

Spring 2017 Issue

niagarahealth —NOW

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YOUR MEDICATIONS MATTER

Learn why it's important for you to bring a list of your medications to all medical appointments



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Niagara Health Now is produced by Niagara Health's Corporate Communications Team.

Editor and Writer: Steven Gallagher

Design Layout and Photography: Anna Cobian

Contributing writers: Melissa Raftis, Kim Jackson



Message from Suzanne Johnston **President**

Welcome to the latest edition of Niagara Health Now. The stories in this issue cover our four Areas of Focus -- Extraordinary Teams, Extraordinary Care, Extraordinary Future and Extraordinary Innovation.

You'll read about how our innovation efforts, including our new Patient Satisfaction Survey, are enhancing experiences for our patients, their families and our teams.

You'll hear from a patient about how our new Integrated Comprehensive Care program has made a significant difference in her life. The program provides discharged patients with access to healthcare services to help manage their chronic conditions at home.

You will also read about how a Niagara Health nurse designed a symbol to help comfort our palliative patients and their families. It's a wonderful example of our caring teams.

And you will receive an update on our planning for the future, which includes the programs and services proposed for Niagara Falls and Welland as part of our redevelopment planning.

And there's so much more highlighting the extraordinary work of our teams who are helping us achieve our vision of a Healthier Niagara.

I hope you enjoy this issue!

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steven.gallagher@niagarahealth.on.ca



A sign of caring

Niagara Health nurse designs symbol to help comfort our palliative patients and their families

Registered Practical Nurse Mark Plantinga with the sign he helped design.

It started with feedback from a patient's family.

Cardiology staff at Niagara Health's St. Catharines Site were told the care they had provided was exceptional, however, the family noted there were times at their loved one's end of life when the hallways in the unit were noisy.

Toni Rogers, Niagara Health Cardiology Program Clinical Manager, brought the concern to her team. She asked them to think about a symbol they could put on a palliative patient's door to make visitors and staff aware they should make an extra effort to be quiet.

The call to action resonated with Registered Practical Nurse Mark Plantinga.

"The ways we can make care as comfortable as possible is something we're always trying to be cognizant of, especially in palliative situations," says Mr. Plantinga. "I started brainstorming some ideas that could highlight those rooms that captured the components of care we really try to strive for."

On his own time, Mr. Plantinga designed an emblem with a heart at the centre hovering above an outreached hand, symbolizing the fragility of life and the indirect touch of compassion when caring for a patient. Mr. Plantinga says the symbol represents how any single person can make a difference for our patients.

"We just have to take that extra bit of courtesy when we're near that room to quiet down to make it as comfortable as possible for them," says Mr. Plantinga. "I think this symbol, and not just for palliative patients, it reminds us of how we need to be all the time for everyone."

"I'm so proud and overwhelmed by Mark's response," says Ms. Rogers. "He took the idea and he really put the heart and the emotion behind it."

Mr. Plantinga says it is difficult for anyone to deal with the end of a life and saw this project as an opportunity to make an improvement in the way we approach palliative individuals and their families. Eventually, the symbol will be used across all Niagara Health sites as a respectful way to highlight palliative patient rooms.



FOCUS ON INNOVATION

Innovation has important impact
on the care we provide patients



Niagara Health's Information and Communications Technology team developed our innovative Patient Satisfaction Survey application in-house (Story on Page 5). ICT team members Michelle Gibson, Project Manager, and Graham Campbell, Business Systems Analyst, led the implementation.

Innovation plays a vital role in improving healthcare delivery, patient satisfaction and patient outcomes.

Advancements in medical technology allow our healthcare providers to better diagnose, treat and care for their patients.

Niagara Health is on the leading edge of developing and using innovative systems. Some of these innovations may not be as readily visible as the latest state-of-the-art equipment might be to patients and yet it makes all the difference in the world when it comes to care.

Fostering a culture of extraordinary innovation at Niagara Health is a key direction of our ambitious strategic plan. Efforts so far are making a significant contribution in our work to create extraordinary experiences for our patients, their families and our teams.

Among the successes, Niagara Health is improving patient satisfaction, creating a more seamless system of care, enhancing communication among our multidisciplinary teams and improving workflow.

"Our people at Niagara Health are making a difference. The teamwork, fresh thinking and innovation taking place are having an important impact on the care we provide our patients," says Niagara Health President Suzanne Johnston. "An added benefit of this commitment to continuous quality improvement is our success in recruiting great people to work and volunteer at our hospital."

