



Interlake–Eastern Regional Health Authority

Community Update - Fall 2016

We had our annual general meeting at the beginning of the month in Stonewall at Quarry Park Heritage Arts Centre where we saw close to 100 people in attendance. The evening started with Dr. Michael Routledge, former provincial chief medical officer of health, presenting on the provincial report called [Healthy Environments, Healthy People](#). He was followed by Dr. Karen Robinson, the RHA's medical officer of health, who spoke from a regional perspective.

In our annual report that was distributed at the meeting, our financial statements were officially made public and our regional director financial services, Dorothy Forbes, presented and addressed questions from the audience. Please note the annual report is posted on our website under "Publications and Reports" or click <https://is.qd/LsMDYB> and is an excellent summary of our program and staff accomplishments over the past year.

At the AGM, I identified some significant progress we've made in addressing key challenges in our region. Based on the board's directions and in consultation with elected leaders, community members, health committees, local health involvement groups, physicians and staff across this region, the plan over the past year has been and continues to be focused on stabilizing health care and increasing reliable access to care. In particular, there are four key areas I reported on: stabilizing emergency services, increasing access to long term care and acute care beds, increasing primary care capacity and recruiting more physicians. On this last point, I highlighted the need to establish a clinical teaching unit in our region.

Stabilizing emergency services

Our doctors are now working closely with us to provide monthly schedules of emergency department status that we are posting online. This is a key step in the direction towards more predictable emergency department services. Emergency department schedules are posted online (<https://is.qd/UzC0sl>) or residents can phone 1-866-267-5818 to listen to a recording of the schedules. Although we are attempting to have a static and predictable schedule, we do update them when additional physician time in the emergency department is added. This means changes to the schedules will arise, so please be sure to always refer to the website or phone number to check emergency department schedules. Please also remember that patients who present at an emergency department without a physician available are still asked to proceed inside to review their care options with a nurse.

It's important to note that patients who arrive at an emergency department and are in need of an ambulance ride to another hospital, the nurse will call the ambulance and our region is responsible to pay for that ride. If a patient does receive a bill for an ambulance ride of that nature, please know that we would like to know about it right away and would be willing to look into it in order to pay for it should that be the case.

We appreciate you sharing this information with your residents as we hear there is some confusion at emergency departments with suspended services.

Not closing hospitals in our region

We are working to provide 24 hour, seven days week coverage in all of our emergency rooms and have no plans to close hospitals. We know gaps exist across our region in emergency department coverage and in those cases we have been bringing in locum or visiting physicians to cover shifts where possible. Where there isn't a physician available to provide coverage, nurses are still available in the emergency room to identify patients' care options.

This past year, we've made good progress in strengthening our emergency medical services (EMS) network throughout the region. We strive to keep our EMS staffing at full complement with minimal vacancies. Sometimes paramedics will apply for internal positions and shift from site to site. A [2013 Manitoba EMS System Review](#) indicates that even at full staffing levels our region would benefit from improved response times with additional funding for increased EMS staffing. We are hopeful the new government will be implementing the report recommendations. We are pleased with the successful conclusion and ratification of the MGEU contract that includes paramedics in our region.

Long term and acute care bed

Another key priority is improving access to beds in our region. We know long term care and hospital beds are under pressure and that strains family relationships when loved ones are moved to available beds sometimes far from their home community. We are currently pushing 60% occupancy of our hospital beds with people awaiting placement in personal care homes. Government is fully aware of our needs. We have provided them with our plan and are hopeful they will follow through with their election promise of generating more personal care home beds as Interlake-Eastern has one of the most significant needs based on our bed situation and aging demographic.

Starting in November, Beausejour Health Centre will be the site of our new regional rehabilitation program that will have 10 beds when operating at full capacity. The rehabilitation program is an addition to existing services in this hospital. It has been modeled after visits to similar kinds of units operating in other RHAs.

Since Beausejour is relatively central in the region and 45 minutes away from Winnipeg, the new regional program will provide easy access for patients returning home from being cared for in the city. Through a referral process, qualifying patients will initially be those recovering from orthopedic surgery, including hip and knee operations. Eventually, we hope to expand care to those recovering from neurological conditions like strokes.

When a person awaiting placement in a personal care home vacates a bed in Beausejour hospital, the bed will become part of the rehab unit. It may take up to a year before the unit has 10 beds. The rehab team in Beausejour will increase in size and the team's time, when not working with rehab patients, will be spent on inpatient and outpatient work.

I should point out that our occupational therapists and physiotherapists have been doing this work to the extent that they can in health care facilities across the region. This is the first formal regional rehabilitation program for Interlake-Eastern RHA.

