



## News Release / Pour publication immédiate

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**September 26, 2014**

### **New Nurse Practitioner Comes to Windsor to Provide Care for the Aboriginal Community**

WINDSOR/ESSEX – The Erie St. Clair LHIN is pleased to announce the new Nurse Practitioner located at the Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre (SOAHAC) within the Can-Am Indian Friendship Centre in Windsor, Ontario. Thanks to the partnerships between the Windsor-Essex Community Health Centre, Can-Am Indian Friendship Centre, and SOAHAC, the new Nurse Practitioner will be providing care for local Aboriginal families and individuals to help them live a balanced state of well-being by sharing and promoting holistic health practices.

This new full-time position will see a base funding investment of \$122,700 by the Erie St. Clair LHIN into the Windsor-Essex Community Health Centre. This funding will help address significant health gaps and poorer health outcomes of the Aboriginal population by improving access to care in the community.

The Nurse Practitioner is a part of the Windsor-based Aboriginal Chronic Disease Prevention and Management initiatives whose goal it is to provide programs and services to on and off reserve, status, non-status and Metis Aboriginal populations. This initiative plays a vital role in the community by addressing specific chronic health challenges such as diabetes; a disease that adversely affects Aboriginal Canadians more than any other group in Canada.

Aboriginal families and individuals looking to access the Nurse Practitioner will receive a full range of health care services including:

- Physical check-ups
- Referrals to specialists, lab, x-ray and ultrasound testing
- Prescriptions (excluding narcotics)
- Prenatal care
- Management of long-term illnesses and short-term problems
- Education about conditions such as high blood pressure and asthma

Nurse Practitioner services are available for people who do not have a family Physician or Nurse Practitioner. To become a patient or to find out more information about SOAHAC, please call 1-844-737-0725.



Ontario

Erie St. Clair Local Health  
Integration Network  
Réseau local d'intégration  
des services de santé  
d'Érié St. Clair

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### QUOTES

“The care that the new nurse practitioner will bring to our community is great news for the residents of Windsor/Essex. It is the belief of both the Erie St. Clair LHIN and myself that people in our community deserve access to quality health care, specifically primary care. It is exciting that the LHIN can work with community partners to identify a need and work together to help meet that need.”

— Gary Switzer, CEO, Erie St. Clair LHIN

“We are looking forward to getting to know the city and developing partnerships designed to improve access to and quality of health services for the Aboriginal communities in the Windsor area. We are grateful to have a Nurse Practitioner like Grace who has years of experience across a broad range of sectors, particularly serving individuals and families who have experienced barriers to receiving culturally appropriate health care,”

— Brian Dokis, Executive Director, SOAHAC

### QUICK FACTS

Age-standardized rates show the prevalence of diabetes was 17.2% among First Nations individuals living on-reserve, 10.3% among First Nations individuals living off-reserve, and 7.3% among Métis, compared to 5.0% in the non-Aboriginal population.

### LEARN MORE

To learn more about the Erie St. Clair LHIN, visit: [www.eriesclairlhin.on.ca](http://www.eriesclairlhin.on.ca)

To learn more about Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre, visit: [www.soahac.on.ca](http://www.soahac.on.ca)

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For more information, please contact Shannon Sasseville, Director, Communications, Public Affairs, and Organizational Development, Erie St. Clair LHIN, at 1-866-231-5446 ext. 3225 or at [Shannon.Sasseville@lhins.on.ca](mailto:Shannon.Sasseville@lhins.on.ca)

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### BIO - Grace Lasala

Grace recently joined the Southwestern Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre (SOAHAC) as a Nurse Practitioner. She completed a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Santo Tomas in the Philippines. She then completed a Master of Science in Nursing with specialization in Family Nurse Practitioner from Barry University in Florida. Grace achieved Family Nurse Practitioner certification from the American Nurse Credentialing Center (ANCC) and obtained her RN-(EC) from the College of Nurses of Ontario, with a specialty designation in Primary Health Care (NP-PHC).

Grace has worked in hospital acute and post-acute health care setting as a Registered Nurse and a Nurse Practitioner in the Philippines and in the States. It is her interest and desire in helping newcomers as a Nurse Practitioner with the Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County (MCC) that she presented in the 14th National Metropolis Conference Future Immigration Policies: Challenges and Opportunities for Canada, on the topic Government Assisted Refugees (GARs): Access to Health Care in Windsor in Toronto, 2012.

In 2013 she presented a poster presentation in the North American Refugee Health Care Conference in Toronto on the topic: A Collaborative Team Approach of Gov' t Assisted Refugee Access to Health Care in Windsor, ON. Joining the SOAHAC team, Grace is looking forward to providing primary health care to on and off reserve Aboriginal people in Windsor and surrounding communities, to empower Aboriginal individuals in a holistic manner as access to health care is improved, and to promote health and well-being; one person at a time. She is a member of Windsor's Community Partners for Multicultural Health.

Born third out of seven children, Grace's family immigrated to Canada from the Philippines in 1996. In honouring her roots, she finds time to go to the Philippines to do humanitarian work as a volunteer. She is a proud wife and mother of twin girls. In her down time she loves to travel and connect with nature.

