED visits



For Mike*, holding down a job was extremely difficult. Struggling with an addiction to alcohol and related health issues prevented him from working, which resulted in him being frequently homeless. Unable to focus on surviving and recovering at the same time left him in a hopeless cycle of crisis treatment and relapse.

For a specific population struggling with serious addiction issues, going through this cycle is the only life they know. Unable to sustain employment, they find themselves living in negative environments, shelters or on the street.

They end up entering the addiction services system through a crisis situation, whether through the emergency department or the judicial system. They complete a resource-intensive treatment program and when they are done, they leave the treatment centre, often find themselves homeless again, and eventually repeat the cycle.

“Not only does this provide a poor quality of life for the individual but it is taxing on our health system. These individuals require greater support and stability to make the lasting changes needed to get better and stay better,” said Heather Kerr, Executive Director, Stonehenge Therapeutic Community. “That’s why our new addiction supportive housing program is so needed and so important.”

In 2010, Stonehenge Therapeutic Community opened a pilot transitional housing program that would serve as a bridge for those who complete treatment and need a place to live while they find work and get back on their feet, and focus on staying clean and sober.

With funding from the Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network, and through a partnership with Waterloo Regional Homes for Mental Health, House of Friendship, and the Canadian Mental Health Association Grand River Branch, local residents now have access to permanent and transitional Addiction Supportive Housing units.

Addiction Supportive Housing Workers Liz Boston and Rachel Davies at Stonehenge. [Click here](#) to read the full story.

Promoting Healthier, More Active Living in Waterloo Region

Ontario is helping people of all ages and abilities in Waterloo Region improve and maintain their most valuable asset – their health. Through the Healthy Communities Fund, the province helps local partners deliver programs for community members that promote physical activity, sport and recreation, healthier eating, injury prevention and mental health, as well as programs that address tobacco use and exposure, and alcohol and/or substance misuse.

In Waterloo Region, the province is helping 5 organizations deliver innovative local health promotion programs for 2011-12, such as:

- KidsAbility's "Lose the Training Wheels" program that aims to teach children and youth with disabilities how to safely ride a two-wheel bike
 - Kitchener Minor Hockey Association's strategic initiative to implement a concussion management program as well as provide educational sessions on healthy eating for athletes
 - Mosaic Counselling and Family Service's plan to create three leadership teams to plan and implement recreational programs, develop leadership skills in youth and support a safe environment for the residents of the Paulander community to live, work and play
 - Popcorn House Community Resource Centre's "Good to Go!" program that offers physical activities and healthy eating programs for low income children, youth and new Canadians
 - Active Cambridge will increase awareness, access and participation in physical activity and healthy eating by engaging local media providers in the creation of strategies to utilize positive, inspiring stories about local opportunities and successes in healthy living.
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Four Pillars: Recommendations for Achieving a High Performing Health System

The Ontario Hospital Association and the Ontario Association of Community Care Access Centres recently released a report - Four Pillars: Recommendations for Achieving a High Performing Health System. The report proposes dramatic health system reform based on four pillars: setting ambitious goals, planning properly, letting evidence drive care decisions, and connecting care.

[Click here](#) to read the report.

New Citizens' Panel Report on Ontario Health System Sustainability

On June 22nd, a new Citizens' Reference Panel report: *Public Priorities for Ontario's Health System* was released. The Citizens' Reference Panel consisted of 28 Ontario residents, one male and one female from each of the 14 Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs). The panelists were chosen through a Civic Lottery that reached 10,000 Ontario households. Members of the Panel met over three weekends in Toronto between April and June 2011.

The panelists spent their time learning about the province's health care system, before proposing recommendations to help ensure that high-quality and publicly funded care is available to future generations. The aim of this demonstration project was to show what an "informed, adult conversation" about our health system might look like and how citizens can play an important role in shaping provincial health policy.

[Click here](#) to read the report and the panel's recommendations.

FHT to Print - Spring Family Health Team (FHT) Newsletter.

[Click here](#) to read FHT to Print - A Newsletter for Family Health Teams. This edition features good news from the Guelph FHT and the Centre for Family Medicine.

