

# **Bolton Community Consultation**

## **September 29, 2009**

On September 29, 2009, the Central West LHIN held a community consultation session at the Albion and Bolton Community Centre in Bolton. The agenda for this meeting included:

- Introduction presentation by Chair of the LHIN and CEO
- Summary presentation regarding the Bolton Primary Care Discussion Paper dated March 29, 2009
- Small group discussions and report back.

Forty-two members of the community attended this session including consumers, provider representatives and two family physicians. There was a good cross-section of representation and excellent participation during the small working group discussions. The small working groups were asked to address two questions;

1. What do you like about the Discussion Paper?
2. What might be improved?

Responses from the working group discussions are summarized below.

### **What do you like about the Discussion Paper?**

Feedback from the small groups indicated that most of the participants felt that the March 29 the Discussion Paper provided an comprehensive summary of the health care needs of the Bolton community and felt that it provided an excellent framework for moving ahead with the development of a more detail action plan for Bolton. Some specific comments included the following:

- First point of contact is important for all patients.
- There is a need for expanded mental health services for all age groups.
- Community education is important. There is a need to find ways to engage the community in planning for the ongoing development of health services in Bolton.
- There is a need for specialty medical clinics to be developed in Bolton. Transportation is a major barrier to access for many Bolton residents and travel to hospitals, especially in downtown Toronto, was a major challenge for many residents. It was noted that previous attempts to develop specialty medical clinics in Bolton were not successful because the local family physicians were not aware of the types of clinics and hours of operation. The local family physicians need to be part of any plan to develop specialty medical clinics in Bolton.

- There is an acute shortage of seniors housing in Bolton and there is a need to address this gap in service.
- The report provides a good summary of the health care needs of the Bolton community.
- The development of a Family Health Team in Bolton is an excellent idea that would appear to provide many benefits to the local family physicians.
- In order to improve access to services, there is a need to educate the Bolton community on the range of services available in the community and how to access these services.
- There is a shortage of family physicians in the community and there is a need to engage the family physicians in Bolton in planning for the future development of health services.
- There is a need to reduce the use of hospital Emergency Departments as this is a very inefficient way in which to provide primary health care services.
- Strong support for the development of an Action Group to move the project ahead and to find ways in which to engage the public.
- The lack of a public transit system in Bolton is a major challenge for many Bolton citizens, especially residents who are isolated, live in rural communities and have no access to transportation.
- There is a need for more geriatric services to support the needs of the elderly.
- There is a need to develop an urgent care centre as an alternative to the use of hospital Emergency Departments.
- There is need for more integration and coordination of services among the current providers of health care in Bolton.
- There is a need for a communication strategy and plan that would inform the general public about the ongoing development of health services in Bolton.
- The concept of a one-stop centre for all health and social services should be developed in Bolton.
- It is important that the community of Bolton be allowed to select from the various options that have been presented in the Discussion Paper.
- There should be a greater focus on the development of partnerships among current health and social service providers in Bolton with a special focus on parks and recreation, wellness services and health promotion.
- Community needs to be involved in assessing the alternative approaches to developing health services in Bolton. Support of the CW LHIN will be important.
- The general public needs to know where to go to receive information about health services. A directory of health services would be a great place to start.

In general, there was strong support for many of the ideas outlined in the Discussion Paper and especially for the development of a family health team comprised of physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners and other health care professionals. Community engagement was identified as a key to moving the project ahead and ensuring that the public was aware of current and future health care services.

### **What might be improved?**

The small working groups were asked to identify what might be improved in the Discussion Paper. A number of suggestions were put forward, such as:

- More focus on wellness, illness prevention and health promotion programs.
- Better use of information technology to assist in the integration and coordination of services among Bolton health care agencies and communication between diagnostic facilities (e.g. labs and radiology centres) and family physician offices and hospitals.
- There should more emphasis on the need for collaboration between health and social service agencies in Bolton and Peel.
- More integration among health providers in Bolton, Caledon and the Region.
- Improved transportation should be a high priority issue.
- There is a need to create a directory of services in the region that can be used by Bolton residents.
- There should be a greater focus on the current points of access for services (e.g. family physician offices, Caledon Community Services, CCAC, etc.)
- Incentives should be provided for medical specialists to come to Bolton to provide clinics (e.g. free office, support services provided, access to information technology, linkages to family physicians, etc.)
- There should be more focus on chronic disease management services including public education, diagnosis and assessment, early intervention, follow-up, public education and rehabilitation.
- More funding should be provided for programs and services that focus on prevention and health promotion.
- More home care services are needed including homemaker and home support services that allow residents to remain in their homes longer.
- The patient navigator concept is an excellent idea that should be implemented to assist residents in finding the right service.
- More focus should be on education of the public and education of health professionals.
- Public needs to know more about the “211 service” and other ways to access services.

- There is a need for more information on tele-health services and other ways in which to access information about the availability of services in Bolton.
- There is a need to research effective ways in which to educate the public before they need services (e.g. newspapers, radio, TV, community education sessions, working with service clubs, etc).
- There is a need for greater focus on education of health professionals, especially family physicians and their administrative support staff, on the range of services available in the community and how to access these services.
- A triage service should be established (e.g. 24 hour, one-stop point of access) for all residents. A telephone answering service should be considered.
- Seniors and people living in rural communities are not always able to access internet-based information and referral services. There should be a better way for seniors to learn how to access services using traditional methods (e.g. 24-hour telephone answering service, a directory of services in Bolton).
- Teenagers should be able to access health services without their parents knowledge in order to promote health education and early intervention.
- Better coordination of services among family physicians, specialists and diagnostic service providers (e.g. lab, radiology, specialty hospitals, etc) is required in order to avoid the duplication of services. Information technology should be used to link the various providers of health services.
- There is a need for better access to publicly funded rehabilitation services as many low income residents cannot afford private rehab services.
- Need a plan with appropriate incentives to recruit more medical specialists (e.g. psychiatrists, surgeons, internists, pediatricians, etc) to the community.
- Local family physicians need to be part of the plan for the recruitment of medical specialists to ensure that there appropriate referral mechanisms in place to support these specialists.
- There needs to be more focus on health promotion and illness prevention programs for isolated residents in rural communities within the Region.

In general, there was strong support for the creation of an Action Group, comprised of Bolton consumers and providers, to determine the priorities that should be focused on and to create an implementation plan with input from community stakeholders.