Primary health care updates

We're making steadfast changes to our primary health care structure. Primary health care is the first point of access you make with the health care system, usually through your regular health care provider. In our region, people attend emergency departments with minor concerns because they are unable to get in to see a regular health care provider in a timely manner. My Health Teams are about bringing teams of care providers (whether located in the same offices or virtually connected online) together to work with patients to make sure they get the care needed, when they need it and by the right provider. Teams of care providers will work together to plan and deliver services for a geographic area or specific community or population. We have our clinical team managers in place to create these health care teams throughout our region.

Lori Wahoski is the clinical team manager for primary health on the west side of Lake Winnipeg (Gimli,

Arborg, Riverton, Fisher Branch, Teulon and areas) and has held several roles working in hospital (acute) care, in the community for primary care, and in long term care in the region. Her email is lwahoski@ierha.ca.

Jeremy Buchner is the clinical team manager for primary health care on the East side of Lake Manitoba (Eriksdale, Ashern, Lundar, St. Laurent, Stonewall and area) and brings experience in health care leadership and has a background in social work. His email is jbuchner@ierha.ca

Annabelle Reimer is a nurse practitioner and is primary health care clinical team manager for Mobile Clinic, Quick Care Clinic, Oakbank and Selkirk communities. Annabelle also has accountability for clinical resource mentorship for nurse practitioners and primary care nurses across the region. Her email is Areimer@ierha.ca.

Nancy Muller is a registered nurse and is primary health care clinical team manager for Lake Winnipeg East Sub-Region that includes the communities of Pine Falls, Pinawa, Lac du bonnet, Whitemouth and Beausejour. Nancy also has accountability for clinical resource mentorship for chronic disease nurses across the region. Her email is nmuller@ierha.ca.

Physician recruitment and retention

We continue to recruit physicians through many different routes including pushing for our region to establish a clinical teaching unit that can provide residencies for physicians. Medical graduates are more likely to stay in the community where they have established routines, settled their family and made connections. By establishing a clinical teaching unit here in our region, we are able to develop relationships with physicians before they have completed their residency in the hope that they will want to remain in the region among their colleagues. Although we are early days, many positive steps have been taken. The hope is to have a residency up and running by 2018.

We continue to work with communities and elected leaders to ensure we are integrating the right physicians into a community that is right for them so these physicians are more likely to stay. We appreciate the hard work and support from our communities over the past year to ensure our physicians are well taken care of once they arrive and we look forward to working more with you in the future.

Selkirk Regional Health Centre

Our regional health centre in Selkirk is on track for opening in June 2017 and we are gearing up for the move that will happen early in the New Year. There are many teams at play working to finish the new hospital and transitional teams are in place working on the move to the new building. Through this new regional health centre, residents from across the region will be able to travel here to access health services such as MRI, obstetrics and surgery to name a few. We are planning tours for the public as part of our opening in the spring.

CEO Award for Community Leadership

The CEO's Award for Community Leadership provides me with the opportunity to recognize individuals or groups who we feel have contributed significantly to health care advancements in the previous year.

At this year's annual general meeting, I was proud to recognize Giigewigamig First Nation Health Authority for their unwavering support and commitment towards the development of the traditional healing centre located in Powerview - Pine Falls.

Named by community members as Giigewigamig or "Place of healing" in Anishinaabe, it will be dedicated to

offering all people access to First Nations traditions, culture, language, healing ceremonies, medicines and teachings to provide holistic and natural care. When complete, Pine Falls Health Complex will be the first in Manitoba to be affiliated with a traditional healing centre. Elder Burma Bushie from Hollow Water First Nation was present to accept the CEO's award on behalf of Giigewigamig First Nation Health Authority.

We presented her with a special handmade star blanket. To give a star blanket is to show utmost respect and admiration. To receive a star blanket indicates that the giver holds you in very high esteem for your generosity and accomplishments.

This blanket was created especially for the communities that have come together to bring us Giigewigamig. The colours included in the blanket are colours affiliated with each first nation community of Black River, Bloodvein, Hollow Water, Sagkeeng and Interlake-Eastern RHA. The star is said to be representative of the morning star that marks the dawning of a new day. This blanket is a physical reflection of our unity and commitment to working towards a common goal to make Giigewigamig a reality.



I was pleased to present this year's CEO's Award for Community Service to Elder Burma Bushie of Hollow Water who represents the First Nations communities comprising Giigewigamig First Nation Health Authority.

Flu season is upon us

Once again we encourage all residents to get their flu shot. Starting this week, Interlake-Eastern RHA is hosting 100 plus flu clinics throughout the region. We thank communities for the use of your community centres and halls free of charge. Flu shots are important because they provide protection against the flu and help prevent transmission to those with weakened immune systems and those with health conditions.

Visit our website (<https://is.qd/HewNla>) for a listing of flu clinics. Please feel free to share these dates on your website and through social media. Any schedule changes will be updated on our website.

Thank you for your commitment to our health care and your support for our regional health authority. We appreciate you spreading this message with your counterparts and constituents.

Thank you,



Ron Van Denakker

Phone: 204-785-4701

Email: rvandenakker@ierha.ca

