

Region's hospital boards vote to take steps to work more closely together in laboratory, decision support and information services

'Health Care Tomorrow' collaboration between hospitals, LHIN and CCAC moves to implementation planning in three key areas

The seven hospital organizations across southeastern Ontario are moving forward to work more closely together, particularly with respect to sharing services that relate to laboratory services, decision support (a service that includes data analysis) and information technology.

Through the month of June, the Boards of Directors of each of the hospitals along with the South East Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and the South East Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) voted to give their support to moving forward with efforts to create a more seamless hospital system.

The work, referred to as 'Health Care Tomorrow: Hospital Services' will make hospital care easier to navigate and access for patients, and to make the best use of financial resources across the region.

"The hospitals in the South East LHIN recognize that we can't keep working as we are now – with seven separate organizations operating independently, particularly when our patients move between sites," says Michele Bellows, co-chair of the regional Health Care Tomorrow Project Secretariat.

"We are all committed to redesigning our hospital system in the South East to be more connected and to share services that are common across each organization, and where we can leverage expertise across the region. We are working closely together to plan coordinated patient care delivery, making it easier for patients to move through the system and be supported on their care journey," says Bellows, who is also Vice-President of Patient Care Services and Chief Nurse Executive at Perth & Smiths Falls District Hospital.

Tony Weeks, who co-chairs the Project Secretariat with Bellows and is President & CEO of Brockville General Hospital says the three areas moving forward are regarded as "enablers" for more future collaborations and shared services between the hospitals. Hospital leaders acknowledge that for direct care services to be more closely aligned, hospitals need to share common technology and support services first.

Each of the Boards considered and voted on three proposals in the past month, which are available on the [Health Care Tomorrow website](#). All seven hospital Boards, LHIN Board and CCAC Board supported moving forward to detailed implementation planning.

"This means that in the coming year we will be building the structures we need to share services across the region. Moving forward, we'll continue to engage with our communities and experts, and at each step we are coming back to our Boards to make sure we have their support," says Weeks.

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“Over the past two years we have collaborated together and involved patients, families, staff, managers and physicians in the planning processes. This work represents real collaboration and a collective effort to strengthen our region’s hospitals,” Weeks added.

A Regional Patient Advisory Council, launched by the South East LHIN in 2015, has provided regular oversight and input into the Hospital Services project.

“This process marks the first time the hospitals, the CCAC and the LHIN have brought patients together from across the region, to look at our whole hospital system”, says Josef Amann, Co-chair of the Regional Patient Advisory Council. “The needs of patients and our concerns are being addressed by the hospitals across the South East LHIN, and are integral to the planning discussions today and going forward.”

With the approval of the Boards in June, Weeks says planning teams for Laboratory, Decision Support and Information Services will turn their attention to how to further develop their proposals. At the same time, additional proposals in Human Resources, Financial Services and Facilities/Support Services are expected to be brought to the Boards for approval as early as this fall.

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Background

What is Health Care Tomorrow – Hospital Services?

The Hospital Services project is a dynamic collaboration between Brockville General Hospital, Hotel Dieu Hospital, Kingston General Hospital, Lennox & Addington County General Hospital, Perth and Smiths Falls District Hospital, Providence Care, Quinte Health Care, Shared Services Southeastern Ontario (3SO), the South East Community Care Access Centre (CCAC), Queen’s University Faculty of Health Sciences and the South East Local Health Integration Network (LHIN).

We are working together to make it easier for patients to get care, when they need it, here in our region, while responding to the financial challenges facing our health care system.

Why now?

Quite simply, our current system of hospital care was not designed to meet the needs of today’s patients and families. They are telling us that we can do a better job of delivering access to high quality care and making their hospital experience seamless, integrated and excellent.

Our [Phase 1 Recommendations Report \(2015\)](#) identifies exciting opportunities to do just that. It’s about how we can start to re-imagine a better hospital care system for patients by finding savings, eliminating inefficiencies and focusing scarce health care dollars where they’re needed most – on the front lines of care.

Phase 2 Progress:

In June 2016, Boards considered three proposals, and agreed to move forward to detailed implementation planning. The following proposals are available at www.healthcaretomorrow.ca under “Hospital Services”:

- Laboratory Services
- Decision Support Services

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- Information Services

Boards also received updates from the following teams with business proposals still under development

- Human Resources Services
- Financial Services
- Facilities Services
- Diagnostic Imaging Services
- Pharmacy Services

Boards received an update on clinical services planning that has been initiated to consider models with plans for broad engagement ahead. Clinical teams have developed recommendations for Complex Frail Vulnerable-COPD and Hip Fracture Patient Population.

More information:

www.healthcaretomorrow.ca

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