

North West LHIN – July 14, 2010

Reducing Emergency Room Wait Times

Significant efforts have been focused on the provincial government's priority to reduce the time spent by patient's waiting in the Emergency Room.

In 2009, two Emergency Department wait-time targets were set provincially that are publicly reported:

- 4 hours for patients with minor or uncomplicated conditions that require less time for diagnosis, treatment and observation. (low acuity)
- 8 hours for patients with complex conditions that require more time for diagnosis, treatment or hospital bed admission. (high acuity)

**time spent = when the patient registers in the ER to the time the patient is discharged or admitted to a hospital bed.*

In 2009/10, the North West LHIN realized positive wait time results for non admitted patients:

- 90% of high acuity non-admitted patients being seen and treated within 6.6 hours
- 90% of low acuity non-admitted patients being seen and treated within 4.1 hours

In 2009/10, the LHIN saw a decrease in wait time performance for admitted patients:

- 45% of patients were treated and admitted to hospital within the 8 hours target

Solutions are being implemented to address three categories:

- Reducing ED demand: funding initiatives in the community aimed at reducing visits to emergency departments
- Reducing ED wait times: funding hospital initiatives to improve patients' length of stay in the ED and patients' satisfaction with care.
- Improving Bed Utilization: improving patient flow from hospital to alternate levels of care or home with appropriate supports.

In upcoming issues of the *LHINfo Minute* in July and August we will expand on solutions that are being put in place to address each of the three categories above.

Fast Facts

- The North West LHIN has the highest ER visits rate in the province for non-urgent case at 208 per 1000 population.
- Limited after-hours or walk-in clinics exist across the region.
- Smaller community hospitals function as primary care centres.
- In March 2010 the North West LHIN ranked 3rd in ED length-of-stay compared to all LHINs in the province.
- 9 out of 10 patients with complex conditions are either admitted or leave the emergency department in 6.6 hours
- 9 out of 10 patients with minor conditions wait 4.1 hours in the ER prior to discharge
- In Q4 2009/10 the percentage of Alternate Level of Care (ALC) days was 18.20%; the goal for 2010/11 is to reduce the percentage of ALC days to 15.4%.