



Partners Advancing
Transitions in Healthcare
A first with Ontario patients

The Change Foundation awards Northumberland Community Partnership \$3-million project to improve seniors' healthcare transitions & use patient input to drive redesign

Groundbreaking approach holds promise for provincial game-change

Cobourg, ON (June 5, 2012) – After a rigorous, year-long selection process, [The Change Foundation](#) today announced the Northumberland Community Partnership as the winner of its \$3-million investment in a trail-blazing project: [PATH](#) – Partners Advancing Transitions in Healthcare (PATH): a first *with* Ontario patients.

The [Northumberland Community Partnership](#) unites 12 health and social care organizations with patients and caregivers who will identify healthcare transition problems across Central East Ontario and work with a full range of service providers to redesign care and improve experiences. [The Northumberland PATH](#), led by Northumberland Hills Hospital, is the first system-wide patient/caregiver/provider co-design venture of its kind in Ontario. The two-year project aligns well with the patient-centred care emphasis in Ontario's Action Plan for Health Care and with the region's priority to build excellence in seniors' care.

PATH is the centerpiece of The Change Foundation's [strategic plan, Hearing the story, changing the stories](#). The Foundation is putting most of its money and might into PATH to deliver on the plan's goal: to improve people's healthcare experience as they move in, out of, and across Ontario's healthcare system. The Foundation targeted seniors with chronic health conditions and their caregivers because they frequently navigate a wide range of services. PATH puts them at the table as partners, using their experience to help identify and address transition problems--redesigning services with providers from across the whole system.

The Change Foundation CEO Cathy Fooks says Northumberland was chosen from a roster of other quality proposals because its winning set of strengths set it apart. "Northumberland had an acknowledged need to improve transitions for one of the country's largest concentrations of seniors with chronic health conditions. They assembled a wide cross-sector community partnership, with a strong primary care presence, and an innovative technology component; they involved seniors and caregivers from the get-go and have an enviable track record of meaningful public engagement," she said. "In short, they showed the smarts, the heart, the team, the ideas, and the experience. We're confident that they can meet their community's objectives and help the Foundation further its wider goal of changing the healthcare debate, practice, and experience in Ontario," said Fooks.

Gayle Einarsson is one of those caregivers involved right from the start, and helped shape the Northumberland Community Partnership's proposal to the Foundation. "When a loved one is sick, we're at our most vulnerable and need the right information and support. PATH puts seniors and caregivers at the center of change and redesign; with PATH we will ensure that patients and caregivers are respected, informed, supported, and empowered ...when they need it the most!" she said.

The service providers in the Northumberland PATH all recognized that people were getting stuck or lost in transitions; they have all committed their time and resources to create smoother, more user-friendly connections to care.

"Given patient feedback, improving the transitions of care in our community has been one of our quality improvement goals. We know we can and must do better in this regard. Our Partnership represents a shared vision and commitment to improving patient and caregiver experiences in their transitions. On behalf of our Partnership, we extend our appreciation for the Foundation's generous support to make this a reality," said Northumberland Hills Hospital CEO Robert Biron.

The Partnership, which includes seniors and caregivers, is also committed to real and meaningful engagement from the people who have a lot of experience to share moving between and among services.

"The CECCAC, like all the community partners engaged in this exciting initiative, is committed to improving the patient experience in and with the health system striving to achieve the best possible outcomes, with the patient and their caregivers at the centre of the care team," said Don Ford, CEO of the Central East Community Care Access Centre.

The Foundation plans to funnel all that it learns from the Northumberland PATH and related research and public engagement into a capstone Summit in 2015 that will result in key recommendations for change. Stay tuned for regular updates and milestones as the Northumberland Community Partnership paves a new PATH in Ontario healthcare.

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Learn more: [PATH backgrounder](#); Video: [Who is The Change Foundation?](#); [Loud & Clear: Seniors and caregivers speak out about navigating Ontario's Health System](#); www.changefoundation.com.

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Backgrounder

About The Change Foundation

The Change Foundation is an independent healthcare think tank, intent on changing the debate, the practice, and the healthcare experience in Ontario. Learn more **about our work** and our history at www.changefoundation.com.

About PATH

In June 2011, The Change Foundation announced its single largest and most ambitious project to date: **Partners Advancing Transitions in Healthcare (PATH): A first with Ontario patients.**

The Foundation began seeking one community/region in Ontario committed to working differently to redesign changes to improve people's healthcare experiences moving across the continuum of care. Through Project PATH, the Foundation sought to engage and support a community coalition of cross-sector providers and seniors/caregivers to redesign how care is delivered, especially at key transition points.

