

**For immediate release  
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## **Patients across Northwestern Ontario benefit from one regional integrated reporting system**

**THUNDER BAY** – 168 physicians and nurse practitioners are now receiving patient reports electronically from 12 hospitals in the North West Local Health Integration Network (NW LHIN) through the Physician Office Integration (POI) Program.

The program enables a person's health records and diagnostic test reports to be sent from a hospital information system to a patient's Electronic Medical Record (EMR) in their primary care provider's office so it can be viewed before the next visit. The POI initiative was started in the NW LHIN in 2007. The program now benefits over 150,000 patients as information flows seamlessly from 12 hospitals to 25 clinics.

"This is an important milestone in improving patient care," said Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. "It means that if a patient from Geraldton received diagnostic tests in Nipigon, the patient's family doctor would receive test results electronically before the patient even returned to Geraldton."

"This program is an integral part of Ontario's eHealth strategy," said Greg A. Reed, President and CEO of eHealth Ontario. "Regional electronic health systems, like the Physician Office Integration Program, enhance the way patients receive care. Physicians and nurse practitioners no longer have to wait days to receive reports from a local hospital. They can now view their patient's hospital discharge summary information directly in their EMRs and have a more comprehensive view of the patient's medical history."

21,000 patient reports are transmitted electronically each month via this system saving approximately 1,100 hours of clinical administrative staff time that used to be spent sorting, filing, scanning, distributing and other manual processing of these reports.

"Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre and St. Joseph's Care Group are proud to be participating in this important regional project," said Bruce Sutton, CIO of Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre and St. Joseph's Care Group. "This initiative is truly changing the way patients receive care across our region and is only possible because 12 hospitals are on a shared hospital information system. By knocking down the geographical barriers that used to exist between systems, patients are receiving faster care directly in the community in which they reside."

“POI is an integral part of our paediatric practice,” said Dr. Teresa Bruni of Thunder Bay Paediatrics. “We provide care to paediatric patients both locally and across the region, so having our regional partners integrated will be very helpful in patient care. Before, reports generated at a hospital would be faxed or printed and mailed to the clinic or physician. Now all the data is collected, formatted and sent electronically. As a result we can download this information right into the patient’s chart after the report is complete.”

To date, eHealth Ontario has allocated \$376,000 to the expansion of the project. This investment builds on significant infrastructure already put in place by the region’s health service providers.

“This project is a great example of how collaboration within the health care system benefits patients,” said Laura Kokocinski, CEO North West LHIN. “Everyone’s involvement, from the acute care facilities to the clinics, has been tremendous and really made a difference in bringing this initiative to life.”

“Ontario's doctors know firsthand the tremendous benefits of electronic medical records to patients and we believe they are a critical component towards improving and strengthening our health care system,” said Dr. Mark MacLeod, President of the Ontario Medical Association. “Physicians using electronic records report improvements in patient safety and continuity and quality of care. Our priority is getting this technology into more doctors' offices as soon as possible.”

“We are really looking forward to having our facility connected to the POI program,” said Dr. Terry O’Driscoll, Chief of Staff, Sioux Lookout Meno Ya Win Health Centre. “One of our key priorities is connecting our remote nursing stations so patients from our fly in communities can get the same access to quality care as patients in other parts of Northwestern Ontario.”

### **Quick Facts:**

- **The program benefits over 150,000 patients as information flows seamlessly from 12 hospitals using a common information system to 25 clinics in the NW LHIN.**
- **eHealth Ontario has committed \$376,000 in funding for the expansion of the Physician Office Integration program.**
- **The program started in 2007 with 22 providers and has grown to 168 clinicians - including nurse practitioners - in 2010.**
- **Sending 21,000 reports per month via POI saves over 1,100 hours a month of clinic admin time.**

## Physician Office Integration Program participants

Hospitals	Clinics
Red Lake Margaret Cochenour Memorial Hospital	Port Arthur Health Centre
Dryden Regional Health Centre	Anishnawbe Mushkiki Thunder Bay
Atikokan General Hospital	Atikokan Family Health Team
Riverside Health Care Facilities	First Place Clinic and Regional Resource Centre / Canadian Mental Health Association
Nipigon District Memorial Hospital	Ear Falls Family Health Team
Geraldton District Hospital	Emo clinic
Manitouwadge General Hospital	Dr. Wesley Fidler Medicine Professional Corporation
Wilson Memorial General Hospital	Fort Frances Community Clinic – Nelson Medicine
McCausland Hospital	Fort William Family Health Team
Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre	Dr. Kenneth Gehman Medicine Professional Corporation
St. Joseph's Care Group	Gizhewaadiziwin Health Access Centre
Sioux Lookout Meno-Ya Win Health Centre	J.E. Stokes Medical Centre
	Manitouwadge Medical Clinic
	Rainy River Medical Clinic
	Red Lake Medical Associates
	Aguasabon Medical Clinic
	Harbourview Medical Clinic
	Marathon Family Health Team
	Dr. Ranjit Baboolal Paediatric Office
	Thunder Bay Paediatrics
	Greenstone Family Health Team
	Superior Family Health Organization
	Dingwall Medical Group Family Health Network
	Machin Medical Clinic / Points North Family Health Team
	Klassen Family Practice

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