

May 3, 2012

New Mental Health Strategic Plan Looks to Create a Supportive Community

From patient stories of success to new programs and tools available, over the past few months you have read a number of mental health initiatives currently underway at the Erie St. Clair LHIN. While each of these steps have proven to be invaluable for improving the lives of those in our communities, it is the Erie St. Clair LHIN's role to look at the system as a whole to ensure that it is moving towards providing better care, experiences, and value.

"I am witnessing very positive changes with respect to mental health in some of our clients once they become engaged in physical and social activity and I think Community Health Centres should further explore the role of health programming in this area"

- Participant, Windsor Essex CHC Roundtable

As the managers of our local health care system, the Erie St. Clair LHIN has been working with experts in mental health to develop a Mental Health Strategic Plan. While the planning process has collected information from a variety of sources such as reports and raw data, the primary focus has been on engaging a broad range of stakeholders. This engagement has included a series of 19 sessions, held across the LHIN, speaking with patients and their families, mental health service agencies, hospitals, primary care providers, psychiatrists, and other stakeholders.

From these sessions a series of common themes emerged. These themes include:

- Recognize financial challenges
- Deliver barrier-free, timely, access to care
- Improve system navigation support
- Address peer support needs
- Further motivate the mental health workforce and provide them with effective tools and resources
- Access to information and resources to promote healthy living
- Better linkages and accountability between primary care, emergency services, community service, and mental health services

"My mental health worker is great. She understands my needs and respects me, and goes the extra mile to get me the help I need"

- Patient, Focus Group, Sarnia



Ontario

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

Patients also commented that having respectful interactions with medical professionals is an important part of the process.

The result of the consultations is that people clearly expressed the need and desire to be a part of a supportive community, one that is stigma free and gives them the opportunity to:

- Fully recover
- Find employment
- Be a part of recreational and social activities
- Learn about positive physical, emotional, and mental health

“The LHIN needs to make sure that agencies partner with existing agencies and also do not reinvent the wheel; agencies need to be enabled to work together”

- Family member, Family Focus Group, Sarnia

Moving forward, the draft Mental Health Strategic Plan is being delivered to the Erie St. Clair LHIN in late June, 2012. As the plan is developed, a number of projects - such as BSO, Telemedicine, and Enhanced Early Interventions - are being moved forward in tandem as they are supportive of the initial findings.

Through dedication, hard work, and leadership, the Mental Health Strategic Plan will provide a clear roadmap moving into the future.

“We need a system which does not penalize clients who have mental illness but embraces their differences and works with them to help them take their place in the community”

- Participant, Chatham-Kent CHC Roundtable

“We need to respect what is working well in each community and build on it”

- Psychiatrist, Chiefs of Psychiatry meeting

“Providing a comprehensive approach that includes the doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners, social workers and dietician in the treatment process, serves our patients and clients well”

- Participant, Family Health Team Roundtable

About the ESC LHIN

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



Ontario

Erie St. Clair Local Health
Integration Network

Réseau local d'intégration
des services de santé
d'Érie St. Clair