Over the next three pages you'll read about a few examples of how our innovative systems are enhancing the patient experience and supporting our healthcare teams.



Measuring patient satisfaction in real time

New technology that allows for in-the-moment feedback making a difference in the experience of our patients and families

Niagara Health patient Craig Millar says being able to provide feedback is vital in healthcare.

That's why Mr. Millar welcomed the opportunity to participate in our new and innovative Patient Satisfaction Survey that sees trained volunteers visit patients in their rooms using a hand-held tablet to complete the questionnaire.

This technology, developed by Niagara Health's Information and Communications Technology team, allows us to measure patient satisfaction in real time and includes an escalation process for timely resolution of their concerns.

The volunteers ask patients five questions covering areas such as whether a doctor or nurse explained their care in a way they can understand, the involvement they had in decisions about their care and how they would rate the care they received.

Any need not being met triggers an automatic email, using Connexall technology, signalling to the Clinical Manager of the unit that there is a patient concern that needs to be addressed.

"It's good to give some feedback to the hospital," says Mr. Millar. "It's a great learning opportunity. What a patient has to say can go a long way to make their stay more pleasurable."



Niagara Health volunteer Chantelle Sterenberg asks patient Craig Miller questions as part of our Patient Satisfaction Survey.

Lisa Hildebrand, Manager, Clinical Services at Niagara Health, says the survey has been an important addition for patient engagement.

"This is absolutely valuable because we can affect change now while the patient is here. It helps us to be aware and something that we can address right now," she says. "This has been a great opportunity in building trusting relationships with our community, knowing that they are being listened to in real time. It is another way we are engaging with patients and their families to gather their feedback."

Being able to collect and act upon "in-the-moment feedback" can make all the difference in the experience of our patients and creates new learning opportunities for both staff and leaders.

The Patient Satisfaction Survey, which is in addition to the regular discussions our healthcare teams are having with patients about their care, has been a rewarding experience for Niagara Health Volunteer Chantelle Sterenberg.

Mrs. Sterenberg surveys patients at our St. Catharines Site once a week as part of her volunteer role.

"I think the patients appreciate it," she says. "For me personally, I feel good that I'm giving somebody a voice and maybe a little company. I enjoy meeting and learning from the patients."

In addition to being asked five questions, patients can include other comments at the end of the survey.

"They're happy to have a way to thank an individual or the staff in general," says Mrs. Sterenberg.

Connecting the docs

Secure smartphone app allows Niagara Health physicians to text one another



Niagara Health Orthopedic Surgeon Dr. David Martin uses the qConnect app.

When most of us want to get a hold of someone quickly, we pull out our smartphones and send a text message. In healthcare, however, communication becomes more complicated. That's why Niagara Health has become one of the first hospitals in Canada to adopt a new app for physicians, which makes it faster and more secure for them to communicate with one another on their personal devices.

Working with IBM and Vocera Communications, Inc., Niagara Health designed and deployed an innovative smartphone app called qConnect that allows our physicians to instant message each other through their own phones.

Jeff Wilson, Niagara Health's Director of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), says doctors can now share test results and other key patient-related information with the click of the send button, ultimately resulting in more timely care for patients.

"Streamlining the communications between physicians and nurses and ward clerks ultimately does impact patient care because the turnaround times are reduced," says Mr. Wilson. "It's about helping our physicians be more efficient and more effective because every step we can take to reduce seconds or

minutes communicating can make a huge difference for our patients."

The use of pagers has been the mainstay of communication for doctors in hospitals since the 1980s, says Dr. Rafi Setrak, Niagara Health Chief of Emergency Medicine and clinical lead for the qConnect project. Unlike a paging system, qConnect lets the user know when a message has been sent, received and read by the correct person in one easy step. It also includes built-in contact lists, which allow users to reach the on-call physician without having to know who is on call.

"It's more efficient than regular texting because if you're going to text or email you need to know the person's contact information," says Dr. Setrak. "With qConnect you don't because those contacts are already built into the system."

Most importantly, the information shared is secure as it is stored on servers housed on Niagara Health property, says Tammy Chaput, Niagara Health Information and Communications Technology Project Manager.

