

December 20, 2013

Letter to the Editor:

Re: Improving Access to Care in Windsor

With all of the changes taking place across our health care sector, it's almost impossible to have a conversation and not hear the words "better patient care", or "improved patient experience." In my opinion, this is a sign of progress and shows that people continue to be the focus of our health care system.

As a health care leader it is my job to continually step up to the plate alongside our partners to find new and better ways of delivering on the promises of the "right care, in the right place and at the right time" a key pillar of the province's Action Plan for Health Care.

One of the innovative transformations taking place in our system relates to Health System Funding Reform. This solution looks to enable more consistency related to health care funding while at the same time promoting the use of evidence based best-practices to hospitals across Ontario. But Health System Funding Reform is more than a financial change; it's a cultural change that seeks to address the question: are patients getting the best care possible and are we getting the best value for our tax dollars?

Reforms are also enabling us to ask another important question: is care best offered in a hospital or has it evolved to a point where it is now appropriate that care can be safely and viably transitioned into the community? By addressing this question, we have the potential to free up capacity in our hospitals to take on more complex and acute care procedures, while at the same time ensuring that some services can be safely made available in the most accessible location – the community.

It's important to know that the shift to the community is not just talk, this is happening and the province is backing up their commitment this year with a 6 per cent increase in community care funding. As a LHIN, we are seeing over \$14 million invested into a wide range of community programs that will ensure more people have access to the services they need to stay healthy and active. As a LHIN we remain committed to working on a Community Capacity Plan that will examine what community-based services exist, where gaps in service may be present, and what investments are required to close such gaps.

I am also excited to say that we are witnessing a step change in how our Windsor hospitals work together to contribute to an improved patient experience and better patient outcomes, and I for one would like to congratulate our front line staff, leadership and all the stakeholders involved in making this happen. The partnership between the two Windsor hospitals is one example that, when taken a step further, has the potential to lead to the creation of a new single-site acute care centre of excellence.



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I've said it many times, health care is and will always be a moving target - needs will change, technology will change, and options for care will change. It will take time to see the outcomes of these reforms, but it is important to remember is that this is not change for the sake of it, but rather a measured approach that will help us provide better care, experiences, and value to Ontario's health care system.

Sincerely,

Let's Make It Happen !



Gary Switzer
CEO, Erie St. Clair LHIN

GS/at



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