

Central East

LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORK

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
February 25, 2008

\$1 MILLION FOR PROJECTS ALLOW PATIENTS TO MOVE THROUGH THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Funding will benefit seniors, immigrants, rural residents

The Central East LHIN's Board of Directors has approved funding for five new "shared strategy" programs to improve health care for people with mental health and addictions needs, to support chronic disease management and prevention, and help address wait times, critical care and seniors' care.

"When we met with local residents and health care providers to develop our Integrated Health Service Plan we heard that we needed to take a co-ordinated approach to service, remove language and transportation barriers and especially help people navigate the health care system no matter what door they walked through," said Foster Loucks, Chair of the Central East LHIN Board of Directors. "The projects we have funded and those that are still in development will do just that."

"These types of investments by our LHINs ensure that local residents are getting the access to services they need closer to home," said George Smitherman, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. "This funding will help lower overall wait times and improve access to quality family health care for all."

With funding provided by the provincial government's LHINs Urgent Priorities Fund, designated health service providers have been identified as project sponsors, and teams will now be created to implement each of these projects:

- Home at Last (HAL) Program - Community Care Durham and The Scarborough Hospital, \$161,375
- Rural Transportation - Haliburton Highlands Health Services, \$30,000
- Timely Discharge Information System Pilot - The Scarborough Hospital and Peterborough Regional Health Centre, \$376,300
- Rehabilitation Task Group - Rouge Valley Health System, \$188,000
- Culture, Diversity and Equity - Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care, \$290,860.

"Navigating the system can be extremely challenging, especially for our senior population, because just when their health is in decline we are asking them to make many decisions, understand how and where to access services and make their way through the myriad of services," said Dr. John Peto, Chair of the Central East LHIN Seamless Care for Seniors Network and a geriatrician at the Rouge Valley Health System. "Accessing the right care, in the right place, at the right time is often challenging for those who are in need of services, their caregivers and providers alike."

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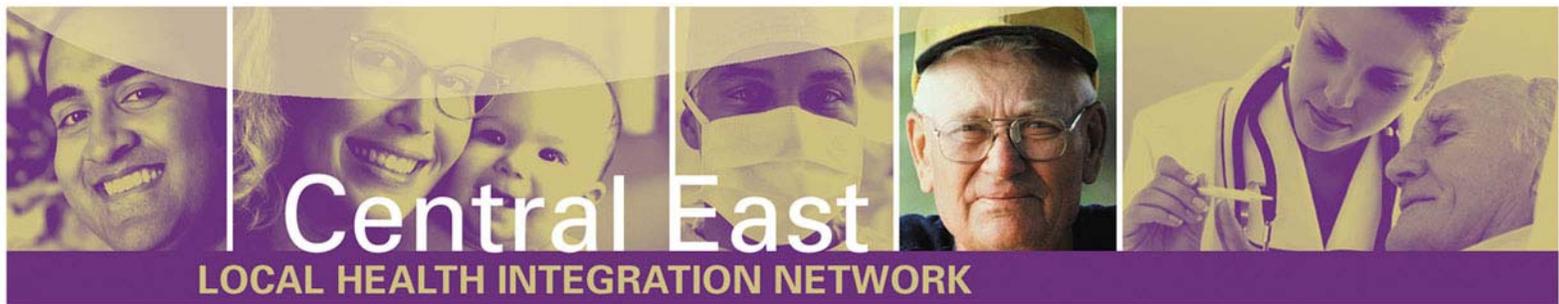
The Central East LHIN is one of 14 not-for-profit organizations, created by the provincial government to be responsible for planning, integrating and funding local health services - hospitals, long term care facilities, community care access centres, community health centres, community support services and mental health and addictions agencies.

For more information:
Katie Cronin-Wood
Communications Lead
1-866-804-5446 X218
katie.croninwood@lhins.on.ca

Karen O'Brien-Monaghan
Community Engagement Consultant
1-866-804-5446 X212
karen.obrienmonaghan@lhins.on.ca

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Backgrounder

Central East LHIN approved funding for five new programs through the provincial government's LHINs Urgent Priorities Fund. The programs are:

Home at Last (HAL) Program - will assist frail seniors and other vulnerable, isolated individuals in safe and supported transition from hospital to community. This service, geared to the specific needs of the individual and family, may include transportation home, having a Personal Support Worker assist with picking up medications at the pharmacy, getting the individual settled at home, preparation of light meals, light housekeeping, an initial home safety check as well as a follow-up telephone call within 1 week.

Recognized as a need by Central East hospitals, community care agencies and the Central East Community Care Access Centre, a Project Co-ordinator will work with a project team to design and deliver a plan for rolling out the HAL program at every hospital site in the Central East region. By learning from the existing HAL program in Scarborough (collaboratively run by The Scarborough Hospital, the Centenary site of the Rouge Valley Health System, St. Paul's L'Amoreux Centre, Carefirst Seniors and Community Services, VHA Home Health Care, Scarborough Support Services and West Hill Community Services) this co-ordinated approach will benefit the system and ensure the success of the program.

"The successful transition of patients from hospital to home is crucial to opening hospital beds for those who need them, and helps in reducing wait times, and keeping people in their homes," said Dr. John Wright, Acting CEO at The Scarborough Hospital. "Without sufficient support, frail elderly individuals often end up back in the hospital and then in a long-term care facility rather than back in their own homes."

"The HAL program will complement the services available through the CCAC and community support agencies and promote integration in the system," said Brent Farr, Executive Director, Community Care Durham.

