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Waterloo Wellington LHIN

Annual Community Engagement Plan 2014-2015

Ontario
Local Health Integration Network

Introduction

We take great care in listening to our residents to determine the necessary changes and improvements for our local health care system, and to ensure those changes match the needs of our community.

This plan is an overview of how the Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network (WWLHIN) will engage our communities and stakeholders over the next year. The document outlines what community engagement is, who our communities are, how we plan to engage them, and how we will measure our success.

This plan is a guideline for our broader community engagement goals for the year. There will also be community engagement plans and activities that are not outlined in this plan that will be identified throughout the year on a project-specific basis.

Table of Contents

The Waterloo Wellington LHIN

What is community engagement?

What are the principles of community engagement?

What are the tools the WWLHIN will use to engage our communities?

Who will we engage in 2014-15?

Measuring our success

How you can get involved

The Waterloo Wellington LHIN

The Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network (WWLHIN) is responsible for planning, integrating and funding health services to improve the health and wellbeing of more than 750,000 residents in Waterloo Region, Wellington County, the City of Guelph, and the southern part of Grey County. Waterloo Wellington is also home to nine Family Health Teams, four Public Health Units and more than 1,000 doctors, including family doctors and specialists.

Ninety percent of our geography is rural. Ninety percent of our population is urban.

Our Job as Leaders

The Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network (WWLHIN) staff are experts on understanding the health needs of our community members and how they are impacted by the social determinants of health. In the WWLHIN office, our team of physicians, nurses and other professionals work hard to provide a resident-focused approach to health care investment, design and improvement.

Mission: To lead a high-quality, integrated health system for our residents

Vision: Better Health – Better Futures

Core Value: Acting in the best interest of our residents' health and well-being

What is community engagement?

The WWLHIN recognizes that improvements to the health care system must directly reflect the needs of the communities we serve. To better understand what those needs are, the WWLHIN engages our communities in order to inform, educate, consult, involve and empower stakeholders to participate in the planning and decision making processes that will improve the local health care system.

What does all of that really mean? It means that the WWLHIN talks to our communities before making decisions. It means that if you have concerns or ideas about improving the health care system in Waterloo Wellington, we want to talk to you about them.

What community engagement does not mean is that everyone will always agree on the decisions that are made within the health care system. Waterloo Wellington is made up of a diverse population of people with very different interests and approaches to what health care is and how to improve it. What we will do, is listen to all of those different opinions and incorporate them into the decision making process as best as we can.

What are the principles of community engagement?

The following seven principles reflect the common beliefs and understandings of those working in the fields of public engagement, conflict resolution, and collaboration. In practice, people apply these and additional principles in many different ways. For the WWLHIN, they are the foundation upon which all of our engagement activities are built.

1. **Careful Planning and Preparation**
   Through adequate and inclusive planning, ensure that the design, organization, and convening of the process serve both a clearly defined purpose and the needs of the participants.

2. **Inclusion and Demographic Diversity**
   Equitably incorporate diverse people, voices, ideas, and information to lay the groundwork for quality outcomes and democratic legitimacy.

3. **Collaboration and Shared Purpose**
   Support and encourage participants, government and community institutions, and others to work together to advance the common good.

4. **Openness and Learning**
   Help all involved to listen to each other, explore new ideas unconstrained by predetermined outcomes, learn and apply information in ways that generate new options, and rigorously evaluate public engagement activities for effectiveness.

5. **Transparency and Trust**
   Be clear and open about the process, and provide a public record of the organizers, sponsors, outcomes, and range of views and ideas expressed.

6. **Impact and Action**
   Ensure each participatory effort has real potential to make a difference, and that participants are aware of that potential.

7. **Sustained Engagement and Participatory Culture**
   Promote a culture of participation with programs and institutions that support ongoing quality public engagement.

What are the tools the WWLHIN will use to engage our communities?

In 2010, the LHINs across Ontario worked together to create a set of shared community engagement guidelines and tools. The guidelines and toolkit are meant to achieve and sustain high quality community engagement across all LHINs by establishing a set of minimum specifications for community engagement.

The community engagement guidelines include the following tools:

1. An Annual Community Engagement Strategy Worksheet to help LHINs develop their annual Community Engagement strategy.
2. A Community/Stakeholder Assessment Worksheet to enable community engagement planners to identify all relevant stakeholders and how they relate to a specific plan or project.
3. A Community Engagement Planning Worksheet to be used with smaller-scale projects for small community engagement undertakings.
4. A Community Engagement Planning Worksheet to be used with larger-scale projects that require larger and more complex community engagement undertakings.
5. A set of LHIN Community Engagement Performance Indicators that each LHIN will report on annually through their annual report and on both ministry and LHIN websites.

The community engagement toolkit is our map for planning effective and meaningful engagement activities with our communities. The toolkit also creates accountabilities and transparency for the work that we do.

If you would like to learn more about community engagement, and the shared guidelines and toolkits that we use, please visit our website at www.wwlhin.on.ca and click on the “Engaging our Communities” section.

Who will we engage in 2014-2015?

