

## Surge Capacity Planning

**December 2013**

On most days, the demands on the health care system in Thunder Bay are met, and care is provided in a timely way. But what happens when there is a sudden or sharp increase in demand? That's where the North West Local Health Integration Network's (LHIN) System-Wide Surge Plan for the City of Thunder Bay comes into play.

The City of Thunder Bay Surge Plan was designed to improve and maintain patient access to emergency and acute care services when the demand for resources and services exceeds availability. Developed by the North West LHIN and its health care partners in the City of Thunder Bay, including Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, long-term care services, community support services, and emergency medical services, the Surge Plan will help ease pressures in times of increased seasonal demand.

"Coordination among partners makes sense," said Laura Kokocinski, CEO of the North West LHIN. "We, together with our partners, developed this plan to ensure continued safe, high-quality care during times of high usage." That is especially important over the holidays, a known time of high emergency department usage in the City of Thunder Bay. The result will be improved patient flow both within the hospital and into the community, reducing pressure on the emergency department.

And there is a role that the public can play, according to Dr. Andrew Affleck, North West LHIN Emergency Department Physician Lead. "Emergency medical situations are best handled in the emergency department, but for non-emergency situations like prescription renewals or routine health examinations, there are other health care options in the community," Affleck said. "It's important to know your options so that you can receive the right care in the right place when you need it."

### **Know Your Health Care Options**

In the event of an **emergency**, always dial 911.

#### **Family Health Care Provider**

Contact your family health care provider (physician or nurse practitioner) for office hours over the holidays.

#### **Community After-Hours Clinics / Walk-In Clinics**

At an after-hours clinic or walk-in clinic, patients can see a nurse or doctor without appointment. Many medical clinics, family health teams, nurse practitioner-led clinics, and pharmacies operate walk-in clinics.

To find out about clinic hours, you can contact your family health care provider.

Walk-in clinic information can also be found by calling 211, or by visiting [www.211north.ca](http://www.211north.ca).

#### **Pharmacies**

Pharmacists now have the authority to prescribe some drugs, renew non-narcotic prescriptions for up to six months, administer the flu vaccine, and provide advice to people with chronic conditions.

#### **Thunder Bay District Health Unit**

Flu vaccinations are available by appointment at the weekly immunization clinic. Visit [www.tbdhu.com](http://www.tbdhu.com) for more information.

#### **Telehealth Ontario\***

Talk to a registered nurse 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 1-866-797-0000.

*\*Telehealth does not replace 911. You should always call 911 in an emergency.*

#### **Health Care Connect**

Health Care Connect helps people who are without a doctor find one. Call 1-800-445-1822 for more information.