

Friday October 12, 2007

Dear Health Service Provider:

As many of you know, on August 28th, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care George Smitherman announced a new provincial strategy aimed at meeting the health and wellness needs of seniors who need some help to live independently at home. The strategy is also intended to relieve pressures from elderly patients in hospitals and their needs for long-term care beds. Caregiver relief is within its scope as well.

This strategy represents a \$700-million investment, over three years. Funding has been set aside for each of the 14 Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs). In the south east, this represents a financial investment of \$17,413,767, over three years, to be allocated by the SE LHIN as follows:

- o \$2,211,479 in 2008/09 (beginning April 1, 2007);
- o \$5,495,822 in 2009/10; and
- o \$9,706,466 in 2010/11.

We must now draw from previous and current plans, i.e., the *South East Integrated Health Services Plan* and the *South East Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) Annual Service Plan (ASP)*, to develop an Aging At Home plan for the south east. A key activity of the South East LHIN, in the coming months, will be the development and continued refinement of a plan tailored to the needs of seniors who want to receive services and supports in their home. We are working within very tight timelines; an interim directional version is due to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care on October 31, 2007, and the final plan is due January 31, 2008.

We believe it is important that seniors across the south east be afforded the opportunity for input in the development and implementation of a plan that is intended to meet their needs. We also believe it is important that health service providers work together and with us in the development of viable solutions. Our approach to the development of an Aging at Home plan will, therefore, be both strategic and inclusive. It will leverage strengths of existing networks, and will include a public community engagement component, as well as an engagement opportunity for health service providers. This approach will ensure that the plan is focused on what is most important to seniors, as well as what is feasible for providers.

On Thursday, October 11, we kicked off community engagement for Aging at Home in the south east with a Seniors' Forum in Napanee. To ensure that this happened quickly and that there was adequate representation from all corners of the South East LHIN catchment area, we partnered with the Frontenac-Kingston region Council on Aging, the only member representing the provincial Councils on Aging association in the South East LHIN. The Council facilitated the participation of seniors who have ties to their communities through their volunteer work. The Council will continue to facilitate senior's participation throughout the planning process. In that way, we are also leveraging an existing strength of the South East LHIN population in planning for Aging at Home – our culture of volunteerism.

The engagement session focused on determining what matters most to seniors by:

- examining whether it is more important to seniors to have services and supports that are unique to each community, or whether seniors with similar needs should have access to similar services no matter where there live in the south east.
- reviewing the priorities for changing our south east local health system, as set out in the *South East Integrated Health Services Plan*, and the strategies to address those priorities included in the *South East Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) Annual Service Plan (ASP)* and *providing input about what was most important to seniors*; and

Next, we intend to invite health service providers across the south east to join us for a second engagement session with seniors. We will ask existing provider (sector) networks to nominate representatives for a LHIN working group tasked with consideration of the Aging at Home plan. This group would also work on identifying an optimal care delivery model.

I know that you are as excited as I am at the chance to help more seniors throughout the south east live their lives independently and in good health, in the comfort of their homes. The network for your sector can expect an invitation in the coming weeks. In the meantime, if you have not done so already, I would invite you to take a look at our *Integrated Health Services Plan* and our *Annual Service Plan*. Both are available on our website at: <http://www.southeastlhin.on.ca>.

Sincerely,



Paul Huras
Chief Executive Officer
South East Local Health Integration Network

cc: Georgina Thompson, Chair, Board of Directors
HSP, Board Chair