

**North West LHIN
Residents Region-Wide Shared their Voices during the *Guide Your Health: Your Story, Your Future* Campaign**

Community engagement campaign draws to a close

September 8, 2015 – For the past few months, the North West LHIN has been on a journey to give residents the opportunity to leave their footprint on health care in their communities.

During the three-month *Guide Your Health: Your Story, Your Future*, more than 700 residents participated in the innovative community engagement public campaign. As a result, the North West LHIN collected over 1,500 comments from residents identifying the areas of the health system that work well and opportunities for improvement. For example, residents highlighted positive collaboration between local health care providers and organizations from other sectors, the benefits of technology and telemedicine to provide care and reduce travel, and the quality of local health care providers and services as examples of the health system operating at its best.



North West LHIN residents leaving their footprint on health care in their communities

When discussions turned to areas of improvement for the North West LHIN to focus on, participants suggested the need for more transportation services in and out of communities, greater access to mental health services from children to seniors, and improving access to assisted living, supportive housing, long-term care, and home care services. Other issues and improvement areas identified were better communication among health service providers and addressing factors that impact health such as level of income, education about healthy lifestyles and access to housing and food.

Reports illustrating the themes that emerged in each community, as well as the commonalities and differences between communities will be released later this fall. The data and resident perspectives will



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be considered in the drafting of the 2016-2019 North West LHIN's Integrated Health Services Plan (IHSP), which will come into effect on April 1, 2016. The IHSP assists the North West LHIN in its decision-making about health system transformation, health service delivery, and funding allocations over a three-year period for Community Care Access Centres (CCACs), community support service organizations (e.g. homemaking, personal assistance, etc.), long-term care homes, community health centres, and community mental health and addictions agencies.

Laura Kokocinski, North West LHIN CEO, is grateful for residents' eagerness to participate in the *Guide Your Health: Your Story, Your Future* campaign as well as the quality of feedback provided.

"We would like to extend a sincere thank you to North West LHIN residents for lending us their expertise, for their commitment to improving their health and that of their communities, and for sharing their powerful stories so that we can make the system better for the future," she said. "We're now set to begin the next leg of our planning journey, which involves incorporating local community voices and priorities in our next three-year plan."

The North West LHIN would also like to acknowledge the Réseau du mieux-être francophone du Nord de l'Ontario, the Matawa Health and Social Services Task Group and other health service providers for their support and collaboration throughout the campaign.

Residents are encouraged to visit the online collection of past events and forum at www.guideyourhealth.org to view the insights fellow community members contributed during the campaign. In addition, the North West LHIN engages residents on an ongoing basis and invites residents to share ideas and feedback year-round through email at nw.communications@lhins.on.ca, Facebook, Twitter, phone, or regular mail.

As the name of the *Guide Your Health* campaign suggests, the North West LHIN relies on residents to be our guides and help us understand what is most important for the future of health care in local communities. The North West LHIN looks forward to sharing the results of this campaign with all North West LHIN residents and values their continued guidance on the journey to better health in the Northwest.

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