

Small Community Hospital Emergency Department Study - Q&A

What did the study tell us about Erie St. Clair's Small Community Hospital Emergency Departments (EDs)?

The study confirmed that there are issues affecting patient/staff safety, access to care, effectiveness/efficiency of care and human resources.

What do we still need to consider?

The study did not include a review of local EMS services; explore issues within larger regional hospitals; consider the full impact of proposed system changes; or include community input. These issues will need to be considered by the LHIN in developing recommendations for system changes.

What happens next?

The Erie St. Clair LHIN will begin a secondary phase of the study involving consultations, supplementary data review, an impact analysis of proposed changes, and the presentation of LHIN proposed recommendations to the LHIN Board of Directors for deliberation. This process is targeted for completion by June 2009.

Have changes to the EDs been determined at this time?

No. A decision will not be made until further review and consultations are completed.

How will the LHIN make its final decision?

Following extensive consultation, additional information gathering, data validation and an impact analysis, recommendations will be presented to the ESC LHIN Board of Directors for their consideration by June 2009. The ESC LHIN recommendations will address our decision criteria, including: patient and ED staff safety; provision of effective/efficient care; access to care; and, the sustainability of human resource practices.

Is the study and its recommendations all about saving money?

No, it is about being able to provide good service into the future.

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Will the report be available to the public?

Yes, the report will be posted to www.erieclairhin.on.ca on January 30, 2009. Other resources that will be available include: slide deck presentation and web cast of the special information meeting held on January 27th, as well as media materials.

How is the LHIN going to engage me for my input?

Upon the release of the report on January 30th, the community can visit our web site to view the report and provide their input through an on-line form. If you do not have access to the web, you can call our office to have a form sent to you for completion (866-231-5446). Input from all stakeholders will be acknowledged by the LHIN and considered in formulating final recommendations.

Why are CTAS levels important?

CTAS levels determine the level of care necessary for a person entering an ED. CTAS levels 1 & 2 require a full-service, emergent ED care, while CTAS levels 3, 4 & 5 identify urgent and non-urgent levels of care.

Will large hospitals be studied next?

No, there will not be a formal review of the larger hospitals. The impact assessment will look at how the proposed changes or alternate models will impact regional hospitals and what broader system changes will be required in order to provide seamless care.

What's wrong with EDs being our go-to for health care service?

Health care needs must be matched with the appropriate resources. The study and previous research confirms that primary care and chronic disease management remain the overwhelming needs of patients across Erie St. Clair. Recommendations put forward to our Board for approval will consider what services best meet the needs of patients living in our communities.

I have heard that Doctors might leave because of this study?

Doctors are independent business people and make decisions that are right for them. However, the LHIN understands and acknowledges the critical resource that family physicians offer and will be working with them to keep them in our community. We are also working with HealthForceOntario, the government body responsible for physician recruitment, to develop an Erie St. Clair Health Human Resources Plan to address ongoing physician shortages.

