

Reach

Connecting you with care

Winter 2011

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Building Community Connections

Message from Kevin Mercer, CEO



Looking ahead, 2012 marks the 40th anniversary of government funded universally accessible home care in Ontario. It's a milestone worth celebrating!

It's also a perfect time to look ahead and think about the next 40 years. As our system continues to evolve, CCAC's will play an increasingly important role helping knit together people's journey through the health care system.

Throughout this issue of REACH, you will find examples of how we are directly connecting people with services and care. Over the past year and looking ahead, our role as "care connector" and "system navigator" will continue

to grow and evolve and we look forward to working with our community partners to bring this to life.

Our CCAC team wishes you a prosperous and healthy year of wonderment •

Ten years, or a week. Health Care Connect makes a difference.

Janina searched for a physician on her own for ten years. "I looked through the yellow pages, called various social agencies, and had friends and family asking their physicians if they were accepting new patients."

Without a family physician, she was forced to use the Emergency Department and Urgent Care when she needed something taken care of. It wasn't easy, but it was her only option.

Sadly, her situation is not unique. Many people who have moved from one community to another struggle to replace their doctor. Others are new to Canada and find it a challenge to

engage in an unfamiliar system. Still others are left without care when a physician changes their practice.

It's a problem everywhere, but has been particularly difficult in the Kitchener-Waterloo area. The population in this area is rapidly growing and, overall, the population is aging. This puts ever more pressure on the health care system. The greatest challenge at this

time is the lack of physicians who have the capacity to accept new patients. "Our area has a number of doctors who have retired recently or will be retiring in the near future," says Wanda Manning, Waterloo Wellington CCAC Care Connector.

While a visit to the hospital emergency department may meet an immediate need, they are not the answer to the problem.

A large number of patients that fill a hospital's waiting room should not even be there at all. Which means the patient isn't getting the care they really need and the hospital is using valuable time and resources caring for individuals who don't really need them. The solution is to help people find a family doctor.

The Health Care Connect program is intended to meet that goal. HCC is a service funded by the Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network and provided by the WWCCAC that helps bring together patients and family health care providers, such as doctors or nurse practitioners. The CCAC plays a central role in this program by providing a Care Connector who works

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Commitment to community is more than a job



The staff at the WWCCAC are committed to providing care for the people in the community. This year, they have shown that there is more than one way to care by participating in the annual United Way campaign.

59% Increase!
The WWCCAC staff raised just over **\$18,000** for the UW, a **59% increase** from last year!

When Isabella Barretto, a volunteer with the Guelph United Way, was asked to be a guest speaker at the WWCCAC Guelph office's United Way campaign launch breakfast, she didn't realize she would be speaking to a group of professionals that had touched her life in a heartfelt way.

The day of the launch, November 1st, was also the 3-year anniversary of her husband Frank's death following a battle with cancer.

Isabella remembers the community care and support they received during that difficult time. "Sandra was our Angel of Mercy. She journeyed with us

every step of the way".

Sandra is a Palliative Clinical Care Resource Nurse who works with those who are dealing with life threatening illnesses and helps to connect people to all parts of the health care system and ensure they receive care that is tailored to their specific needs. WWCCAC staff had the benefit of hearing first-hand the impact of the work they do every day. When they heard Isabella's story, they spontaneously decided to dedicate the launch in honour of Frank.

Isabella is an employee of the Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs and was loaned to the United Way for a 3-month period to assist in the Campaign. The United Way work helps her give

back to the community in a meaningful way.

The staff at the WWCCAC participated in a number of events held at all three offices and included staff stationed at hospitals and facilities throughout the service area. "The events were a fun way of promoting the United Way and building awareness. They also provided an opportunity for staff to build relationships with their colleagues in a relaxing setting," said Barbara Headly, the campaign chair. "I'm very proud of everyone for taking this effort to heart and the success we had. This is just one more example of the way we all show we care for our community •



PJ and Campfire Day dedicated to Rainbow Day Camp, a United Way agency

Benefiting from the connections between patients and physicians

One of the most important functions of the WWCCAC is helping connect people to health care options in their community and to help them navigate through the health care system.

Hearing from our local physicians on ways to improve the level of care provided to patients and clients is critical as we continue to improve the health care experience for those we serve. Earlier this year, the WWCCAC held a number of engagement discussions with local physicians to solicit feedback and work

together to develop new, creative models for care delivery, improve integration and find more efficient ways to provide service.

According to WWCCAC CEO, Kevin Mercer, the involvement of physicians is an important component in the successful implementation of provincially mandated programs.

"The desire to keep or return people home from hospital as the first choice is one of our key strategies. Partnering with our local physicians to achieve this goal is essential. We need to hear from physicians where the pressure points are in the community and work together to alleviate them to keep people home

when possible."

The fall physician engagement sessions were jointly led by the WWCCAC, the Ontario Medical Association and the Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network. Bruce Lauckner, WWLHIN CEO noted that "ongoing input and feedback is required to transform our system to one that is patient focused and uses all of our resources as wisely as possible."

According to Dr. Gagan Sarkaria, Executive Member of the Kitchener-Waterloo Academy of Medicine, "As physicians, it's important that we participate in these types of events to ensure the interests of patients are represented." •

with patients looking for a family doctor and with doctors who are looking to accept new patients.

