



News Release – for immediate release

Community members prioritize wait times, improved communication between providers

Citizen input influences project's planning phase; Community engagement a key component of continued collaboration between hospitals

Thursday, July 9, 2015 - Feedback from the community at a series of open houses and through a broad region-wide survey is informing a large, multi-year project underway at hospitals across southeastern Ontario.

Each of the seven hospital organizations located within the South East Local Health Integration Network, as well as the South East Community Care Access Centre and the South East LHIN, launched a project called "Health Care Tomorrow – Hospital Services" last year, to improve access to high quality care through the development of a sustainable system of integrated care.

This week, a report summarizing the first phase of the project was released to the public on the www.healthcaretomorrow.ca website. This initial report summarizes options for potential changes to the regional system of hospitals that would improve access to patient care and make better use of resources across the South East LHIN.

The hospitals are focusing attention on three key areas: Clinical Services, Diagnostics and Therapeutics and Business Functions. In each of these areas, while several options have been identified, each requires more detailed planning and analysis before any changes to the current system will be possible.

"Many patients in our region say they struggle to access the services they need in a coordinated way, particularly as they move between different health care providers or levels of care," said Beverley McFarlane, President & CEO, Perth Smiths Falls District Hospital. "Our population is aging and many residents in southeastern Ontario need health care, but wait times can be long and services hard to navigate. This, combined with major changes to how hospitals are funded, increasing budget challenges, and evolving care models, have prompted us to come together to develop a cost-effective hospital system that will work well for patients."

"Health Care Tomorrow is a long-term project that has us coming together and working collaboratively with a shared goal for our future: a strong, sustainable health system. This includes ready access to even the most specialized health services and support for the important academic mission of several of our local hospitals. We are working with communities and residents across southeastern Ontario to make sure our planning is responsive to the region's needs," said Dr. David Pichora, CEO, Hotel Dieu Hospital.

Included in the report released this week is a summary of the feedback received at several open house sessions hosted by the hospitals, South East CCAC and the South East LHIN in May-June. Over 400 people participated in the sessions, and more than 1700 people responded to an online survey. Community members said improving wait times in emergency departments and for diagnostics, ensuring high quality care, and improving communication between various health providers are key priorities.



“The feedback and level of engagement in our region is really encouraging, and is evidence of just how important health care is to all people – regardless of geography. The information gathered so far will be important to the ongoing health services planning, and we will continue to ask for community input into the Health Care Tomorrow – Hospital Services project as it moves forward,” said Tony Weeks, President & CEO, Brockville General Hospital.

There will be other opportunities for community members to provide their input as part of the next phase of Health Care Tomorrow – Hospital Services project, which begins this fall and will run through the next year.

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Background: Brockville General Hospital, Hotel Dieu Hospital, Kingston General Hospital, Lennox & Addington County General Hospital, Perth and Smiths Falls District Hospital, Providence Care and Quinte Health Care, in partnership with the South East Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) and the South East LHIN, are working together with a goal to improve access to high quality care through the development of a sustainable system of integrated care. This planning project is called “Health Care Tomorrow – Hospital Services”. More information about Health Care Tomorrow – Hospital Services can be found at www.healthcaretomorrow.ca under “Hospital Services Project.”

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