

## Long-term care isn't just about beds. It's about services.

**November 16, 2012** – “It takes a community to care for our elderly.”

This is the message the North West LHIN has been sharing about long-term care services now and in the future. The North West LHIN recently spoke, by request, to Thunder Bay City Council about long-term care beds in the community.

The City's interest in planning for seniors' services is understandable. Based on our data, the North West LHIN is projecting a 79 percent increase in seniors (age 65 and over) living in Northwestern Ontario between now and 2030. However, our research also shows that, in this time period, 8 percent of our seniors' population will require supportive housing, high intensity and long-term care – and 92 percent will be able to live at home, some independently, and others with lighter supports.

As you can see, seniors' care isn't just about long-term care beds. It's about providing many options in the community to support seniors as they age.

The North West LHIN has engaged with, and spoken to seniors and health service providers about how the health care system needs to change to improve seniors' care. Seniors expressed a clear desire to have choices as they age and as their need for services and supports change.

A senior's health care journey ranges from: living independently with no supports, to remaining at home with light support services, to more increased supports, to high intensity supports, to a long-term care bed and/or end-of-life care.

Health care is moving away from institutional care to a stronger community care focus. For seniors, this shift from care in an institution to the community makes sense:

- It focuses on seniors living at home as long as possible – which is what seniors want; and
- It ensures supports are available for seniors during their health care journey.

The focus is on providing the right care in the right place at the right time and by the right service provider.

To achieve this, the North West LHIN is finalizing its Long-Term Care Service Plan for Northwestern Ontario, in consultation with our health care service providers and communities. The plan, to be released next year, will detail where we need to continue to make investments to improve access to community support services for seniors, out to 2030.

### Fast Facts:

- Long-term care services have been a priority of the North West LHIN since 2006.
- Since 2009, the North West LHIN has invested nearly \$26 million in additional funds into programs and services to support seniors and their caregivers in the Northwest.