PATH is the centerpiece of The Change Foundation's strategic plan, **Hearing the story, changing the stories.** The Foundation plans to funnel all that it learns from the Northumberland PATH and related research and public engagement into a capstone Summit in 2015 that will result in key recommendations for change. We expect our collective efforts will highlight system-level policy and funding barriers to smooth healthcare transitions and identify solutions to improve them. Hand in hand with that objective is our intent to test whether healthcare co-design can work in Ontario – and what difference it makes.

Choosing the PATH community

Our search was conducted in two phases. In July 2011, we issued a province-wide **Letter of Intent (LOI)**. In February 2012, a six-member review panel short-listed five promising coalitions to proceed to a second full-Request For Proposals (RFP) stage. The review panel included senior Foundation staff and representatives from the **Saskatchewan Health Quality Council**. The Foundation also commissioned a Fairness Advisor to provide oversight to both phases of the selection process.

On June 5, 2012, The Change Foundation awarded The Northumberland Community Partnership \$3 million over two years to work closely with the Foundation on the groundbreaking Northumberland PATH project. Northumberland's proposal had a winning combination of strengths: wide array of strong cross-community players, including primary care and a technology partner, growing expertise in geriatric care, proven track record in engaging its citizenry in healthcare decision-making.



About Northumberland PATH

The Northumberland Community Partnership unites 12 health and social care organizations with patients and caregivers who will identify healthcare transition problems in west Northumberland and across Central East Ontario and work with a full range of service providers to redesign care, improve experiences, and strengthen the system.

Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) is the project lead.

Northumberland Community Partners*

1. **Northumberland Hills Hospital**
2. **Central East Local Health Integration Network**
3. **Central East Community Care Access Centre**
4. **Community Care Northumberland**
5. **Golden Plough Lodge** (Long-Term Care Home)
6. **Health System Performance Research Network**
7. **NHH Community Mental Health Services**
8. **Northumberland Family Health Team**
9. **Palisade Gardens Retirement Residence**
10. **Patients' Association of Canada**
11. **QoC Health** (Mobile Health Solution Provider)
12. **YMCA Northumberland**

*The partners will work with a panel of seniors and caregivers who will be the heart and soul of the project

The Northumberland PATH's key elements

- Public education, supported by an Aging Well Toolkit to guide planned aging.
- My Health Story to capture personal stories in print and online to empower and ensure quality transitions. My Health Story will be owned by, and go with, the patient.
- Training and tools for local providers based on UK's **Experience Based Design** methodology to shift the local healthcare culture to a person-centred model of care.
- Transition Partners to direct and coach seniors towards supportive community resources. This role will not duplicate CCAC case managers.
- Low-cost mobile patient and caregiver tele-monitoring technology (iphones/tablets) provided as in-kind contribution by project partner, QoC Health, to a pilot group of patients and caregivers to capture their real-time experiences as they move from service to service.

- Recruitment of approximately 35 patients and caregivers to provide ongoing input to each phase of the process. A Northumberland PATH Steering committee will be established to guide the project. Membership will include representatives from the NHH, a patient and caregiver committee, The Change Foundation, and senior leaders from all PATH partners.

Key facts about the Northumberland community

Northumberland is located within the Central East LHIN, one of the fastest growing geographic regions in Ontario and home to 1.4 million people, over 11% of Ontario's population.

In densely populated urban cities, suburban towns, rural farm communities, cottage country villages and remote settlements, the Central East LHIN stretches from Victoria Park to Algonquin Park. It has a mix of urban and rural geography and is the sixth-largest LHIN in land area in Ontario (16,673 km²). The region spans a rich diversity of community values, ethnicity, language and socio-demographic characteristics.

The Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) serves approximately 60,000 residents in West Northumberland including the Town of Cobourg, Municipality of Port Hope, and the townships of Hamilton, Alnwick/Haldimand and Cramahe. The town of Cobourg (18,519) represents almost one third of NHH's catchment population. The populations of Cobourg and Port Hope (16,214)¹ represent 58% of the people served by NHH.

The area has a high population of seniors, 20% vs. 14% in Ontario generally. The community has the demographic profile that the rest of Ontario will have in 20 years, serving as a kind of bellwether for the rest of the province.

See [map](#) of the region.

¹ Statistics Canada, 2011 Census data.