"Because we house all of our own servers, everything that is shared in this app stays behind Niagara Health's firewall," says Ms. Chaput. "Doctors can now send patient information like diagnoses and X-rays to each other through their own smartphones without risking a breach in patient privacy."

Niagara Health's ICT department worked with the hospital's doctors to customize the app to specifically meet their communication needs.

"It's about helping our physicians be more efficient and more effective ..."

Jeff Wilson

Director of Information and Communications Technology

"Because this is a two-way texting solution with multimedia capabilities, it opens so many new doors for communication," says Dr. Setrak. "A heart monitor from the Critical Care Unit could forward the patient's rhythm right to the cardiologist's cellphone, for example. The possibilities are endless. We're just starting to scratch the surface."

Other hospitals in Ontario are now looking to Niagara Health to see how they can implement similar leading-edge communication technology.



Other examples of innovations Niagara Health has undertaken to improve healthcare within our organization and the larger healthcare system:

PATIENT IN-HOUSE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM REDUCES WAIT TIMES



Niagara Health's innovative Patient Transportation Program allows porters like Darlene Augustino to receive patient transport requests directly through a wireless phone system.

Niagara Health's new portering system was launched in 2013 to make patient transfers within the hospital faster and smoother, whether for a diagnostic test, procedure or other need.

Niagara Health worked with Connexall (an integrated technology solution company) to develop an automated notification system that allows all hospital

staff involved with patient transports to follow a patient's status or movement along the route in real time on a monitor.

Automating our porters' workflow has significantly improved patient transport times from one location in the hospital to another and has generated positive feedback from both patients and staff. Reduced wait times for transfers translate into better experiences for our patients and a greater ability of our porters to manage their workloads.

Here's how the program works: Porters receive transport requests directly through a dedicated wireless phone system; those issuing the request for a patient transport are advised the moment it is received and accepted by the porter who will be managing the task. The task can be escalated if more or alternate resources are needed.

The system provides up-to-the-minute details on each task to ensure a more seamless process for patients and staff. As a result, patients receive better service and staff on our units spend less of their valuable time coordinating and following up on transfers.

WAIT TIMES AND OTHER INFORMATION IN REAL TIME

Niagara Health was one of the first hospital systems of its size in Canada to provide its community with real-time Emergency Department and Urgent Care Centre wait times and other information about usage.



As part of our ongoing efforts to improve the patient experience and access to care, wait time information is available on Niagara Health's website and on TV monitors at our sites allowing people to make decisions about how they access care. This system, powered by our partners Oculys, reinforces our commitment to be transparent and accountable by communicating information in real time that will help those we serve make more informed decisions about their care.

Other innovative solutions we have undertaken with Oculys include implementation of a new decision support tool that our healthcare leaders and front-

line staff use every day to manage the movement of patients throughout our hospitals and services. The new Oculys Performance tool is a mobile-friendly dashboard that provides our teams with one concise overview displaying real-time operations data for use to make decisions on a timely basis. The dashboards provide information about bed occupancy across each program, patient bed assignments, anticipated discharges, and they even allow patient care areas to view their incoming and outgoing patients. Information is also available providing an overview of our ED/UCCs, including the number of admitted patients awaiting a bed within the hospital as well as the number of patients in the waiting room.

We have also invested in a similar tool with our partner Hotel Dieu Shaver Health and Rehabilitation Centre in St. Catharines that improves the flow of patients by helping them to more quickly access the proper level of care they need. With this new tool, patients at Niagara Health needing rehabilitation or complex care are identified sooner, allowing for a more seamless transition to the next level of care and resulting in reduced wait times.



Partnering for patients

Organizations work together during busy winter months to ensure they're meeting community needs

Trends in healthcare can be very unpredictable. But one that is easy to predict is during the winter months, flu and other illnesses spread in our communities.

As a result, the healthcare system faces increased pressure from people seeking care. This year, Niagara experienced even greater pressures because of a rise in flu cases and other illnesses compared with the year before. Hospitals across the province also experienced high patient activity.

For a second year, Niagara Health and our partners assumed a leadership role in Ontario by taking a regional approach to address the increased pressure on the system.

Continue reading on page 7

During the Know Your Healthcare Options public education campaign, Dr. Bahareh Ghadaki, an infectious disease specialist at Niagara Health, offered tips to the community on how to prevent the spread of illness.

