



**MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Antibiotic Stewardship Program improving quality of care at NHS**

As part of Antibiotic Awareness Week (Nov. 17-23), the Niagara Health System is pleased to announce that its Antibiotic Stewardship Program is seeing positive results and improving the quality of care for our patients.

The goal of the Antibiotic Stewardship Program, which was launched last year at the St. Catharines Site, is to promote the responsible use of antibiotics.

To do that, a risk benefit analysis is conducted on each patient case in which an antibiotic is prescribed. Important to an effective Antibiotic Stewardship Program is the use of antibiotics only when necessary and selecting the appropriate antibiotic at the right dose, frequency and duration to optimize patient outcomes.

Targeted antibiotic therapy can reduce the risk of resistant infections. When antibiotics are prescribed, in some cases they kill off the “good” bugs in the body, and allow antibiotic-resistant bugs to take over. This can cause hospital-acquired infections.

“Our message is simple, yet effective: Make every antibiotic count,” says Dr. Karim Ali, Niagara Health System’s Director of Infectious Diseases Division and Associate Director of the Antimicrobial Stewardship Program. “This stewardship program is one more way the NHS is working to improve the quality of patient care. We’re ahead of the curve on this effort to encourage responsible antibiotic use.”

Since launching the stewardship program, the St. Catharines Site has seen improvements in several key areas, including a 40.7 percent decrease in overall broad-spectrum antibiotic use and a 53.7 percent decrease in hospital-acquired *Clostridium difficile* infection. Also, length of stay and readmission rates have decreased or remained stable on units where the stewardship program has been active.

The stewardship program was recently introduced at the Welland Site and will be launched at the Greater Niagara General Site in Niagara Falls in January.

Ms. Gina Fleming, Antimicrobial Stewardship Pharmacist at the NHS, adds: “It is wonderful to see the difference this program is making in the lives of our patients and in improving the quality of the care we provide. We are excited about

expanding the program to other sites and seeing the positive effect it can have elsewhere.”

**WHAT IS ANTIBIOTIC AWARENESS WEEK**

Antibiotic Awareness Week is an effort worldwide to promote the responsible use of antibiotic drugs and raise awareness about the public health concern of antibiotic resistance.

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