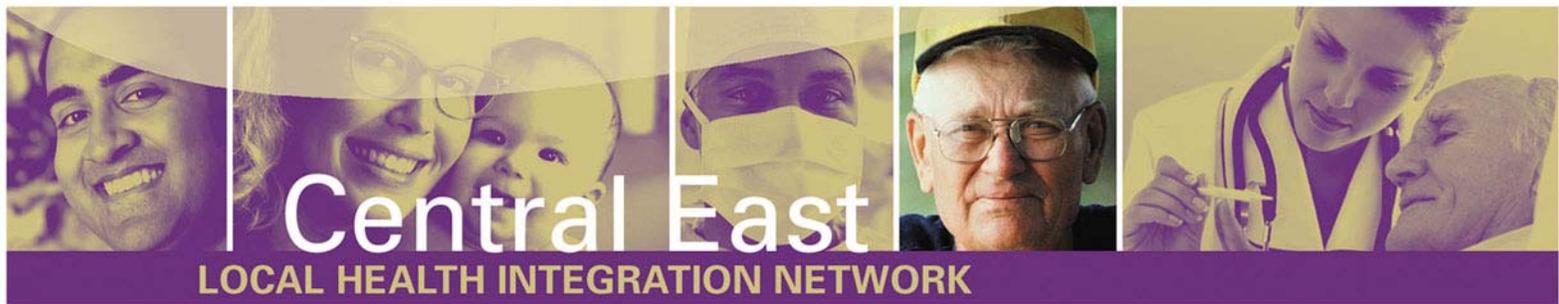
Timely Discharge Information System Pilot – is a project developed by the physicians and primary care providers who are involved in the Central East LHIN's Primary Care Working Group and is further supported by the LHIN's e-Health Steering Committee. As a demonstration project it will involve the timely delivery of admission and discharge information from the hospital to a patient's primary care practitioner. This will improve the current delays which can create many problems in the seamless continuity of patient care. Lessons learned from the pilot, to be implemented in both the Scarborough and Peterborough community first, will be used as the project is rolled out to other communities in the Central East region.

"It is vital to ensure a smooth transition of care for ill patients when they leave hospital and receive follow up care from their family physicians," said Dr. Christopher Jyu, a family physician in Scarborough and co-chair of the Central East LHIN's Primary Care Working Group. "By sharing the information between the hospital and a patient's primary care practitioner we can reduce readmissions and costly medical errors."

Rural Transportation – with an initial focus on transportation services provided by Community Care organizations serving the rural populations in the Central East region, this project will include an environmental scan of services currently available, the creation of a GIS (Geographic Information Systems) map to pinpoint service and demographic information and holding an event to bring together stakeholders from across the region to talk about shared solutions and next steps.

"Limited access to affordable and accessible transportation is a major barrier to many people's ability to access services regardless of whether they live in a rural community or an urban community," said Janice Hardy, Acting CEO at Haliburton Highlands Health Services. "But transportation difficulties are further compounded in rural areas as many people live in communities where public transportation systems are not available."

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Rehabilitation – will focus on developing an inventory of rehabilitation services across the Central East region and implementing region wide standards of practices so that patients, regardless of where they live, will be assessed and treated using common criteria, definitions and practice guidelines.

“Rehabilitation services are focused on maintaining wellness and reducing the risk of injuries,” said Heather Reid, co-chair of the Central East LHIN’s Rehabilitation Task Group and Program Director of the Rehabilitation and Complex Continuing Care program at Rouge Valley Health System. “With increasing chronic disease and co-morbidities in the Central East population, rehabilitation will only become more critical in restoring and maintaining a person’s health and contributing to the sustainability of the system.”

“A common level of understanding of rehabilitation services across the LHIN will respond to the needs of patients in a timely fashion to reduce impairments and improve outcomes and quality of life for patients and caregivers resulting in overall patient flow improvement,” said Shelly Santerre, co-chair of the Central East LHIN’s Rehabilitation Task Group and the Clinical Leader of Post Acute Specialty Services (PASS) Program at Lakeridge Health Corporation.

Culture, Diversity and Equity – recognizes that the Central East Local Health Integration Network encompasses a geographically vast area, and houses a diverse population variably concentrated in urban, suburban, and rural community contexts. New immigrants, visible minorities, First Nation communities, and French language resident groups are found in varying concentration in different parts of the region translating into challenges for service providers to meet their health care needs. Similarly, diversity along mental and physical capacities, gender, sexual orientation, and other dimensions also presents challenges.

This project, which was recognized as a need by the Central East LHIN’s local advisory teams or collaboratives in Scarborough and Durham West, will help to document the barriers that are encountered by people with diverse backgrounds when they are trying to access health care services and will begin to develop measures to address these barriers. The project team will also develop and publicize a list of services available to those people who don’t have health insurance and an inventory of existing culturally appropriate services for specific population groups.

“Given the diversity of the population and the vastness of the catchment area, it is imperative that we recognize culture, diversity, and equity in the provision of health services and to act upon them proactively in both policy and implementation,” said Brock Hovey, Chair of the Durham West Collaborative and Vice President, Clinical Support Services and Chief Planning Officer at Lakeridge Health.

“In order to address existing inequalities and support the trend towards even greater diversity, racism, oppression, and discrimination needs to be treated as a system issue that challenges all health service providers,” said Eric Hong, Director of Corporate Development for the Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care in Scarborough and a member of the Scarborough Agincourt Rouge Collaborative.

Information on these priority projects can be found on the Central East LHIN website – www.centraleastlin.on.ca - behind the Resource Documents/Integration button.

For more information, please contact the Central East LHIN office at 1-866-804-5446.

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