As part of those efforts, a Niagara Region Winter Planning Command Centre was mobilized to ensure access to care. Teleconferences are held twice a week with our partners, including Niagara Emergency Medical Services, Niagara Region, Long-Term Care facilities, Hotel Dieu Shaver Health and Rehabilitation Centre, Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) and the Local Health Integration Network.

The Command Centre provides a framework to identify the critical pressure points, identify staffing issues that will affect daily operations and take action to help reduce the patient flow challenges. A significant amount of planning and preparation took place prior to the holidays to support the increased demands and pressures on patient flow throughout the winter season.

In addition, Niagara Health partnered with Hotel Dieu Shaver, Niagara Region Public Health and CCAC to launch a Know Your Healthcare Options public education campaign throughout the winter. The campaign was designed to help the public better understand the options available to them during the

holiday season and winter months when healthcare providers are busy with an increased number of patients needing care for flu and other seasonal ailments. The campaign included media coverage, social media and direct education with patients.

Derek McNally, Niagara Health's Executive Vice President Clinical Services and Chief Nursing Executive, thanked the Niagara Health team for going above and beyond to ensure patients and families are safe and well cared for.

"Amid many added pressures, our patients and families continue to receive excellent care thanks to our teams' compassion and dedication," says Mr. McNally. "We're also very thankful for the opportunity to work with our partners to improve the patient experience and access to care."

Mr. McNally also thanked the community for its support during this busy time. "We know that wait times are higher when there is more demand. We're sorry for any inconvenience this may cause the public and we appreciate your patience and understanding."



ON THE WEB:

To learn more about the Know Your Healthcare Options campaign, please visit www.niagarahealth.on.ca/options

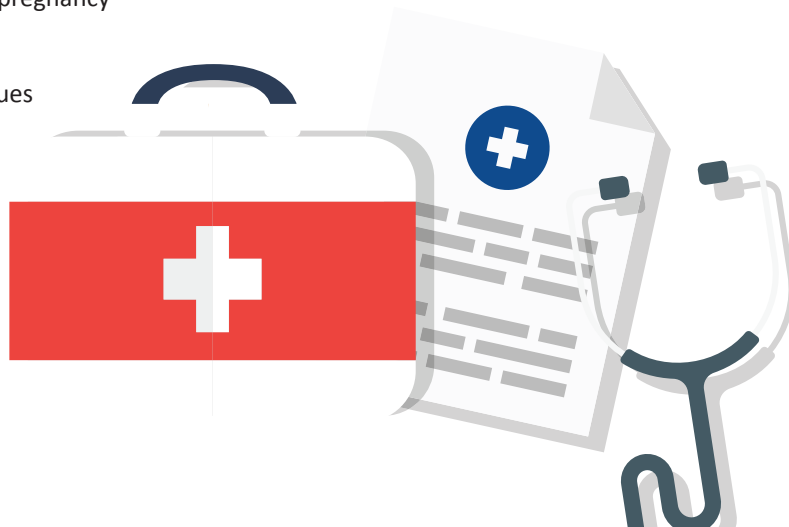
When to go to a Niagara Health Emergency Department

Our specialized ED teams treat patients who call 9-1-1 and arrive by ambulance. They also treat walk-in patients for such emergencies as:

- Broken bones
- Dizziness
- Complications of pregnancy
- Serious illness
- Serious injury
- Mental health issues

When to go to a Niagara Health Urgent Care Centre

- Minor abdominal pain (nausea, vomiting)
- Ear, nose, throat and eye problems
- Minor mental health issues
- Cuts that may need stitches
- Sprains, strains, sports injuries
- Minor asthma attacks or allergic reactions





You can play a role in your own safety

Bring updated medication list to all medical appointments

Susan Cubelic, Niagara Health's Director of Pharmacy, and Andrea Forgione, a Medication Reconciliation Pharmacist, look over the medication brochure that is available on our website and on Page 11. In the background is Pharmacy Technician Kim Mauriello.

We want patients to play a role in their own safety.

One way is by bringing an accurate list of your medications when visiting one of our sites, whether it's for a scheduled appointment or a visit to one of our Emergency Departments or Urgent Care Centres.

"To provide the best possible care, your healthcare team needs to know what medications you are taking at home," says Andrea Forgione, Niagara Health Medication Reconciliation Pharmacist. "This includes prescription and over-the-counter, non-prescription medications as well as vitamins, minerals, supplements and natural remedies."

