

## Central Local Health Integration Network

# Strengthening palliative care in our communities

September 13, 2013

Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross – the author of *On Death and Dying* – once said, “Watching a peaceful death of a human being reminds us of a falling star; one of a million lights in a vast sky that flares up for a brief moment only to disappear into the endless night forever.” Helping those falling stars disappear with the dignity, comfort and respect they deserve is a commitment that the Central Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), its health service providers and partners involved in palliative care certainly embrace.



This year, for example, the Central LHIN has made a commitment to develop a regional vision and plan for palliative care in Central LHIN, which will be achieved by working together with the LHIN's recently formed Central Hospice Palliative Care Program Council and the Central Community Access Centre (CCAC).

“Central LHIN is committed to working with both our funded and non-funded health service providers to find new ways to strengthen palliative care for patients in our communities, and to support more patients through the end of life period in their preferred locations,” explained Kim Baker, Chief Executive Officer for Central LHIN. “As we collaborate to deliver the right care, at the right time, in the right place, we are committed to providing standardized, best practice palliative care in our LHIN,” continued Baker.

Comprised of caregivers, family members, community representatives and health sector leaders representing palliative services, the new Central Regional Hospice Palliative Care Program Council is focused on implementing a comprehensive, integrated, regional program for hospice palliative care in Central LHIN. Their goals, which are aligned with the common framework outlined in *Advancing High Quality, High Value Palliative Care in Ontario – Declaration of Partnership and Commitment to Action*, include:

- Enhancing navigation and care coordination to increase access to palliative care
- Improving access to bereavement services and after-hours support
- Strengthening caregiver supports and building service capacity
- Strengthening residential hospice services and palliative care delivery in long-term care homes
- Improving integration and continuity across care settings

The Council is, “building on work previously done to collectively strengthen, embed and sustain person and family-focused palliative care within our communities,” said Joyce Bailey, Chair, Central Regional Hospice Palliative Care Program Council.

In July 2013, the CCAC and the Council hosted a value stream mapping event – a key tool used in many Lean Six Sigma projects that can help participants map, visualize and understand the flow of patients and information to identify improvements. The event welcomed over 50 participants representing the CCAC, community support services, hospitals, long-term care and hospices to work collaboratively to develop an integrated and coordinated approach to palliative care while ensuring the system can support the future needs of the community.

“The dedication, passion and shared commitment demonstrated by the participants at the value stream event put us on the right path to ensuring patients who need palliative services and their families are well cared for and supported when they most need it,” continued Bailey.

Through discussions, collaboration and by using the Lean methodologies, the group identified common themes for an ideal palliative care system. A strategic plan and objectives for moving closer to an ideal future state are being developed and will be finalized in the early fall.

Central LHIN staff will continue to bring a system-wide perspective on palliative care services to the Council as it works to understand and plan to address the changing needs of palliative clients, while realizing efficiencies and increasing effectiveness wherever possible.

## Key Facts about palliative care

- Last fall, Central LHIN announced the Central Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) as the **operational lead** for the LHIN's regional hospice palliative care program, which was an important step forward in improving and strengthening the model for palliative care in Central LHIN. It also helps Central LHIN move toward the Province's vision for palliative care, as articulated in a [provincial review of the palliative care system in Ontario](#).
- **Palliative care** is an approach to care for people who are living with a life-limiting illness, regardless of age. The focus of care is on achieving comfort and ensuring respect for the person nearing death and maximizing quality of life for the person, their family and loved ones.
- A **residential hospice** is a home-like environment where adults and children with life-threatening illnesses receive end-of-life care services. A residential hospice provides individuals who cannot be (or choose not to be) cared for at home with compassionate care and comfort in the last stages of their lives.
- **Funding for residential hospices** is approved by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Central LHIN does not fund residential hospices, as it is outside the LHIN scope and mandate as defined by the Local Health Service Integration Act, 2006 (LHSIA).
- A **10-bed residential hospice through Southlake Regional Health Centre in Newmarket** has been approved by the Ministry with an expected implementation of fall 2015. This new 10-bed residential hospice will receive funding for nursing and personal support services to deliver additional palliative services in the York Region.
- **Visiting hospices** are a support service where volunteers are recruited, matched with service recipients and supervised to provide in-home emotional, social and spiritual support to those who are living with a life-threatening or terminal illness and their families. A case manager – usually a nurse or a trained professional– may provide coaching and support to the volunteers.
- Central LHIN **funds palliative care services** for its communities through the CCAC, and the following health service providers for visiting hospice services:
  - Better Living Health and Community Services
  - Circle of Home Care Services
  - Hazel Burns Hospice
  - PalCare Network for York Region
  - Stevenson Memorial Hospital
- Through Central LHIN's Integrated Health Service Plan 2013-2016 – a strategic roadmap for the next three years – Central LHIN is focused on improving the delivery of safe, effective and timely care in the right setting, which includes the **development of a palliative care plan** for Central LHIN.
- **Palliative care services** within the Central LHIN boundaries are offered through a variety of channels/settings and include: acute hospitals, complex continuing care units, visiting hospices, residential hospices, community care co-ordination, contracted service providers and physician groups. Opportunities exist for integrating and enhancing services to increase capacity which is part of the work being addressed through the Central Regional Hospice Palliative Care Program.

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### Contacts:

Crystal Moss  
Manager, Communications  
Central LHIN  
Tel. 905-948-1872 ext. 214  
[Crystal.Moss@lhins.on.ca](mailto:Crystal.Moss@lhins.on.ca)

Andrea Szokolcai  
Communication Specialist  
Central LHIN  
Tel. 905-948-1872 ext. 257  
[Andrea.Szokolcai@lhins.on.ca](mailto:Andrea.Szokolcai@lhins.on.ca)