

# Non-urgent patient transfer project deemed a success

By *expositor* on December 11, 2013

ESPANOLA—The Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board (DSB) non-urgent patient transfer service pilot project has been deemed a success in its first six months of operation.

“A report on the six-month pilot project, which is still going and was presented at our board meeting last week, has been a huge success,” stated DSB CAO Fern Dominelli. “The hospitals and patients are very happy with the project and we are still waiting for word from the Northeast LHIN (Local Health Integration Network) on an extension of funding to March (2014), which we have applied for.”

“Since March of this year, patients requiring a medical transfer from the Espanola or Manitoulin hospitals to Health Sciences North in Sudbury have been able to take advantage of an alternative transportation means,” a DSB release reports. “Prior to March the most common way to get to your appointment in Sudbury was to take an ambulance.”

“Under a pilot project funded by the North East LHIN, three organizations came together to provide a service with the best interests of the patient in mind. Espanola Regional Hospital and Health Centre, Manitoulin Health Centre and the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB developed a model of alternative transportation for patients requiring movement from one medical facility to another,” the release notes.

“It is great to see a project established for the good of the patient, but to do so in a cost effective and efficient manner is what makes this project an overwhelming success,” said DSB board chair Les Gamble. “Results of the patient and hospital staff surveys confirm the project’s success.”

“We had developed a concept on paper and had thought about an alternative model of non-urgent patient transportation for many years, understanding that the primary goal of our ambulance service is to provide for medical emergencies,” said chief of EMS Michael Maclsaac. “During the six-month project the patient transportation service has moved 472 patients over the course of 1,218 hours. That is 1,218 hours of ambulance service brought back into the communities.”

Mr. Dominelli added, “this is an example of what can happen when organizations align themselves where traditionally they haven’t. The partnership that we have established with the hospitals has been a great success for everyone involved. Patients are getting to appointments on time, hospitals receive certainty surrounding transportation to alternate facilities, and EMS is being positioned in a better way to meet the emergency medical needs of the communities. We are extremely happy with the relationship we have built through this project.”