

Two Health Service Providers Opt for Voluntary Integration - *Community Support Services Exemplify Spirit of Cooperation*

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Two health-service providers in Ottawa West will soon merge, aiming to improve access to care, increase scope of services, and obtain efficiencies.

The Boards of Directors of Nepean Support Services (NSS) and Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre (WOCRC, as well as the Champlain Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) Board, have approved the change. It begins on April 1, 2009. Called a 'voluntary integration,' this sort of initiative results in a better coordinated health system. The Champlain LHIN provided \$50,000 to help the two providers develop their model of integration.



From left to right: Guy Le Madec, Board member, NSS; Bob McGaraughty, Board chair, NSS; Darryl Kicul, past Board chair, WOCRC; Cathy Jordan, executive director, WOCRC.

The Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre was incorporated in 1986 and serves clients in Goulbourn, Kanata and West Carleton. Nepean Support Services, incorporated in 1989, reaches residents in the urban and rural areas of the former City of Nepean.

“Nepean Support Services began facing service capacity issues, and integration possibilities became more attractive,” explained Bob McGaraughty, president of that organization. “It became clear that the Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre was the best fit for us. We thank the Champlain LHIN for supporting us during this intensive process.”

Both organizations provide services such as Meals on Wheels, transportation, home maintenance and friendly visiting. Such services effectively reduce the rates of hospital visits and premature admissions to long-term care homes.

“Although we have separate histories, we have always shared a common objective: to assist seniors and adults with physical disabilities to live independent, active and meaningful lives, said Darryl Kicul, past chair of Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre. “We remain dedicated to this objective now that we are merging as one.”

A key principle of this project is that any cost savings will be re-invested into client services. Overall, there will be improved access to care through one bilingual phone number. The integration will result in one Board of Directors, one executive director, a stronger infrastructure (i.e. finance, human resources, information technology), and enhanced fundraising in the long run.

Next steps are to work through details for a smooth transition and engage stakeholders along the way. An evaluation plan will also be developed to ensure benefits to clients are being realized. The new agency will be called Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre.



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