



April 28, 2015

For Immediate Release

Seven More Hospitals Join Virtual Critical Care in Northeastern Ontario

SUDBURY, ON – Seven more hospitals have been added to northeastern Ontario's Virtual Critical Care (VCC) Unit.

Joining VCC this month are Anson General Hospital (Iroquois Falls), Bingham Memorial Hospital (Black River-Matheson), Englehart and District Hospital (Englehart), Hornepayne Community Hospital (Hornpayne), Lady Minto Hospital (Cochrane), Hôpital Notre-Dame Hospital (Hearst), and Hôpital de Smooth Rock Falls Hospital (Smooth Rock Falls).

A total of 23 hospitals are now part of the Virtual Critical Care Unit. Launched in May of 2014 and based at Health Sciences North/Horizon Santé-Nord (HSN) in Greater Sudbury with funding from the North East Local Health Integration Network (NE LHIN), VCC is the first virtual critical care model of its kind in Canada.

Virtual Critical Care uses the latest in videoconferencing technology and electronic medical records sharing to connect HSN with smaller Critical Care units and Emergency Departments at hospitals across northeastern Ontario. The VCC model uses a specially designed software program created by the Ontario Telemedicine Network.

Under the VCC model, a team of Intensive Care physicians, specially trained nurses and ICU respiratory therapists based at HSN are available for around-the-clock consultations for critically ill patients at participating hospitals. Other allied health professionals such as dietitians and pharmacists are also available for consultation during scheduled hours.

The goal of VCC is to enhance the diagnosis and treatment of critically ill patients across northeastern Ontario, and potentially avoid the transfer of patients out of their local hospitals, away from their families and support systems.

Since being launched in May of 2014, VCC has been used for 110 patients, with an additional 218 follow-up visits, for a total of more 11,000 VCC care minutes. Thanks to VCC, 40 patients avoided a medical transfer by air ambulance, at an approximate saving of \$680,000 to the health care system.

“Having more hospitals in northeastern Ontario hooked up to Virtual Critical Care is great news for patients,” says Dr. Derek Manchuk, an Intensive Care Unit physician at HSN, Medical Lead for the VCC, and Critical Care Lead for the NE LHIN. “This essentially eliminates distance as a challenge to patients in these areas needing specialized intensive care, as they can now receive more of that care in their home communities.”

“Transforming the delivery of care takes leadership and innovation,” says Louise Paquette, Chief Executive Officer of the North East Local Health Integration Network. “Providing Northerners with improved access to critical care without having to leave their communities and their families is an example of leaders working together creatively across the North East to improve patient experience.”

“As Virtual Critical Care continues to grow, we come closer and closer to our shared goal for the Ontario healthcare system: the right care at the right time in the right place,” says Laurie Poole, Vice President, Telemedicine Solutions, Ontario Telemedicine Network. “It’s a goal we believe can be achieved through innovative programs powered by telemedicine.”

“The new Virtual Critical Care service will allow us to better serve our patients, increase quality of care for the patient, reduce the wait time for a critical consultation and increase patient safety,” says Helen Poirier, Vice Chair of Hôpital de Smooth Rock Falls Hospital. “This is a long time in the making but it has been worth the wait. We will all benefit from this new enhancement in critical care delivery.

“We’re very excited to be joining the Virtual Critical Care Unit,” says Kelly Hunter, Nurse Manager, Englehart and District Hospital. “Having access to the VCC will mean better access to care for our critically ill or injured patients.”

Contacts:

Dan Lessard
Media and Public Relations Officer, Health Sciences North
(705) 523-7118, ext. 4
(705) 507-4031 c
dlessard@hsnsudbury.ca

Kathleen Bain
Communications Officer, NE LHIN
kathleen.bain@lhins.on.ca, 705-840-2340.

Sharon Rose Airhart
Telehomecare Communications Lead, OTN
416-446-4110 x. 4307, www.otn.ca

Fabien L. Hebert
Directeur General - CEO
Hopital de Smooth Rock Falls Hospital
705-338-3212

Lisa Verrino, CEO
Hornepayne Community Hospital
807-868-2442 ext:135
lisa.verrino@hornepaynehospital.ca

Kelly Hunter, RN
Nurse Manager
Englehart and District Hospital
705-544-2301 ext 5239
khunter@edhospital.on.ca