Improving Mental Health Supports for Ontario Kids and Families

Over 50,000 Ontario kids and their families will now have quicker and easier access to the right mental health supports, when and where they need them. On Tuesday, the provincial government released a Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, which focuses on children and youth in the first three years. Supports for kids target three key areas: fast access to high-quality services, early identification and support, and helping vulnerable kids with unique needs.

Key Investments for children and youth include:

- Placing mental health workers and nurses with mental health expertise in schools – benefitting over 9,000 kids – and giving educators, social workers and other professionals tools and training to identify mental health issues early on.
- Providing more services such as short-term therapy and crisis intervention in community agencies to help 13,000 more kids and reduce wait lists.
- Expanding telepsychiatry (video counselling) services to rural, remote and underserved communities to provide more kids with consultations with child psychiatrists.
- Providing culturally appropriate services to 4,000 more Aboriginal kids by hiring new Aboriginal mental health workers.
- Keeping 2,300 youth out of the justice system by adding more mental health court workers who can refer them, instead, to community-based services, such as clinical counselling.
- Helping more than 16,000 youth transitioning from secondary to post-secondary school by adding more mental health workers on campuses in colleges and universities.

The government will also develop performance measures for publicly reporting wait times, client experiences and health outcomes.

Ontario a Leader in Reducing Wait Times

Ontario is once again a national leader in reducing wait times for five priority health services, according to a new report card issued by the Wait Time Alliance (WTA).

For the fourth consecutive year, the WTA gave Ontario straight A's for meeting performance targets in reducing wait times in five areas: hip replacements, knee replacements, cataract surgery, radiation oncology and cardiac services. Ontario was the only province to receive A's in all five areas.

The report also recognized Ontario as the leader in reporting on emergency department and paediatric wait times. Ontario also gets the top mark for its wait times reporting web site.

This is the sixth annual report card from the WTA, which is comprised of several national medical specialty societies, including the Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Cardiovascular Society and the Canadian Association of Radiologists, whose members are directly involved in providing care to patients.

St. Mary's Presents Prestigious Mission Legacy Awards

Seven local individuals honoured for 'exceptional' service to St. Mary's

On June 16th, St. Mary's General Hospital recognized seven local people who have contributed in "an exceptional manner" to the health care ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Hamilton, St. Mary's General Hospital, St. Joseph's Health System and St. Joseph's Resource Development System.

St. Mary's was founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Hamilton in 1923, and since that time, the hospital's staff, physicians and volunteers have proudly carried on the Sisters' Mission of providing excellent and innovative care with compassion, dignity and respect.

Mission Legacy Award recipients exemplify that Mission. The 2011 honorees are: Barbara Case, Sister Patricia Hagan (posthumous), Hartman Krug, Dr. Charles McCarville (posthumous), Sister St. Thomas Warren (posthumous), Esther Strub (posthumous) and Vivian Zochowski.

Protecting Ontarians' Access to Public Health Care

The Ontario government is taking action to ensure Ontarians aren't being charged extra fees to access health care services that are covered by the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP).

Ontario is stepping up efforts to investigate potential illegal fees that health care providers charge patients for services that are insured by OHIP. In some cases where multiple complaints have been received, Ontario will immediately expand proactive investigations or spot checks. For example, extra fees charged at medical clinics and fees associated with cataract surgery and colonoscopies will be investigated.

A new 1-800 number and email address is available to any Ontarian who believes he or she has been illegally charged for an insured health service. Anyone can make a complaint or ask questions by calling toll-free at 1-888-662-6613 or by emailing protectpublichealthcare@ontario.ca.

In addition, all health care providers will be sent reminder notices to ensure they fully understand their legal obligations to provide equal access to services to all Ontarians – regardless of ability to pay, who they are, or where they live. In instances where there are found to be consistent patterns of extra-billing for insured services the government will look for opportunities to prosecute to the fullest extent of the law.

Spousal Co-payment Financial Policy Change

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care recently announced changes to O.Reg. 79/10 under the *Long-Term Care Homes Act*, 2007, which removes the financial barriers for spouses in Long-Term Care Homes (LTC) who wish to live together in a two-bed room. This is a result of the Minister of Health's commitment to strengthen the LTC spousal reunification policy.

This regulatory change prevents LTC licensees from charging up to the \$8.00 per resident, per day spousal supplement to spouses residing together in a two-bed room.

