

**QUESTIONS FROM WALLACEBURG COMMUNITY MEETING:
WALLACEBURG DISTRICT SECONDARY SCHOOL
MARCH 27, 2009**

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

Why was only 6 hours spent at the hospital before a decision was made?

The Hay Group was commissioned to write a report with recommendations for each of the three Emergency Department's (ED) involved in the study. As part of their work, the consultants visited each site to conduct interviews with nurses, physicians, administrators and board members prior to finalizing their analysis. However, the majority of their time was spent off-site analyzing data.

The ESC LHIN is currently consulting with stakeholders and the community and will bring its recommendations to the Board of Directors in June for their consideration.

Why do you want to take our hospital?

This study is not about closing the Emergency Department or the hospital. The suggestion that this is the intention of the work currently underway by the LHIN and CKHA is unfounded and misleading.

ACCESS

If that emergency department was not there, what would have happened to those who have relied on it in the past (sliced wrist; seizures causing brain damage; significant allergic reactions) or who would have difficulty getting to Chatham?

It's difficult to speculate about past experiences of patients or about what may happen in future. However, hearing individual stories provides us with scenarios that we can apply against all the options currently under consideration. Thank you for sharing your personal stories and concerns with us.

As we move forward in this process, the more information we gather and the more we understand the issues, the better able we are to make the right recommendation for our board to consider in June.

How far does the provincial government expect us to walk to get good health care?

Access to care is not limited to care in hospitals. The provincial government has made significant investments in Family Health Teams, Community Health Centres, Nurse-Practitioner Clinics, Community Care Access Centres and Community Support Services because evidence demonstrates that supporting people close to home and enhancing community-based programs helps to keep more people out of hospital and closer to their natural support systems of family, friends and neighbours.

Through the significant investments of the Aging at Home initiative, an additional \$31 million will be invested into Erie St. Clair to help keep seniors live healthy and independently in their own homes.

Additionally, the role of EMS as first responders needs to be acknowledged as the most appropriate linkage to Emergency Departments in the case of life threatening illness or accidents. Our community engagement to date with EMS and other stakeholders has indicated that EMS is not appropriately used by rural residents in emergent situations.

QUALITY

How is the provincial government able to say they are providing good quality health when access is being limited, when services are being centralized, when you've got hips and knees in one building and eyes in another and people are having to travel, and an aging population?

Health care delivery is changing, more specialists and test equipment is needed for diagnosis and better patient outcomes. This requires optimizing the facilities available which allows for greater productivity; it allows more patients to be treated with shorter wait times and enhances the quality of care through the expertise of specialized health professionals. Also, access to care is not limited to care in hospitals. The provincial government has made significant investments in Community Care Access Centres and Community Support Services because evidence demonstrates that supporting people close to home and enhancing community-based programs helps to keep more people out of hospital and closer to their natural support systems of family, friends and neighbours.

Why can't the people who are supposed to be your future, get service like you?

Our focus is on improving access to primary care for everyone, including children and youth. By ensuring consistent access to primary care, your health improves. We all use the same local health care system, but that system is changing. The reality today is that when you require advanced levels of care, it is very likely you will have to travel to another institution or another community. For example, when you are diagnosed with cancer there is a high likelihood that you would need to travel to a regional centre for surgery to ensure that you have access to the level of expertise required for that specific procedure. However, it's also very likely that if you had cancer today, you would be able to get support pre and post surgery closer to home. This interlinking of services across communities and regions means that throughout Ontario, more people have access to the right care.

How is the LHIN going to ensure quality health care in the winter when highway 40 is shut down by the Ontario Provincial Police?

As part of this study, we are consulting with EMS, Fire Departments, and police in each region to determine their current and future capabilities as well as to better understand the protocols already in place, such as those implemented in bad weather or for highway closure. We are also looking at best practices in other communities.

ECONOMY

Why would someone open a business in Wallaceburg if an ER is not available?