Patients who register with the program also benefit by having access to the support that the CCAC provides to connect with a wide range of community-based health services that may help them manage their health needs until they find a physician. This can mean fewer unnecessary visits to emergency rooms and better health overall.

"It is clear from the statis-

tics that this program, and the information and referral support we supply to those waiting for a connection, have become invaluable to the many clients we serve. The Care Connectors are a friendly voice in a complex health care system," says Helen Ezekiel, Client Services Manager of the WWCCAC HCC Program.

Janina couldn't agree more. Once she registered with the program, she was connected to a doctor within a week. And she couldn't be happier •

The Waterloo Wellington CCAC's Health Care Connect program has connected over 3,000 patients with a family physician or nurse practitioner since it was introduced in 2009.

How "mapping" helps tell the story of the client and family journey

Value Stream Mapping, or VSM, is just one of the tools CCAC staff are using to better understand the client and family journey through our health care system.

VSM is a pictorial representation of all the activities that are performed in a process. It identifies opportunities to eliminate waste in the process. Waste is any unnecessary work that does not add value for the client. The focus is to identify opportunities to improve the process.

VSM activities have involved hospital staff, physicians, clients, health care provider organizations, community support services and WWCCAC staff to create a visual picture of the client's and family journey as they move through our health care system. The team identifies waste, barriers, gaps and opportunities for improvement which will help in the design of the new "future state" process

that will better serve our clients and families.

The mapping sessions have focused on key strategic areas such as hospice palliative care, hospital discharge, care in the community, and wound care.

Lydia Chudleigh, Vice President Quality and Performance Management at St. Mary's Hospital noted that: "This session was valuable to the multidisciplinary team. Team members had the opportunity to learn about the process upstream and downstream from the points in the process that they touch. We can see there are plenty of opportunities for improvement"

Quality Improvement Specialist with the Excelerated Response team, Tony Stevenson, has

Finding valuable services in our community – 310-CCAC improved

The 310-CCAC info line provides on-line support for clients, community members, WWCCAC staff and physicians who need to access community-based services. This service is one way that CCAC's across the province are helping to connect people to the care in the community.

It provides a comprehensive, interactive, up to date inventory of services available in the community. Recently announced plans to introduce improvements will help those accessing the service to find the information they need to help clients connect to available community services.

310-CCAC

been very busy facilitating over 12 VSM sessions. Tony has been impressed with how collaborative and engaging participants have been. "It was great to see all of the participants so engaged, everyone's input and honest feedback was excellent. The dialogue and feedback from participants provided great information to assist with the identification of opportunities for improvement."

Lorna Morris, Excelerated Response Project Manager, has identified some key similarities in the 9 hospital site VSMs. "For example, one type of waste that has been described is the number of care team members asking the client the same questions

for their respective assessments," says Morris. "This is a process that helps identify ways that not only makes the discharge process work better, but also improves the quality of the experience for the patient."

"Everyone involved has been very supportive and we have had lots of great participation from staff and system partners to work with us to map our care processes" says Leah Gibson, Director of the Excelerated Response Team. "This collective and valuable input will help us with 'accelerating' through 'excellence' a number of key CCAC strategies." •



Participants at the St. Mary's General Hospital Mapping Session

WWCCAC Awarded Quality Healthcare Workplace Gold Award

The Waterloo Wellington Community Care Access Centre (WWCCAC) was awarded a Gold Level Quality Healthcare Workplace Award at this year's annual HealthAchieve Conference in Toronto.

The awards program is a partnership of the Ontario Hospital Association, the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care and Health Force Ontario. The Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum level awards recognize organizational efforts to improve healthcare workplaces in ways that contribute to providers' quality of work life and the quality of the care and services they deliver.

"Our staff have a strong commitment to our shared vision to provide Outstanding Care, Every Person, Every Day to our clients. But we believe that in order for our staff to provide that kind of care to clients they have to feel

valued and involved in their workplace," said Kelly Smith, Senior Director of Human Resources and Organizational Development. "We've invested in leadership development so that our current and future leaders support these values, wellness programs so that our staff can be healthier at work and at home, and communications and change management education so that we can learn a better way of implementing the changes that are part of every workday in an innovative health care organization."

The WWCCAC's recent Employee Engagement Survey results for employee engagement and client

focus were the highest among the province's participating CCACs. "We're proud of the dedication that all of our staff show to our clients, the people in the community who need care and support," said Patty DiRuzza, a front-line Case Manager who, along with the CEO, co-chairs the WWCCAC's Employee Engagement Committee. "We work hard to provide excellent communication channels between front-line staff and the leadership team, and do our best to provide everyone with the tools they need to promote and enhance organizational creativity and innovation. These are important elements in providing outstanding care for our clients."

HealthAchieve is one of the largest and most prestigious health care gatherings in North America, attracting over 9,000 health care and business leaders from around the world who gather together to learn, build relationships, and share best practices •



L TO R: Kevin Mercer, CEO; Marshall Draper, Board Chair; Richard Emrich, Treasurer; and John Enns, Board Member receive the Gold Level Award



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Reach: What's in a name?

- to reach a destination, either real or abstract
- to reach a goal
- the act of physically reaching out
- moving forward or upward
- to be in or establish communication with

Now it's your turn to reach out!

Email us your questions, comments and story ideas to newsletter@ww.ccac-ont.ca