

Health providers encouraged to self-organize in Central LHIN

Inviting the 48 long term care providers in Central LHIN to form a committee and develop a meaningful dialogue with LHIN staff began with a specific goal, says Hy Eliasoph, Central LHIN CEO.

After asking providers in early 2006 to decide what form engagement would take, LHIN staff hoped the region's providers would come together and develop a sector-specific voice, transcending affiliations, funding and operational differences.

"We wanted them to self-organize," he says. "[For us] it was 'who do we go to?' And 'who will speak on behalf of the entire sector?'"

An improved LTC information and navigation system for consumers is one initiative the LHIN and providers can work on, he says.

LTC providers have subsequently met twice to encourage home administrators to volunteer for a committee to work with the LHIN. A rough draft of "rules of engagement" is being authored by the group, which met most recently on June 27th.

Christine Nuernberger, meeting attendee and public relations manager with Leisureworld, an LTC operator that owns four homes in the LHIN, calls the relationship a "new way of interacting."

"The providers like that there is this strong interest from the LHIN," Nuernberger told Axiom News in an earlier interview. "They're acting in good faith and [this arrangement] is in everyone's best interest."

Eliasoph and LHIN representatives just conducted 14 community roundtables offering consumers and health care providers the opportunity to speak out on LHIN

priorities and system gaps.

Consumers, he says, surprised many of the provider participants with their knowledge of health care issues in the Central LHIN region, which covers northern Toronto, York region and a portion of Simcoe region. It includes the towns of Markham, Newmarket and Richmond Hill.

“[The meetings] were a learning experience for providers,” says Eliasoph. “On issues like long term care and hospitals consumers were way far ahead in their thinking.”

Eliasoph is optimistic that as LTC providers take ownership of the committee, that it will enable the LHIN to deal with issues in service provision and quality of access.

“Consumers need a better navigation system,” he says, “[so they know] what they should expect or demand from a long term care home.”