

North West LHIN – March 14, 2011

New Community Engagement Guidelines

In an effort to ensure greater transparency and accountability, Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) will be posting Annual Community Engagement (CE) Plans on their websites at the end of April as new LHIN Community Engagement Guidelines are implemented across the province.

These annual plans are designed to outline local LHIN community engagement initiatives for the coming year, describing how local stakeholders will be informed about upcoming community engagement activities and how they can provide input into the work of their local LHIN.

By developing provincial guidelines, all 14 LHINs now have a consistent approach to community engagement planning and will be better able to show how feedback gathered through community engagement activities is considered as part of each LHIN's decision making process. The posting of the annual community engagement plans is just one element of the provincial Community Engagement Guidelines that will ensure greater transparency and accountability by the LHINs.

North West LHIN Community Engagement

Engaging our stakeholders, including the public, health service providers, community leaders and others enables the North West LHIN to make decisions and set priorities to improve access to care that are based on local data and experiences, provided by those who best know their community.

In order to identify the priorities for our 2010-2013 Integrated Health Services Plan, it was necessary to engage a broad range of stakeholders across the LHIN. Our *Share Your Story, Shape Your Care* web-based engagement project collected comments, ideas and stories from over 900 participants. In September 2009 this project received the International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2) Core Values Award for Innovation Using Technology.

In 2010-11, the North West LHIN continued to focus on engaging its communities to support local planning and decision-making, with a focus on a number of key areas to support the LHIN's strategic directions, including supportive housing, integration along the continuum of care, patient satisfaction, emergency department and alternate level of care, access to primary care, Aboriginal health, and mental health and addictions services.

Overall in 2010, the North West LHIN hosted 731 community engagement activities with 9,044 individuals participating through surveys, roundtable discussions, forums, advisory team meetings, public consultations, education sessions and key informant interviews.

At the North West LHIN, community engagement is highly valued as a 'critical success factor' in the Board of Directors' Strategic Directions (2010).