WHAT IS CONSIDERED A MEDICATION?

- Prescriptions
- Over-the-counter medications (allergy medicines, cough and cold preparations, vitamins/minerals)
- Natural health products (herbals, homeopathic medicines)
- Ear/eye drops, creams/ointments, inhalers, injections, liquids, nose sprays, patches, samples or suppositories
- Please speak with your community pharmacist if you need assistance creating a list of your current medications.

In a recent survey of our Emergency Department patients, 48 per cent said they bring their medication list with them to every medical appointment.

As part of the Your Medications Matter campaign, we have a print-friendly medication brochure on our website (www.niagarahealth.on.ca) and also available on Page 11 that allows you to write out your medications, along with how much is taken and how often as well as who prescribed the medication and if you have any allergies. "Keeping an up-to-date medication list with you provides important information for your healthcare team, and improves patient safety," says Ms. Forgione. "If someone has questions or needs help creating a list of their current medications, they are encouraged to speak to their community pharmacist."



Ask your community pharmacist to help you create a list of your current medications. Remember to always keep this list up to date.

Fill out the form below, cut along the dotted line, fold it and keep it in your wallet.

Name: _____ Family Doctor: _____

Emergency Contact(s) (include telephone number): _____

Allergies (Reaction): _____

Community Pharmacy (list all): _____

[illegible][illegible]

Advocate for Aboriginal patients

Program provides support
and helps patients navigate
healthcare system in Niagara



Jolene Courchene knows navigating the healthcare system can be difficult and overwhelming.

"It's hard when you're not feeling well and you're in the hospital and maybe you don't have family or community connections to provide support," says Ms. Courchene, an Aboriginal Patient Navigator with the Aboriginal Health Centre. "Sometimes you're left to figure things out on your own."

Ms. Courchene wants Aboriginal patients in Niagara to know she is here to help.

"I want hospital staff and the community to know that I am here and that the Aboriginal Patient Navigator Program is available to them," she says.

Ms. Courchene is part of a team of Aboriginal Patient Navigators who provide services in the Niagara, Hamilton and Haldimand-Brant regions. Designed specifically to meet the needs of Aboriginal people, the program provides support to patients and their families and assists in accessing the healthcare system as well as traditional healing and wellness practices.

The program also provides navigation services that are culturally appropriate within the health/social service systems for individuals, caregivers and their families to improve patient outcomes.





Jolene Courchene wants Aboriginal patients in Niagara to know she is here to help.

"There is a need for advocacy for the Aboriginal population," says Ms. Courchene, who has been in the Aboriginal Patient Navigator role since earlier this year. "The health system can be hard to navigate. Having someone like me come in and provide support can be helpful. Sometimes it's just coming in to say hi that helps the situation."

Funding for the Aboriginal Patient Navigator Program is provided through the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Local Health Integration Network.

Ms. Courchene, who has a background in working in Mental Health, says another key part of her role is connecting patients with other Aboriginal support organizations in the region.

"Wherever individuals are at in terms of their healing

journey, some just want social activities while others may need more health outreach," she says.

Ms. Courchene says it is rewarding work and part of her role and responsibility as a helper in her community.

"I've received great feedback. There is a lot of gratitude and relief," she says. "When you're working with people who are not well and facing so many barriers, it feels good to be that support person who individuals can build a trusting relationship with. I feel incredibly grateful and humble to do the work that I do."

MORE INFORMATION

If you'd like more information on the Aboriginal Patient Navigator Program, please call 905-358-4320 or visit www.aboriginalhealthcentre.com

Seamless transition from hospital to home

Program providing discharged patients like Jean Brown with access to services to help manage their chronic conditions at home

Integrated Care Co-ordinators like Jane Karner connect discharged patients with services in the community, including home care.



Jean Brown says Niagara Health's Integrated Comprehensive Care (ICC) program has changed her life. In December 2016, the 73-year-old grandmother was recovering from a heart attack when she started having trouble breathing.

Ms. Brown received care in the Emergency Department at Niagara Health's Welland Site, where she was then connected with an Integrated Care Co-ordinator after it was determined she met the criteria for the ICC program.

Launched last April, the program directly integrates hospital and community care services for patients who are admitted with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and congestive heart failure (CHF) and require home care after discharge.

Ms. Brown no longer drives and has limited ability to travel.

"So when they said the healthcare workers would come to the house, I said this is wonderful."

