

North Renfrew County Health Link Communiqué

Joint Board-to-Board Governance

On Monday, January 25, 2016, sixty people representing nearly thirty organizations from across the county met for the first Joint Board-to-Board Governance engagement session. The participants were drawn from community boards and senior leadership of health and social services providers. The event was a pan-Renfrew County event, because many providers serve the entire county and interact with all three Health Links. The purpose of the session was to introduce a diverse group of local leaders to Health Links.

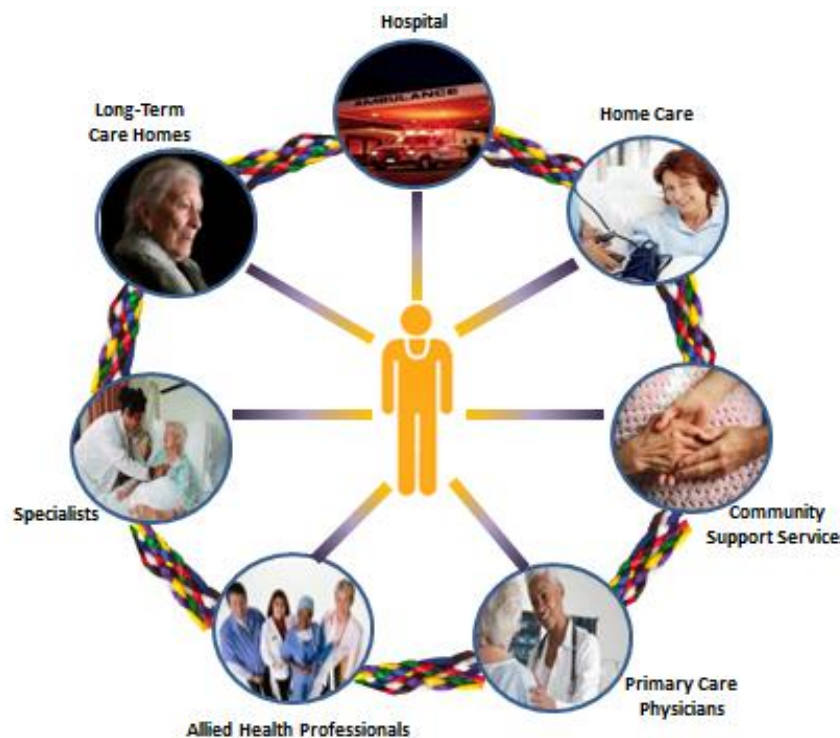
Kelly Hollihan, Board Chair of Pembroke Regional Hospital, acting as the day's Master's of Ceremonies, welcomed the group. She asked the group to think about the idea that while the health care providers in Ontario work hard to serve their own areas, the people of Ontario need a stronger, more collaborative health care system. At the board level what can we do to ensure this?

And coming from a background in customer service, she was struck by some of the patient stories from the Health Links. Cold transfers of patients can involve something like giving them a phone number, whereas a warm transfer may include introducing them to the next provider. We may be doing excellent work within our own touch point but the cross touch point requires coordination and collaboration.

Key Speakers

The first speaker Cal Martell, Senior Director, Health System Integration at the Champlain LHIN sketched out the Health Link model and purpose. He reviewed the Champlain LHIN's Integrated Health Services Plan for 2016/19 which commits to a rapid scale up of Health Links.

Julia Huckle, Project Manager of South Renfrew Health Link, gave a joint update on all three Health Links. Currently there are 132 patients enrolled in the three Health Links. Of those patients, 75% have more than four medical conditions plus other concerns (socio-economic factors, caregiver strain, social isolation, safety). Eleven of them are without Primary Care Providers, with Health Link Care Coordinators working to find them a family physician. Of the patients who have access to primary care, sixty-one different providers are involved.



Current referral sources include primary care providers, retirement homes, hospital discharge planners, and specific care teams (Diabetes Outreach, Geriatric Emergency Management (GEM) nurse, Chronic Heart Failure). Fifty percent of the current Health Links patients receive CCAC services. Four of the Health Links patients have died, which is expected given the complexity of the health conditions of the Health Link population.

Eric Hanna, CEO of Arnprior Regional Hospital (ARH) spoke about Boards and Health Links. He observed that change used to be episodic, but now change is constant. At ARH, they are moving from how they perform in their own facility – what is the wait time, how many visits, etc. to evaluating the performance of the health system. To be a better corporation, ARH must be more responsive to the community. He stated that for ARH, participation in Health Links is a matter of strategic importance, and challenged others in the room to consider making the same commitment.

Participants were then guided through two break-out sessions where they were asked to consider potential roles Boards could play in promoting the work of Health Links. Themes from the discussions included:

- We think we should continue with regular Board to Board engagement meetings.
- Absolutely there is an appetite for system integration.
- There are and will continue to be challenges.
- We support the Health Links and need to continue to tell the patient stories to demonstrate the value of what we are doing.

Participants will be given a follow-up package on the day to share with their fellow leaders. Project Managers are available for presentations to individual organizations. There was interest expressed in spring Board engagement sessions for individual Health Links and then another pan-Renfrew County session in the fall.

For more information about Health links or the Joint Board-to-Board Governance engagement session, contact one of the Health Link Project Managers listed below.

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