

## News Release / Pour publication immédiate

For Immediate Release

January 27, 2009

### **ERIE ST. CLAIR LHIN BOARD RECEIVED CONSULTANTS FINAL REPORT ON SMALL COMMUNITY HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS**

CHATHAM-KENT – The Erie St. Clair LHIN's (ESC LHIN) Board of Directors received the final report and a presentation on the Small Community Hospital Emergency Department Study by Hay Group Health Care Consulting at a special information meeting held today at Smitty's Family Restaurant (Aristo's) in Chatham. The report and presentation were received for information purposes only with no decisions pending at this time.

The report's author, Dr. Isser Dubinsky of Hay Group Health Care Consulting, presented on the findings of the study and made several recommendations for the consideration of the ESC LHIN.

Ralph Ganter, Senior Director, Planning, ESC LHIN provided an overview of why the study was commissioned and what else needs to be considered to plan for sustainable emergency services. The next steps of the ESC LHIN's process will take three to four months and will include: key stakeholder and community consultations, a review of supplementary data and an impact analysis of proposed changes.

Ganter noted that upon the completion of the secondary phase, expected by June 2009, recommendations would be submitted to the ESC LHIN Board of Directors for their consideration. The LHIN intends to put forward a plan for sustainable services that reflects the needs and input of the community, explores all options, and considers patient and staff safety, access to care, effectiveness/efficiency of care and human resources.

The ESC LHIN acknowledges the important role of small hospitals in the local health care system. Although each hospital studied is a key asset to the current health care system, all three hospitals will likely need changes to either the services they provide or their structure to become sustainable.

The report further confirmed that access to primary care remains a significant health care challenge for Erie St. Clair by acknowledging that many people continue to use the Emergency Department (ED) for care that could be provided in the community. High rates of chronic diseases, an aging population, and a shortage of family doctors or other community-based primary care providers are also placing strain on the local health care system.

The Hay Group's final report will be made available to the public on January 30<sup>th</sup> through the LHIN web site, [www.eriestclairhin.on.ca](http://www.eriestclairhin.on.ca). At that time, a community feedback tool will also be available for the public to provide suggestions and comments on the report directly to the ESC LHIN.

...2

## News Release / Pour publication immédiate

---

.2

To accommodate the public's interest in this study, a web cast of presentations made today will be available on the ESC LHIN's web site in the near future. TVCogeco will also be airing the presentation as part of their upcoming local programming.

### QUOTES

"Receiving the Hay Group's report is only the first step in our process," said Gary Switzer, Chief Executive Officer, ESC LHIN. "We will now take the time needed to gather additional information, validate the report's findings and conduct extensive consultations before making any decisions."

"Just because they are small, does not mean that they are not delivering good quality care, do not have committed doctors and nurses, or are not serving our communities well," said Switzer of the ESC LHIN's small community hospitals. "The professionals working in these hospitals need to know that they are valuable resources to our communities and are appreciated."

"The Board has just seen the Hay Group's presentation and has just received their final report – we will need time to review, digest and consider its findings," said Mina Grossman-Ianni, ESC LHIN Board Chair. "At the end of this process, any recommended changes to our local health care system will not be made lightly. We will require that a comprehensive and considerate process is used to develop the recommendations that will be brought to our Board for approval later this year," added Grossman-Ianni.

"EDs across the province are experiencing similar pressures, but small EDs are particularly vulnerable given their limited resources and the types and volumes of patients they see," said Dr. David Ng, ESC LHIN ED Lead. "The study helps to identify a base-line understanding of how all three EDs are being impacted, but certainly, there is more work to do in this next phase. I am particularly interested in meeting with the medical staff of the three sites to discuss the challenges identified by the Hay Group and the opportunities for local solutions," added Ng.

### QUICK FACTS

- The Erie St. Clair LHIN commissioned the Hay Group to conduct a study of small community hospital EDs in August 2008
- The hospitals involved in the study include: Charlotte Eleanor Englehart Hospital Site, Bluewater Health (Petrolia); Leamington District Memorial Hospital; and, Sydenham Campus, Chatham-Kent Health Alliance (Wallaceburg)
- The Erie St. Clair LHIN, with a total population of approximately 649,000 people, is one of 14 LHINs across Ontario
- The Erie St. Clair LHIN is responsible for over \$900 million of health care services delivered in Chatham-Kent, Sarnia/Lambton and Windsor/Essex



Ontario

Erie St. Clair Local Health  
Integration Network  
Réseau local d'intégration  
des services de santé  
d'Érié St. Clair

## News Release / Pour publication immédiate

---

.3

### **LEARN MORE**

Read more about the Erie St. Clair LHIN at [www.eriestclairhin.on.ca](http://www.eriestclairhin.on.ca).

- 30 -

### **CONTACT**

Zoja Holman, Senior Community Engagement Consultant, 866-231-5446 ext 225



Ontario

Erie St. Clair Local Health  
Integration Network  
Réseau local d'intégration  
des services de santé  
d'Érié St. Clair