

NE LHIN Invests in ‘Navigators’ to Guide Northern Patients to Community-Based Care

Thursday, February 16, 2012 -- In the North East, alternate level of care (ALC) patients, mainly the frail elderly, will now be more quickly linked to services they need in community thanks to a new “Navigator.”

A Community Support System Navigator is a new health care position created by the North East LHIN to help connect the work of our 70 community support service providers to seniors, who need help ranging from Meals on Wheels to Assisted Living.

“We’ve created more capacity in community by investing in many new programs. The Navigator will help make sure that frail elderly patients in hospital are linked with existing services so that they can be supported after discharge,” explained Louise Paquette, CEO of the North East LHIN. “We know that seniors do better recuperating at home and that’s where they want to be. We also know that the longer they stay in hospital the more danger they are put in for risk of infection, social isolation and loss of mobility.”

Funded by the NE LHIN, the first four Navigators –located in Sudbury, Timmins, North Bay and Sault Ste Marie– will work directly with the local Red Cross. However, their offices will be based out of the four urban hospitals so that they’re onsite to guide patients to the care they need in community. Navigators will work as part of the Integrated Discharge Team to help patients coordinate their care “beyond the hospital walls.”

The patient-focused role of the Navigators is part of the shift to deliver more services in the community and outside of institutions. More than 30% of us in the North will be in our senior years in another two decades, and we need to adopt better ways to care for our aging population.

Northerners told the NE LHIN in 25 community engagements last year that more coordination of services within the various care sectors is needed to help people better access care. This same coordination will also ease pressures on hospitals while meeting the needs of people who want to be at home, convalesced at home, and stay at home for as long as possible.



Three of the newly appointed Community Support Service System Navigators participate in a mapping exercise in Sudbury to take stock of all the services offered by the North East LHIN's 70 community support service providers. These System Navigators, reporting to the Red Cross, will be based out of the four urban hospitals in the North East. Newly created by the North East LHIN, the Navigators will help alternate level of care patients better navigate the health care system and ease congestion in the hospital by finding the supports these frail elderly patients need so they can be more quickly discharged into community.

Left to right: Debbie Amarosa (left) will be based at the Sault Area Hospital, Nancy Lacasse, work of the Health Sciences North, and Sandra Gagnon, out of the Timmins District Hospital. A fourth Navigator will work out of the North Bay Regional Health Care Centre.

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