Ms. Brown was discharged from Niagara Health's Welland Site on a Friday. By 9 a.m. Saturday, a nurse was knocking at her front door to deliver care.

"I was so happy to see her the next day because I was scared," says Ms. Brown. "She took my blood pressure and she explained a lot of things and explained what happened to me."

Heather Paterson, Niagara Health Director of Patient Care and Integrated Comprehensive Care project lead, says as of the end of 2016, 311 patients have come through the ICC program.

Integrated Care co-ordinators act as a link between hospital specialists and connect COPD and CHF patients with necessary service providers in the community, including home care provided by St. Joseph's Home Care. "The feedback from our patient satisfaction surveys has been very positive," says Ms. Paterson. "So far the data is indicating that we've created significant positive change."

Patients and their family members have access to support on a 24/7 basis for 60 days after discharge. For Ms. Brown, that means she receives home visits from nurses, physiotherapists and a dietitian.

"I learned a lot from this program. The dietitian came to my house and showed me how to read labels," says Ms. Brown. "I honestly believe if I would have had this program after my first heart attack, I don't think I would have had the heart attack in December because I think I would have understood what was happening. The nurses really explained it to me and explained what I have to do."

For those patients who are readmitted, Ms. Paterson says they are staying in hospital for shorter periods of time because they are learning to manage their chronic conditions.

"It's making the transition from hospital to home a more seamless one."

Heather Paterson

Director of Patient Care and Integrated Comprehensive Care project lead

"It's making the transition from hospital to home a more seamless one," says Ms. Paterson.

The ICC program builds on the success of St. Joseph's Health System's early work in launching an innovative approach to integrated care and currently includes all acute care hospitals in the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant LHIN.

Integrated Comprehensive Care at a glance

- More than 300 patients have come through the program since it launched in April 2016.
- Patients and their families have access to support 24/7 for 60 days after discharge.
- Mobile technology, such as iPads, allows home care staff to update the care team in real time with any changes to a patient's condition.

We are Niagara Health



Members of the Douglas Memorial Site Allied Health Team pictured from left to right: Kathryn Ingebrigtsen, Cheryl Allen, Tawnya Otten, Shannon Finn and Carol Van Dieten.

Interprofessional Practice Award recipients 2016

Each year we celebrate the accomplishments and milestones of our incredible staff and physicians at our annual Loyalty Recognition and Retirement Events and our Interprofessional Practice Awards.

In the fall of 2016, we celebrated the long service milestones of 657 employees, 50 physicians, and 107 retirees. The combined time worked by these staff members and doctors totals an impressive 14,345 years of serving patients in Niagara. As well, members of Niagara Health's team who go above and beyond to help patients with their physical, emotional and personal needs were recognized at our 10th annual Interprofessional Practice Awards. **Here are the award recipients:**

Individual Practice

Rosalie Bilodeau, Physiotherapy Assistant - Greater Niagara General

With a helpful attitude and dedication to those she serves, Rosalie often takes a lead role in adapting the plan of care to meet the age-specific and cultural needs of her patients. For example, she recently took the initiative to work with other staff members, a patient and their family to devise a strategy to help work around the patient's physical limitations to meet their personal hygiene needs. Rosalie coordinated the extra time and equipment needed to create a strategy that was not only effective but also worked best for the patient.

Jacob George, Discharge Planner – Welland Site

Jacob spends a great deal of time with each member of the interdisciplinary team to better understand their specific roles and scope of practice so he can better assist in enhancing the care delivered and the overall patient experience. Whether it's staying late, missing breaks or coming in on his own time, Jacob consistently goes above and beyond to meet the needs of those he cares for.



Mark Plantinga, Registered Practical Nurse – St. Catharines Site

Mark consistently demonstrates accountability, multidisciplinary collaboration and a values-based approach to quality patient and family care. One example of how Mark continually demonstrates caring and compassion for his patients stems from a team discussion about creating more awareness about areas where there are palliative patients. Mark designed a symbol to be placed outside of palliative rooms to indicate to those nearby to be as quiet and respectful as possible when passing by.

Kathryn Pummell, Social Worker – Greater Niagara General

Kathryn is always ready to advocate for her patients and their families. She put together a binder for each unit she is responsible for to provide patients and families with contacts for community support services. Kathryn has also been known to call various used clothing stores to collect donations for patients. She also helps her patients file their income taxes and assists with other personal activities that they find difficult to do on their own.

