

MEDIA RELEASE

NE LHIN Drives Work on Non-Urgent Patient Transportation

Pilot projects underway in Manitoulin-Sudbury District, Greater Sudbury, and Timiskaming District

May 14, 2013 – Big spaces mean added challenges when it comes to transferring non-urgent patients between facilities and communities in the vast North East LHIN region.

Right now, almost all non-urgent inter-facility transfers in the region are provided through Emergency Medical Services (EMS). However, since the transport of non-urgent patients is usually between hospitals, or between hospitals and nursing homes, it generally doesn't need to tie up EMS urgent care. A new transportation model is being explored.

The NE LHIN has funded three transportation pilot projects that are now in progress. Each pilot involves a different model of patient transportation service. The idea is that the pilots will help to inform a larger review of non-urgent transportation to be done later this year. The review is to lead to a new business model for non-urgent patient transfer that is timely, safe and cost-effective.

“Our community engagement feedback has told us clearly that action is needed on transporting non-urgent patients so that safe, efficient and timely transfers between facilities take place,” said Louise Paquette, CEO, NE LHIN. “This is especially important for members of our frail elderly population who rely more often on this service than the general population.”

The pilots involve:

- Health Sciences North and City of Greater Sudbury Emergency Services Department
- Espanola Regional Hospital and Health Centre & Manitoulin Health Centre & Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board
- Kirkland and District Hospital, Temiskaming Hospital, Englehart and District Hospital, and the District of Timiskaming Social Services Administration Board.

Michael Maclsaac, Chief of EMS, Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board, said in the first four weeks of his area's pilot, 11,000 kilometres were covered in doing 88 patient transfers.

Maclsaac said he is looking forward to the results of the three pilot projects.

“I think this ‘made-in-the North’ solution is going to be a hybrid of the three models.”

At Manitoulin Health Centre, Paula Fields, Nurse Manager, has positive comments on that area's pilot related to both patients and providers.

“We believe it's been a success to date,” said Fields.

Her list of benefits includes the flexibility to schedule travel for non-urgent patients to get to appointments in Sudbury at the hospital, as opposed to the more limited daytime hours-only schedule

of the EMS transfer vehicle; and the possibility of determining the right level of care provider to accompany a patient on their transfer, rather than taking nurses away from their hospital coverage as was previously done in each case.

Once the pilots and the review are completed, a new model for non-urgent transportation services will be recommended for implementation across Northeastern Ontario.

“We are bringing the best people around the table – EMS, District Social Service Administration Boards, NE LHIN, hospitals, medical representation, the community, and Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care – to ensure comprehensive input into a new model of non-urgent transportation,” said Philip Kilbertus, Senior Officer with the NE LHIN.

“I look forward to the results of these pilots and study,” said MPP Rick Bartolucci. “Having access to non-urgent patient transportation services will provide safe transport of patients and ensure their medical stability while meeting requirements for continuity of care throughout the transport.”

BACKGROUND

- Nearly all non-urgent inter-facility transfers in the North East region are provided through EMS
- The review is expected to be completed by fall 2013.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Philip Kilbertus from the NE LHIN, left, moderates a panel discussion on Non-Emergent Patient Transfers and Ambulance Services with (l to r) Michael MacIsaac, Chief of EMS, Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board; Joseph Nicholls, Deputy Chief Emergency Services, City of Greater Sudbury; and Mike Trodd, Chief of EMS, District of Timiskaming Social Services Administration Board. Each area is piloting a NE LHIN-funded demonstration project on non-urgent patient transfers, providing information for a new model to provide this service.