

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

South West LHIN provides facts on improving the health care system

NEWS

April 28, 2010

LONDON, ON – The South West Local Health Integration Network would like to clarify statements made by Ontario PC Leader Tim Hudak today during a stop at London Health Sciences Centre.

The South West LHIN is making important investments in the health care system in our region. We know we have one of the best health care systems in the world, but there are growing pressures from an aging population, shortages of skilled health care providers and increasing costs. The LHIN is working closely with health service providers on positive changes to our system to allow frontline providers such as doctors, nurses and other health professionals to focus on what they do best – deliver quality care in a dynamic environment.

When first established in 2006, the 14 LHINs have taken on all of the responsibilities that were previously handled separately by 23 different offices across the province. This included seven regional offices of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care that oversaw funding and 16 District Health Councils which implemented planning functions. LHINs have added responsibilities for ensuring communities are engaged, playing a role in shaping their health services, as well as ensuring that patients and clients are receiving quality care through the addition of performance and accountability responsibilities in the LHIN portfolio.

Locally, prior to the introduction of LHINs, there were almost 100 people doing this work, compared to 31 in the South West LHIN today. In addition, the South West LHIN Board conducts its business in open, public sessions, ensuring transparent decision-making and accountability.

Six members of the South West LHIN staff earned salaries of \$100,000 or more and are reported on the Ministry of Finance sunshine list in 2009. That is the same number as were reported in 2008

QUOTES

“Collectively, LHINs are working together to transform health care delivery in Ontario. Locally, LHINs are working closely with health care providers to build relationships, measure performance and ensure accountability to ensure quality care not only for today, but for the future as well. The South West LHIN is responsible for almost \$2 billion in funding. We need to ensure we have professional, knowledgeable staff with specific expertise and experience to lead our health care transformation.”

- Michael Barrett, Chief Executive Officer, South West LHIN

QUICK FACTS

- The South West LHIN Board makes its decisions in open, public meetings. Agendas for these meetings are posted on the LHIN's website.

- The South West LHIN is focusing on performance, setting targets and working hard to achieve results.
- Aging at Home programs in the South West LHIN are providing seniors with quality supports. The Home at Last, Safe at Home, Wellness for Seniors and Assisted Living programs are examples of innovative new services that allow seniors to avoid hospitalization

or nursing home admission by providing the supports they need to remain in their own homes.

- Other investments help hospitals move patients home or to other care settings, which helps to streamline the discharge process.
- By mid-2011, four new long-term care homes will add 608 beds to the London area.
- Our work with improving the management of chronic diseases such as diabetes allows people to live better in the community through a coordinated team-based approach.
- More than 60 family physicians and community partners are working closely with the South West Community Care Access Centre on a program to improve diabetes treatment and screening in a program called Partnerships for Health.
- The South West LHIN is funding projects such as SPIRE that connect hospitals, doctors' offices and other health care providers to each other, eliminating delays in the transmission of key data such as lab results and diagnostic scans.
- Ontario MD reports that electronic medical record usage among family physicians in South West Ontario is higher than the provincial average.
- The Ontario Telemedicine Network shows telemedicine activity in the LHIN is outpacing other regions by almost two to one.
- Last fall, the Ontario Hospital Association reported the South West LHIN is a provincial leader when it comes to adopting and implementing technology-based solutions.
- Get more information on the LHIN by visiting www.southwestlhin.on.ca, visit our You Tube channel, find us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter.

Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) are a fundamental component of the government's plan to build a stronger health care system in Ontario. The South West LHIN is a crown agency responsible for the planning, integration and funding of more than 150 health service providers, including hospitals, long-term care homes, mental health and addictions agencies, community support services, community health centres, and the South West Community Care Access Centre. The South West LHIN covers an area from Lake Erie to the Bruce Peninsula and is home to almost one million people. For more information visit www.southwestlhin.ca, find us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter.

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