Patti Wasylowich-Champoux, Charge Diagnostic Imaging Technologist – Greater Niagara General

Patti intuitively knows when a patient needs extra emotional or physical support, and immediately exudes a warm and caring attitude, while being positive and respectful of each person. She ensures her patients are comfortable and at ease, while providing confidentiality and dignity, especially for those who cherish their privacy. She relates exceptionally well to patients of all ages. Patti communicates openly and transparently in all her conversations and is a collaborative and cheerful team member.

Innovation Award**Andrea Forgione, Pharmacist – St. Catharines Site**

In her role, Andrea acts as a facilitator, educator, moderator and innovator. She works proactively with programs to ensure the Medical Reconciliation (MedRec) processes are in place to support safer patient care. She recently worked collaboratively with our Information and Communications Technology and Decision Support teams to use new software technology to allow staff to prioritize their clinical work and efficiently identify which patients require a best possible medication history.

Education Award**Robin Owen, Clinical Dietitian – St. Catharines Site**

Robin is a team player who often asks her colleagues if she can assist them with providing patient care when workloads are busy. Among the many projects she worked on this year, Robin developed a dietary education tool for patients called Niagara Meal and Food Support Services. She collaborated with other disciplines to design a handout for patients in need of meal services at home. It's now being used in other disciplines to help patients receive the meal services after they've been discharged.

Team Practice Award**Douglas Memorial Hospital allied health team, Complex Care Unit:**

Cheryl Allen, Discharge Planner

Kristi Baughn, Physiotherapist

Debbie Potashnyk, Recreation Therapist

Shannon Finn, Physio Rehab Assistant

Taylor Strande, Speech Language Pathologist

Petra Fraelic, Occupational Therapist

Teresa Tulumello, Physiotherapist

Kathryn Ingebrigtsen, Speech Language Pathologist

Carol Van Dieten, Physiotherapist

Tawnya Otten, Physiotherapy Assistant

Kathryn Pummell, Social Worker

This group works together to ensure extraordinary caring is delivered to every person, every time. The physiotherapists ensure patients are as strong as possible when they are discharged home, while the social worker immediately provides assistance to ensure the patient has support systems available to them. The speech language therapists assist patients and caregivers with swallowing assessments to ensure there are eating safely, the outpatient physiotherapists provide supports to ensure patients are thriving in the community and the discharge planner meets with patients immediately after admission to make sure there is a safe discharge home. By working together as a team, this group helps to restore lives while living out our values.

Building a Healthier Niagara



A message to the community

Niagara Health would like to thank the thousands of people who offered feedback during the initial redevelopment planning related to the Niagara Falls South Site hospital and the Welland Ambulatory & Urgent Care Site.

Community leaders, residents, patients, healthcare workers, physicians and municipal partners were engaged in the planning so far, and we will continue to seek input as we move forward. In January, the LHIN endorsed the first submission – Stage 1A – which is a first look at the programs and services that would be offered in Niagara Falls and Welland.

“We are very appreciative of the LHIN’s endorsement of Stage 1A,” says Niagara Health President Suzanne Johnston. “While this is just the first of many milestones required to move forward, it’s a significant step closer to achieving our vision of a healthier Niagara.”

In addition to planning new buildings, Niagara Health is also exploring new ways that healthcare services can be offered in the community such as in-home care, satellite clinics in shared spaces, and use of new technology. Such partnerships would go a long way to ensure every patient is receiving the care they need in the right place, at the right time.

Next steps are for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to review and provide feedback on Stages 1A & 1B, which describes anticipated space requirements for the programs and services outlined in Stage 1A.

Although the planning will be refined throughout the various stages, at the core of this work is to:

- integrate hospital and community care services for a seamless experience
- anticipate the need for growth in inpatient beds – projecting 100 new beds in 2023 (located in Niagara Falls and St. Catharines) and an additional 140 new inpatient beds in 2033 (majority located in Niagara Falls)
- seize the opportunity to take advantage of the latest medical and technological advances in healthcare
- continue to retain and recruit the best physicians and healthcare professionals
- enhance our infection prevention and control practices
- make better use of our limited resources by reducing duplication
- provide senior-friendly care in all aspects of the patient experience

Stage 1A includes the proposal for Centres of Excellence in stroke, eye care, seniors’ wellness, complex care and academic education to be located in Niagara Falls. The proposal also calls for urgent care, dialysis clinics, outpatient clinics for medical and surgical patients, diagnostic imaging, ultrasound and radiology, as well as a lab and other services in Welland. The programs and services plan will continue to be refined as we move through each stage of planning.



