

NEWS RELEASE
For Immediate Release
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CE LHIN BOARD MOVES FORWARD ON HOSPITAL ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENTS PROCESS **Two year agreements provide direction on service delivery and funding**

The Board of the Central East LHIN Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) today took the next step in finalizing the 2008-2010 Hospital Service Accountability Agreements (HSAA) for each of its hospitals. These Agreements, which detail each hospital's operating plan for achieving a balanced budget, service planning, measurement and evaluation of health services and organizational performance for the next two years, must be completed by March 31, 2008.

"Healthcare leaders from each of our hospitals have been working with the LHIN board and the staff in developing a new culture that is focused on integration and maximizing resources," said Foster Loucks, Chair of the Central East LHIN Board of Directors. "We have to manage the healthcare system wisely so that together we can better meet the needs of our communities."

Over the last few weeks each hospital has been reviewing their agreement and negotiating any final wording into the document so that the board and CEO of each organization could sign them. The goal of the Central East LHIN was to have all the signed documents in place by the time of today's Board Meeting to meet the March 31st deadline. As of today's board meeting, only Northumberland Hills Hospital had not indicated their intention to sign their Agreement.

"We look forward to continuing to meet with the leadership of Northumberland Hills Hospital as we head to the March 31st deadline and beyond," said Loucks. "Our goal is to reach agreement with the hospital on their 2008/09 agreement and we will be taking the necessary steps to ensure that outcome."

The CE LHIN Board also indicated that they would be accepting the HSAA from the Rouge Valley Health System as it was submitted but would be requiring Rouge Valley to work with the LHIN prior to the implementation of its planned consolidation of inpatient Mental Health Services from the Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering site to the Rouge Valley Centenary site in Scarborough.

"We will be working with Rouge Valley to conduct consultations with community stakeholders and the general public over the next 30 days," said Loucks.

Responsibility for negotiating Hospital Service Accountability Agreements with local hospitals was transferred from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to the LHINs in April 2007. The negotiation process, which began in May of 2007, included an event in October where hospital leaders met with the CE LHIN organization to discuss short term and long term pressures that each hospital was facing as they developed their plans. A second event, held in November, began a dialogue on Clinical Services Planning across the entire Central East LHIN.

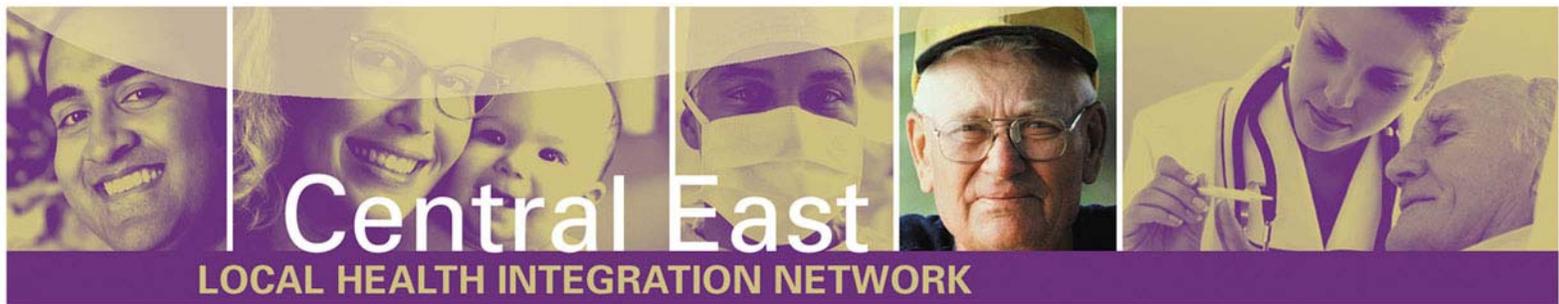
In addition to hospital leaders, the November event was also attended by board leadership, physician and nursing leadership and union leadership from each of the hospitals. Information from these two events was posted on the Central East LHIN website for the general public's interest and awareness.

In many cases, the agreements have recognized the pressures that hospitals have been experiencing which include non-urgent transportation costs, alternate level of care costs and funding requirements to meet the increased needs of patients when new services have been added to an organization or new space has been opened or is about to be opened.

"We will continue to work with our hospitals and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care over the course of these accountability agreements on obtaining the necessary funding to meet these pressures," continued Loucks.

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“There continue to be challenges as health care providers strive to provide the most accessible health care,” continued Loucks. “But I am confident that by working together and focusing on the priorities that were identified in our Integrated Health Service Plan we can create a stronger public health care system that will continue to be there for our children and grandchildren.”

Electronic copies of each hospital’s Accountability Agreement will be posted on the Central East LHIN website in the coming days.

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The Central East LHIN is one of 14 not-for-profit organizations, created by the provincial government to be responsible for planning, integrating and funding local health services - hospitals, long term care facilities, community care access centres, community health centres, community support services and mental health and addictions agencies. The Central East LHIN encompasses a geographic area which includes Scarborough, Durham Region, Northumberland County/Havelock, Peterborough, Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton/Minden.

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