The WWLHIN's focus over the next year will be on engaging the diverse residents that make up the Waterloo Wellington LHIN. Specific emphasis will be placed on engaging francophone residents through a series of French health forums to better understand where gaps in access exist. Initial research has shown that francophone residents are unaware of the French language health services available locally through our community providers. Engagement with French schools, organizations, and residents will help us to better serve these residents in our community.

Emphasis will also be placed on engaging with primary care doctors as we work to increase access to primary care for local residents. By partnering with the Ontario Medical association and Choosing Wisely Canada, education sessions will be brought to primary care doctors to help them better connect their patients with specialize care in the most efficient way possible.

The WWLHIN will also focus on developing a community engagement database to track and report on how we are doing in engaging our community. Regular engagement opportunities to solicit community input will also continue, such as: council, network and advisory committee meetings; special sessions for input related to the development of the 2015-2016 Annual Business Plan; events and presentations; social media including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube; news releases and media outreach; and Board Highlights.

Other stakeholders the WWLHIN will target include:

Local Residents

Our RESIDENTS and FAMILIES are at the heart of our strategy to improve access, service and quality within our local health care system. As part of an overarching marketing and re-branding strategy, the WWLHIN is committed to making its communications products as resident-focused as possible. This means using language that residents can easily understand and respond to. Local residents will be engaged in person, online, and through other media, providing convenient and accessible options for participation. The WWLHIN will also work to engage local media in covering more news from the local health care sector to help inform and engage more of our residents in their health care.

Our Local Health Care System Providers

Health service providers are the nuts and bolts of our health care system. Together, they provide essential services dedicated to improving the health and well-being of our residents. They are also responsible for the implementation of our system's strategic plan, the IHSP. As we work to create one truly integrated and sustainable system of care, we need to bring providers together to share information and best practices, provide input into system initiatives, and ensure services will best meet the needs of our residents. The WWLHIN will focus on implementing engagement and communications initiatives that will bring providers together and make it easier for them to share information and provide input. Examples of providers we will engage include:

- Boards, including Chairs and Vice-Chairs, of hospitals, community service agencies, community health centres
- Community Care Access Centre, mental health and addictions agencies and long-term care homes
- Physicians, nurses, other clinicians and staff
- Administrators of hospitals, community service agencies, community health centres, Community Care Access Centre, mental health and addictions agencies and long-term care homes.

Organizations that influence the health and well-being of our residents and the social determinants of health

Social determinants of health are the socio-economic, cultural, and environmental conditions of our lives that impact overall health. We know that many frequent users of our health system are the most vulnerable and least-equipped to negotiate the multiple services they need. These high-system users also account for 75 percent of the total health care funding per year.

No one sector or organization can fully improve the health of the population alone. This is why it is so important that we engage individuals and organizations outside of the health care sector. Government officials, businesses, educators, and more all have an important role to play. This year's focus will be on engaging diverse stakeholders in the initiatives of the IHSP, which includes a specific focus on increasing access to care and improving coordination and integration of care for vulnerable populations. Examples of organizations we will work to engage include:

- Municipalities
- MPPs
- Public Health
- School Boards
- Private Sector
- The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

WWLHIN Advisory Groups and Local Provider Networks

The WWLHIN's Advisory Groups and Networks are one of the unique ways the WWLHIN has brought health service providers together, working towards a common goal – improving the health and well-being of our residents. Before, providers worked in silos without considering the impact their decisions and services had on other organizations, and ultimately, their patients/clients. These groups and networks are also the driving force behind change in the health care system. Tasked with implementing system-wide initiatives, engaging these groups in the implementation of the IHSP is essential. This year, the WWLHIN will utilize these Networks to drive engagement initiatives with health service providers and residents. For example, utilizing the Community Council to organize and evaluate community engagement activities.

- Local Community Council
- LHIN Health System Leadership Council
- Local Health Professionals Advisory Council
- Primary Care Advisory Council
- Various Networks (Addictions and Mental Health, Community Support Services, Geriatric Services, Emergency Services, etc.)

Measuring our success

The WWLHIN is responsible for measuring the success of our community engagement activities. By measuring our performance, we can continuously find ways to improve our work. Measuring our work is also one of the ways that we stay accountable and transparent to our communities. The following is a list of the performance measure indicators we utilize:

1. An annual community engagement plan that is consistent with the guidelines set out in the shared LHIN community engagement toolkit, and available for our communities on our website.

2. Adherence to the LHIN community engagement guidelines and toolkit in support of our projects and decision making.

3. Participant evaluation integrated into every community engagement plan and used to inform future engagement planning.

4. Evaluation through a community engagement database and reporting quarterly to assess and review the LHINs activities.

5. Presentation of community engagement results to LHIN decision-makers.

How you can get involved

To find more information on the WWLHIN's community engagement activities and current projects please visit www.wwlhin.on.ca and go to the "Engaging our Communities" section.

If you would like to talk to someone at the WWLHIN about our community engagement plan please contact the WWLHIN at waterloowellington@lhins.on.ca.

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