

December 18, 2013

Understanding the Potential of Health Links

Three solutions that are improving care for residents

People with complex or chronic health conditions are a priority for the ESC LHIN and local health service providers. To help ensure that people with complex health needs receive the care they need, over a dozen community health care providers and social service organizations have been meeting to develop the Chatham-Kent Health Link (CKHL).

While the CKHL has not yet officially been launched, there are examples of the kind of positive impacts that the formal partnership between health and community care providers will have on the community. The following three projects show how the Health Link model will improve residents' experiences in our local health system.

1) An Ontario First: Seniors Will Receive a Flu Shot Thanks to a New Partnership

Thanks to a newly formed partnership, the first flu shot given by EMS in Ontario happened here in Chatham-Kent this month. EMS is now able to provide flu shots to senior patients of the Chatham-Kent Community Health Centres (CK CHC) who have challenges with transportation. This innovative solution was developed when CK CHC and Medavie EMS Ontario Chatham-Kent worked together to find a way to break down barriers faced by seniors unable to access the flu vaccination. It is one step towards the Health Links goal of increasing access to primary care services.



2) Extended Hours of Operation at the Chatham-Kent Community Health Centres

With the Health Links goal of improving access to primary care in mind, the Chatham-Kent Community Health Centre has taken the bold step of extending their hours of operation. This will help people avoid needing to use the local emergency department by providing patients with more opportunity to visit their doctor or nurse practitioner. Additionally, there will be after-hours services at the Chatham and Walpole Island locations and same day services to CK CHC patients who are having an episodic experience.

3) Helping Those With Mental Health Needs

When it comes to helping people with mental health needs, timely access to care is vital for ensuring the best possible health outcome. In order to meet this demand, mental health care providers in Lambton and Kent counties are developing a new intervention for patient care that will speed up mental health assessments and offer a shared care model with Primary Health Care Practitioners (PHCP), aimed at detecting and treating mental illness early.



Erie St. Clair LHIN HEALTH CARE UPDATE

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The Canadian Mental Health Association Lambton Kent in partnership with Chatham-Kent Health Alliance and Bluewater Health, has successfully secured annual base ESC LHIN funding to support a Rapid Assessment Intervention and Treatment Program (RAIT).

The teams will bring critical mental health expertise to the patient bedside - or wherever it is needed. There is no intake process and referrals will be accepted based on the practitioners or patient's need for involvement. In line with Health Links goals, this will reduce delays and remove barriers in access to care.

"Doctors are asking what kind of diagnosis does the patient need to receive services. When they hear there is no exclusion criteria, they get excited. It's exactly what they need, if they assess a need for mental health support, we will become involved" says Paula Reaume-Zimmer, Integrated Director of Operations, Mental Health and Addictions Programs, Chatham-Kent, Chatham-Kent Health Alliance & Canadian Mental Health Association-Lambton-Kent.

For more information about Health Links, please contact the LHIN project lead, Ron Sheppard, at 1-866-231-5446 x3230 or ron.sheppard@lhins.on.ca.

LEARN MORE

For more information about the Erie St. Clair LHIN, please visit: www.eriestclairhin.on.ca

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ABOUT THE ESC LHIN

The Erie St. Clair LHIN is a Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care agency that plans and pays for health care services totalling a billion dollars a year in our region alone – everything from hospitals to Meals on Wheels.

The Erie St. Clair LHIN strives to make the health care system better by understanding and responding to local needs and by getting services to work together more efficiently. That's how we'll all get better health care, while saving money and making the system sustainable for our children and grandchildren.



Erie St. Clair Local Health
Integration Network
Réseau local d'intégration
des services de santé
d'Érié St. Clair