

An emergency department diversion success story

NEWS

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The emergency department is often the first stop for patients experiencing mental health-related crises. But for more than 75 per cent of patients enrolled in North York General Hospital's Emergency Department Diversion Program, a visit to the local emergency department is no longer necessary.

Funded by the Central Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and run by North York General Hospital in partnership with Saint Elizabeth Health Care, Toronto North Support Services and ACCESS 1, the program is focused on improving the coordination of care delivery between acute care and community-based supports.

Here's how it works: When a patient with a mental health issue visits North York General's emergency department but does not need to be admitted, a mental health team initiates a referral to a community-based crisis worker who meets with the patient prior to discharge from the emergency department to assess the crisis, develop a support plan and link the patient to immediate community crisis management services.

North York General Hospital has been recognized for the program's quality and innovation by the community and patients alike. The program was highlighted as a "success" story in the most recent Ontario Health Quality Council report, and the hospital received the Winner Leading Practices Award in Access to Care from the Ontario Hospital Association in 2008. In addition, according to the evaluation of the pilot phase of the program in 2007-2008:

- Over 50 per cent of referred patients may have been admitted to inpatient beds if the program had not been available
- 77 per cent of patients treated had no return emergency department visits and
- 83 per cent of patients treated said that if another mental health crisis occurred, they would seek alternate services rather than emergency care.

QUOTES

I am pleased that local residents who are experiencing mental health issues in Don Valley East are benefiting from enhanced access to community-based care and service options through the Emergency Department Diversion Program at North York General Hospital. Through this program, Central LHIN, and the hospital and its community partners are helping to deliver on the provincial government's commitment to reduce emergency department wait times and create a more coordinated and integrated health system.

– David Caplan, MPP, Don Valley East

By directing funding to enable the Emergency Department Diversion Program, the Central LHIN is delivering on two priorities in its Integrated Health Service Plan – reducing emergency department wait times and enhancing mental health and addictions services. North York General Hospital and its partners have collaborated to improve timely access to community supports. That has resulted in reduced inpatient admissions for those with mental health issues, whose needs can now be safely met in the community, making this a Central LHIN success story.

– Kim Baker, Chief Executive Officer, Central LHIN

...1/2

The Emergency Department Diversion Program was established to seamlessly connect patients with mental health issues, who do not need hospitalization, with the appropriate community-based services. This successful program is another great example of how our hospital is working with our community partners to provide timely, quality care to our patients and their families.

– Bonnie Adamson, President and Chief Executive Officer, North York General Hospital

QUICK FACTS

- According to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's [*Every Door is the Right Door*](#):
 - o About one in five Ontarians will experience a serious mental illness or harmful substance use at some time in their lives.
 - o Investing in supporting people to stay mentally healthy saves money. Every \$1 spent on mental health and addictions treatment and services saves \$7 in health costs and \$30 in lost productivity and social costs.
- In 2009/10, Central LHIN provided \$362,820 under the [*Aging at Home*](#) strategy to enable North York General Hospital and its partners to continue providing support through the Emergency Department Diversion Program.
- Overall, [*North York General Hospital*](#) is one of the top 20 performing hospitals for emergency department wait times across the province.
- Central LHIN's [*Integrated Health Service Plan*](#) (IHSP) 2010-2013 outlines four key priorities, including emergency department/alternate level of care, chronic disease management and prevention, mental health and addictions and health equity.
- Through [*Aging at Home*](#), Central LHIN has to-date allocated about \$47 million to 59 health service provider-led projects to build a sustainable health care system for seniors in Central LHIN.

LEARN MORE

Find out more about Central LHIN's [*emergency department and alternate level of care*](#) and [*mental health and addictions*](#) priorities.

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Download Central LHIN's new Integrated Health Service Plan 2010-2013: [*Creating Caring Communities, Healthier People... Together*](#)

...2