In February, a number of community partners and representatives from our Community Advisory Committee joined members of our Niagara Health team to exchange ideas and to provide feedback on the planning so far. They heard from experts in seniors' care, the future of hospital design and wayfinding (features that help people navigate a building) which inspired all of the participants to think of new and innovative ways that care can be delivered in our communities. It was an educational day that left everyone feeling excited about what the next stages of project planning will involve.



To receive project updates, please subscribe through our website www.niagarahealth.on.ca/future

Questions and feedback can be emailed to healthierniagara@niagarahealth.on.ca.

Power of pet therapy

Four-legged friends bring comfort to patients and our teams

Carol Privat is grateful for the launch of Niagara Health's first Pet Therapy Program.



Patient Carol Privat hangs out with Teddy.

"I look forward to pet therapy day," says Ms. Privat, a patient in the Woolcott Wing at our Welland Site. "I can't wait to get to see them, to hold them and pet them. I just love them."

The Welland resident says the therapy dogs have made a big difference in her care.

"When you pet them, it gives you that warm feeling," she says. "They're happy to see you and I'm happy to see them. It's very relaxing."

The Pet Therapy Program, which was launched in partnership with the Therapy Dog Program of St. John Ambulance, Niagara Region Branch, provides comfort and support to patients, their families and our teams.

Therapy dogs and their volunteer handler teams started bringing cheer to our patients at our Welland Site in mid-2016. The program has since expanded to the Mental Health Program at our St. Catharines Site, where patients have dubbed the visits "Furry Friday."

Niagara Health plans to have our four-legged friends visit patients at other sites in the future.

"The energy that radiates off the patients when you see them visiting with the pet therapy dogs is extraordinary," says Natalee Little, a Co-ordinator of Volunteer Resources at Niagara Health. "The peace and sense of calm it brings to the patients with a

simple pet of a dog is truly remarkable. The Recreation Therapists on the units that St. John Ambulance currently visits have said that it is not only great therapy for the patients, but for the staff as well."

Dr. Suzi Peters, Coordinator of the St John Ambulance Therapy Dog program in Niagara, adds: "We are honoured to be partnering with Niagara Health on this wonderful program. We hope the visits from the dogs brighten the moods of patients and their families. A visit from a therapy dog can also help bring a sense of normalcy to a patient. Being in a hospital for an extended period often means patients are away from their own family pets. Spending a few minutes with a loving dog may give them a much-needed boost."

"I can't wait to get to see them, to hold them and pet them. I just love them."

Carol Privat
Patient



Sokka is one of the four-legged friends providing comfort and supports to our patients and staff.



ONEFOUNDATION

for Niagara Health System

Supporting a Healthier Niagara

As the new President and CEO of OneFoundation, I am dedicated to supporting Niagara Health as we work together to build a healthier Niagara for all.

At OneFoundation, the staff, board members and volunteers are passionate about supporting the advancement of healthcare in Niagara. That passion, paired with the philanthropic spirit and incredible generosity of the Niagara community, are the building blocks for a healthier Niagara. Together, we are helping Niagara Health provide extraordinary caring, to every person, every time.

Each Niagaran truly has the power to impact the well-being of virtually every Niagara resident by ensuring Niagara Health is well-equipped with the tools and

services they need to provide extraordinary healthcare to the thousands of patients who rely on the sites of Niagara Health each year.

Thanks to the outstanding generosity of our donors, Niagara healthcare has made incredible progress in recent years. There is still much more work to be done and with the help of donors like you, we can help ensure that patients across Niagara are able to receive the care they need, when they need it. With so much to gain, I'm confident that, together, we can help build a healthier Niagara.

At OneFoundation, we'll be working hard to raise the bar to organizational excellence and are inviting the good people of Niagara to join us in making more great things happen at Niagara Health. I'm thankful for the warm welcome I've received so far and I look forward to meeting many more residents of this wonderful community. Please call or visit me anytime. I am always available to talk.

Roger D. Ali, MBA, CFRE
President and CEO,
OneFoundation for Niagara Health System



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