

June 11, 2015

## North West Local Health Integration Network

### Enhancing Regional Critical Care Response

#### New Program Enhances Care for Critically Ill Patients in Northwestern Ontario

A critically ill patient at a hospital site in Northwestern Ontario is being cared for by a team of health care professionals while the patient awaits transportation to Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre. The team includes the emergency room doctor and nursing staff, a respiratory therapist, an Intensivist physician specializing in Critical Care, an Intensive Care Unit nurse, and a critical care pharmacist. What's different is that, in this story, the emergency room doctor and nursing staff are separated from the other members of the health care team by more than 400 kilometers.

Funded by the North West Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), the Regional Critical Care Response (RCCR) Program is an innovative eHealth strategy. It will connect 11 regional hospitals with specialized critical care and trauma services located at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC) in real time via the Ontario Telemedicine Network's videoconferencing technology to collaboratively manage critically ill adult patients. Dr. Michael Scott, Critical Care Physician Lead for the North West LHIN, envisioned the RCCR Program as a way to improve care for regional patients: "Health service

#### Regional Critical Care Response Program Rollout

- RCCR launched on March 31, 2015 at Lake of the Woods District Hospital in Kenora, Sioux Lookout Meno Ya Win Health Centre, Dryden Regional Health Centre, and La Verendrye Hospital in Fort Frances.
- By fall of 2015, seven (7) additional hospitals will join RCCR including: Atikokan General Hospital, Wilson Memorial Hospital in Marathon, Manitouwadge General Hospital, The McCausland Hospital in Terrace Bay, Nipigon District Memorial Hospital, Margaret Cochenour Memorial Hospital in Red Lake, and Geraldton District Hospital.

providers, linked by technology, can provide assessment and management for more timely care for patients. It is an exciting, coordinated way to deliver exceptional critical care across Northwestern Ontario.”

“The opportunity and funding to develop this collaborative partnership and leverage technology brings critical care and trauma expertise to patients across the region,” notes Dr. William McCready, Interim CEO of TBRHSC. “By extending critical care consultations to regional hospitals, we will improve patient outcomes by beginning specialized care sooner and jointly managing patients as they await transfer to Thunder Bay.” All activities are captured at TBRHSC’s end as an electronic medical record, available to both care teams. This is important not just from a clinical perspective to record treatments administered, but also because it becomes the patient’s voice, telling the story of care across multiple settings.

The RCCR Program’s mobile videoconferencing brings care to the patient’s bedside, allowing all members of the care team to view the patient at the same time. Regional health care providers will benefit from the enhanced knowledge and support provided by experts in critical care. According to Dave Murray, CEO of Sioux Lookout Meno Ya Win Health Centre and RCCR Program project lead, “Videoconferencing will allow for a real-time evaluation of the patient from the inter-professional perspective. Sending, transporting, and receiving team members will be able to simultaneously communicate and provide an expedited, timely, and safe transfer of the patient.”

Laura Kokocinski, CEO of the North West LHIN, notes that this is an important advancement for the health care system: “The RCCR Program exemplifies integration through the sharing of expertise amongst all hospitals in the North West LHIN by leveraging technology. A number of potential benefits can be realized including better outcomes for patients through earlier access to specialized treatments, shorter transfer times, or even the opportunity to eliminate the need to transfer a patient, bringing care closer to home.”



# HEALTH CARE UPDATE

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