Our primary concern is ensuring people get the health care they need when and where they need it. Today there are many factors affecting the economies of communities across Ontario and Canada and any future speculation would be inappropriate.

GOVERNANCE/LEADERSHIP

Why is it that EDs are mostly staffed by doctors in London? Why don't we see support from Chatham doctors? Is this really an alliance and if it is, where is the alliance?

The hospital has signed a funding agreement with local physicians to staff the ED; however, with limited local physicians, it is difficult to uphold this agreement. Therefore, CKHA arranges to have out of town physicians staff the ED to ensure coverage. Physicians are not hospital employees but they sign agreements with hospitals to provide specific services. Although it is true that physicians from Chatham rarely support shifts in Wallaceburg, it is also true that physicians in Wallaceburg rarely supports shifts in Chatham. Both EDs rely on out of town physicians for full coverage, which identifies an opportunity for greater collaboration.

Will the CEO of CKHA be fired before the hospital is closed?

This study is not about the leadership of CKHA nor intended to result in a personal attack on any one individual.

Why does Gary need so many staff?

The ESC LHIN is responsible for planning, integrating, funding and managing the performance of over \$900 Million in health care services delivered by 88 health service providers for the 649,000 residents of Erie St. Clair. This is a substantial task that requires an adequate number of staff with the relevant skill sets to meet our accountability agreements with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Who is monitoring the LHIN organization?

The ESC LHIN signs an accountability agreement with the provincial government to execute its mandate. This agreement is posted to our web site at: www.eriesticlairhin.on.ca

Why did CKHA dismantle and move the intensive care unit from Wallaceburg to Chatham?

This question relates to decisions made by the Chatham-Kent Health Alliance prior to the establishment of the LHINs. We have provided a copy of this question to CKHA in order to respond.

Why are doctors (including out of town physicians) being told to send patients to Chatham and who is directing them to do so?

The LHIN is not aware of any such direction; however, this is an operational matter and once again, we have forwarded a copy of this question to CKHA for their response.

Has anyone from the LHIN ever driven the roads around Wallaceburg during bad weather?

ESC LHIN staff and members of the Board of Directors live throughout the region and many travel through Wallaceburg in addition to Lambton, Chatham-Kent and Essex as part of their daily commute or in travelling to and from meetings with health service providers.

Can CKHA give Wallaceburg a chance at having a centre of excellence?

The CKHA recently announced its long-term commitment to Wallaceburg and its intention to develop a new health care facility in the community as part of its Master planning / Master programming efforts.

FUNDING

Why are the small rural hospitals in debt?

The current financial situation of hospitals across Ontario (small rural to large urban) is a challenge for the health care system. LHINs are working closely with hospitals to find efficiencies that do not impact patient care. For example, hospitals within our region signed an agreement for employee benefits collectively, that resulted in over \$1 Million in savings to the system. By partnering together, the institutions could negotiate a better rate without diminishing the quality of benefits for employees. This is really about improving health by creating a sustainable system for both now and in the future.

Why not fire all of the consultants and give the money to the hospitals?

Consultants are hired because of their specific expertise and ability to provide an additional perspective to those working on an issue or project. Their contribution is limited by time and scope; however, they remain an essential tool for any organization when required.

Do we know the cost of getting new helicopters, ambulance and EMS resources?

We have met with the Chatham-Kent EMS administrators and are working with them to better understand their current capabilities and limitations, including the cost of additional resources if required.

GOVERNMENT

With funding cuts being announced by the provincial government, why is there so much news about new construction?

This question is outside the scope of health care and our mandate and, therefore, we cannot provide an appropriate response. Should members of the community be interested in the current priorities and initiatives of the provincial government, they can visit the government's web site at www.gov.on.ca or by contacting their local Member of Provincial Parliament.

OTHER

Who is paying for the clickers?

The ESC LHIN is paying for the cost of the electronic survey technology.