

## SRN Council Meeting Update

### **Introduction**

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The Small, Rural and Northern Hospital Provincial Leadership Council (SRN Council) held its quarterly meeting on Tuesday, March 18, 2008. The following is a brief overview of some of the issues discussed.

### **New Membership to the SRN Council**

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Donald Sanderson, Chair of the SRN Council, welcomed two new members to the Council. They are:

- David Bird, West Chief Executive Officer, Haldimand General Hospital
- David Craig, Trustee, North Wellington Health Care

### **Core Service Report Update and Rural/Northern Hospital Strategy**

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The OHA reported to SRN Council members that a small planning committee had been established to assist with the planning of a one-day facilitated forum on the issue of core services and the rural/northern hospital strategy.

After much discussion on these issues with members, the OHA has decided to host this event in the spring of 2008 with the key objectives being:

- To develop specific recommendations to the OHA on the next steps of the core services report; and
- To shape the provincial government's Rural/Northern Hospital Strategy by providing options/recommendations as to the purpose, scope and framework of the strategy

SRN Council members suggested that one way of engaging members in this discussion is to explore the health service needs within a community and address whether small hospitals can support these needs as health care providers.

The OHA will continue to plan for the forum and seek feedback from SRN Council members as needed.

### **Outpatient Laboratory Services**

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Within some small communities, hospitals are providing outpatient lab services because private labs in their communities are limited in the amount of services they provide. This has become a growing issue for some hospitals who are not getting the recognition or funding from the LHINs or Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC).

Following discussion, members of the SRN Council surmised that this issue was not just specific to labs. There are also other health care services, such as outpatient Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy for example, that are being performed by hospitals without recognition, and thus, financial compensation.

The OHA agreed to explore this issue further when looking at the core service/rural northern hospital strategy.

### **Emergency Room Coverage**

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SRN Council members discussed the issue of emergency room coverage and how finding health human resource professionals to provide this coverage continue to be a serious concern for members.

To address this issue, some members of the SRN Council have inquired with the MOHLTC on whether they can use clinical fellows as per the government's "restricted registration pilot for Ontario medical residents" program, to assist with emergency room coverage. It was noted that any clinical fellow could provide coverage if they have completed their Royal College training and are eligible for an independent licence from the College of Physician and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO)

While it appears the MOHLTC is advocating for hospitals to use this program, it is not easy for clinical fellows to obtain the licence to do so. As well, it is also unclear if small hospitals are eligible to participate in the program.

The SRN Council will be inviting a representative from HealthForceOntario to attend the next meeting (May 21, 2008) to provide clarification and advice.

### **Patient Safety Indicators**

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OHA staff provided an update on the public reporting of patient safety indicators to SRN Council members.

One of the concerns raised by SRN members was with regard to the issue of hospitals receiving wait time funding that they will now have to start submitting data to *Safer Healthcare Now!* (SHN) regarding Central Line (CL) Infections, Surgical Site Infections (SSI) and Ventilator Associated Pneumonia (VAP) by March 31, 2008.

As most small hospitals receive wait time funding for general surgery, it would appear that many small hospitals may have difficulty participating in and reporting on CL Infections and VAP due to lower volumes.

The OHA will look into to whether other small hospitals have this difficulty and provide this feedback to SHN.

### **Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation**

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Members of the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation (CCHSA) provided an update on their new program *Qmentum* including an update on their pilot program, new standards, indicators and survey instruments. They also reported that they will be publishing a newsletter specific to SRN hospitals that will be released in the near future.

CCHSA acknowledged the concerns of SRN hospitals and reported that they have made adjustments to assist small hospitals including:

- Additional training of surveyors to address the issue of surveyor match and ensure that surveyors going to SRN hospitals have an understanding of the unique needs of small hospitals.

### **Rural and Northern Conference**

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SRN Council members discussed the upcoming Rural and Northern Conference scheduled for May 22, 2008.

### **Next Meeting**

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The next meeting of the SRN Council will be held on Wednesday May 21, 2008.

### **Your Ideas Welcome**

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The SRN Council is interested in hearing your issues, ideas or comments. Hospitals are invited to contact members of our SRN Council through Michelle Caplan, Policy Analyst, at 416-205-1391 or at [mcaplan@oha.com](mailto:mcaplan@oha.com).