



COMMUNIQUE

LOCAL HOSPITALS TAKE THE FIRST BIG STEP TOWARDS PLANNING FOR A NEW STATE OF THE ART SINGLE SITE ACUTE CARE HOSPITAL

In November 2012, after seven months of community engagement, the Windsor Hospitals Study Task Force concluded that “there is strong interest and enthusiasm” from the Windsor-Essex community for the development of a new, state-of-the art, single site acute care hospital, which would be at the centre of an integrated health care system.

The Task Force recommended that “the Provincial Government, with this community involvement, proceed immediately in approving the planning and construction of a new single site acute care hospital for the Windsor Essex region”. Further, as a result of the Task Force’s strong recommendation, the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) took action in January 2013 by providing an initial advance of \$2.5 million to commence the capital planning process to achieve this vision.

The initial grant required the existing Hospital corporations, Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital (HDGH) and Windsor Regional Hospital (WRH), to address and resolve their respective roles in the future of healthcare governance in the region. In addition, with community engagement, the grant required that the “core” services be defined that form the basis of the single site acute care hospital. In addition, the government committed up to an additional \$35 million towards the more detailed capital and operational planning once and only if the governance and core services issues was completed.

The Board of Directors of both WRH and HDGH initiated discussions on what governance should look like going forward because they support the possibility of a new hospital, and believed the governance question needs to be dealt with soon in order to expedite the process.

Representing the best interests of the community at large, the Boards of Directors for Windsor Regional Hospital and Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital agreed unanimously on a vision for a new Windsor hospital system and Windsor hospital governance model that will be submitted to the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care and Erie St Clair LHIN for review and approval.

The following forms the basis of the agreement, subject to approval by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care:

1. All Acute care services and necessary support for these services at the single site acute care hospital would be operated and governed by Windsor Regional Hospital;
2. All sub-acute services (rehabilitation, ambulatory care, chronic care, specialized mental health, addictions and children's mental health) would be operated and governed by Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital; and
3. Once the single site acute care hospital is operational, the existing Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital site (Ouellette) should be reconfigured to facilitate ambulatory care, urgent care, diagnostic services and possible day surgery.

It is obvious that a considerable amount of planning and approvals will be required before the ultimate goal of a new state of the art single site acute care hospital is realized.

In order to facilitate this detailed planning, the Boards of Directors of HDGH and WRH have endorsed , subject to Ministry of Health approval, the interim transfer of acute services from HDGH to WRH and the interim transfer of chronic care, rehabilitation, specialized mental health, addictions and, children's mental health from WRH to HDGH.

Under this proposed shift in responsibilities between the two organizations, all employment contracts and union contracts would be respected and, privileged professional staff member appointments and privileges treated in an equitable and fair manner. An Oversight Committee comprised of joint committees of the Boards and administrations would be created to provide oversight to this process.

Realigning all acute services under one organization even before moving to one site makes it possible to:

- Optimize capacity across both sites
- Re-balance activity across both sites
- Explore operating efficiencies with a higher critical mass of activity
- Improve coordination and consistency in service delivery
- Adopt a consistent city-wide approach to patient quality and safety
- Qualify for increased cancer funding
- Establish a single professional (medical/dental/midwives) staff structure
- Commence the detailed planning required before the eventual move to a new single acute care site
- Allow for administration and professional staff to make day-to-day operational decisions and Boards to govern with a vision to the future
- Facilitate best practices and models of care and standardization of both clinical and non-clinical processes and practices that have been shown to optimize the efficiency of acute care services
- Create a single unified professional staff, unified medical departments and a single Medical Advisory Committee (MAC) that should facilitate improved inter-site access to clinical consultation and clinical technologies
- Explore opportunities for improved operating efficiency through economies of scale in administrative and support services

As seen in other communities in Ontario, there is benefit in having one corporation responsible for acute care services while another organization administers non-acute functions. According to Hay Group Health Care Consulting, an argument can be made “that organizations that focus on post acute care and specialized continuing care services provide better and more effective care than organizations that provide these services as an adjunct to acute care. The post acute care activities are often neglected as attention is focused on acute care services. By creating an organization whose focus is these specialized services, then the people of Windsor-Essex will benefit.”

Providing the opportunity for one corporation, WRH, to focus on acute care also allows HDGH and its faith-based partners to play a continued role locally that is consistent with the organization’s long-term Mission. This Mission includes a focus on services and programs that support the vulnerable, needy and disenfranchised, while continuing as well to serve the inner city through its downtown site on a smaller footprint.

We recognize that staff, physicians and volunteers will have many questions about this process, and how it may impact them personally. We also recognize that it will take some time to complete the transfer of services as outlined above; how long this process will take is difficult to confirm at this time and can be impacted by many variables outside of the control of either corporation’s administrations. We will do our best to keep you apprised of all plans but regardless of any changes to hospital governance, it is most important that you remain focused on our most responsibility – providing outstanding, quality care to the patients we serve each and every day.

Carol Derbyshire
Board Chair
Hôtel-Dieu Grace Hospital

Gay Wrye
Board Chair
Windsor Regional Hospital