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CELEBRATING SUCCESS — Members of the Rural West Primary Health Team that serve the communities of Bengough, Radville and Pangman, gathered with local and provincial officials in Bengough in mid-March to celebrate the team's successes. From left to right, the team members are Mike Sjare, Regional Systems Operations Manager; Megan Keep, Occupational Therapist; Delee Foley, Bengough Pharmacist; Kim Borschowa, Radville Pharmacist; Kelly Fish, Home Care Nurse; Susan Viergutz, Home Care Nurse; Dawn Geiger, Physician Assistant; Heather Tant, Regional Director Primary Health; Dr. Werner Oberholzer, Physician for the Rural West area; Leila McClarty, Nurse Manager for the Bengough and Pangman Health Centres; Laura Wood, Nurse Practitioner; Candace Kopec, Dietitian; Colleen Herman, Mental Health Social Worker. Missing from the picture is Wanda Miller, Primary Health Care Team Facilitator. Sitting in front of the team is Natalie Bieberdorf, Regional Director, Therapies.

Please turn to page 4-5 for more information.

A publication of Sun Country Health Region





The View from the desk of Marga Cugnet, Interim CEO,

Releasing Time to Care, or RTC as we call it in health care, is one of those acronyms that makes people suspicious. Some people have dubbed it “the fad-of-the-week” in Saskatchewan health care.

That is not the case. It is here to stay because it helps our staff provide better care to our patients/residents/clients.

Three wards in three of our facilities in Sun Country Health Region are using this program to reform the health care workplace and three more are set to go in the near future.

RTC has been accepted by all health regions in the province and plans are to implement it in all health facilities soon. The program uses very successful methods of changing the way health care employees work, from the ground up, that was developed by the National Health Service in Britain.

In Britain, in the facilities where RTC was implemented, the direct care time available for patients increased by 23-60 per cent. Meal wastage was cut from seven per cent to one per cent. The time needed to deliver medicine dropped by 63 per cent, and fewer errors occurred. Those are dramatic and exciting improvements.

Saskatchewan is already seeing some improvements.

One RTC ward in Saskatoon Health Region has seen a 32 per cent reduction in overtime hours; a five per cent reduction in sick time, and a 67 per cent reduction in family leave hours, as well as reducing orientation hours by 59 per cent because staff chose to continue working on that unit.

Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region reduced cancelled MRIs from 12 to one per week, representing a seven per cent increase in productivity or capacity to perform an additional 650 scans / year using existing resources.

Here in Sun Country Health Region, some improvements are showing up very quickly. In St. Joseph’s Hospital of Estevan, the number of health care workers who followed the approved hand hygiene methods jumped to 100 per cent at the end of March, compared to 25 per cent in the first week of January. This will result in fewer infections.

Now that’s exciting!

In the 2005 National Survey of the Work and Health of Nurses, 59 per cent of Saskatchewan nurses said they have too much to do to do everything well. Forty-five per cent said they were not given enough time to do what was expected in their job. Thirty- seven per cent reported high job strain and twenty-nine per cent reported deterioration in the quality of care.

We expect RTC to help solve those challenges. You, the patient/ resident/client will see the benefits.

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Sun Country Health Region





It's all about customer service!

Amy Ryan is a young, soft-spoken woman who has taken over what can be a tough job in Sun Country Health Region. She's the person you contact if you have a complaint or concern, or don't understand how to navigate the challenging health system. After a year on the job, Amy is even more convinced she provides a useful service for the public.

"I can help people understand the Health Region, its facilities and services; what they need to do next and what has been done for them. Sometimes it's complicated - even for people who work here," she says.

"I think it's very important for the public to know that I'm here, that there is a person available to provide this service to them. People often think there's nowhere they can go with a concern but there is and I want everyone to know that," she says.

"There might be a miscommunication or false expectation. A patient might think he is scheduled for a treatment next week but really that's just the initial examination. I try to explain these things."

Amy takes concerns and complaints and questions by telephone, fax, and email.

"Sometimes people are just trying to access a service and don't know where to begin. They want to know where to get their well water tested or their restaurant inspected. I can help them with that, too."

"Sometimes they are inquiring about a service, like needing to know when their surgery is scheduled in another health region. I am the contact for the Saskatchewan Surgical Directory, for instance, and can help them navigate that system."

"Patient safety has become one of the main focuses in health care," says Amy. She has found that Sun Country Health Region is taking it seriously.

"To provide safe care is to provide quality care," she says.

When members of the public contact Amy with a concern or complaint about health care services, she receives the information, investigates the

situation and works with staff and physicians to resolve the issue.

She uses that information to recommend changes and improvements to programs and services within the system.

Amy begins a discussion with clients by asking who you've spoken with so far about the problem.

"I try to find out if people with a concern have first spoken to someone closer to the point of care where the service was provided," she says.

"It may be easier for a question to be answered if we begin close to the service provider. It helps to hold people accountable for their actions and their department with patients/residents/clients."

Amy likes working with people. That's the preferred part of the job for her.

Another part of her job is the reporting section. She also gathers de-identified details about the kinds of concerns raised for staff in the Health Region to examine.

"It's very important for staff in the Health Region to hear the voice of the public. I can give them that," she says.

She reports only the kind of concern and complaint raised, and how it was resolved so the system can improve the service for the next time.

"Over the years, more people are turning for help to my office so it's obviously becoming more visible. That's a good thing," she says.

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Sun Country Health Region's Rural West Primary Health Team celebrates success

Sun Country Health Region (SCHR) is celebrating the accomplishments of the Rural West Primary Health Care Team, which now provides a range of health services to people in the Bengough, Pangman and Radville areas.

The team's goal is to provide quality, accessible and timely health care through a co-ordinated, interdisciplinary team that tailors services to the client's needs.

A strong core team is working together and has held community consultations to improve the quality of care provided.

"Our government is committed to providing the every day health services people need to protect and maintain their health," Environment Minister and Weyburn-Big Muddy MLA Dustin Duncan said, on behalf of Health Minister Don McMorris, at a recent celebration in Bengough Health Centre.

"This team is an excellent example of how collaboration between health professionals and effective use of technology benefits patients," he said.

The Primary Health Care Team members include patients, physician, pharmacist, health centre staff, EMS, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, dietitian, home care staff, public health nurses and mental health and addictions staff. A nurse practitioner will join the team in June 2011.

"Being a part of this team has enhanced my personal satisfaction and enhanced patient care. Team-based care improves the quality of life for providers and patients alike," says Dr. Werner Oberholzer, Family Physician for the three communities.

The team is one of only 13 in Saskatchewan to implement an electronic health record.

An electronic patient record means improved patient care, greater efficiency, and more informed decision making at the point of care. Among other benefits, it ensures health providers have the information they need, helps avoid repeat tests and keeps track of medications.

"Our Rural West Primary Health Care Team just got stronger as a result of this new electronic tool," says Marga Cugnet, Interim CEO of Sun Country Health Region.

"Care providers have the ability to make better health care decisions when all the relevant health information is available to the whole team," she said.

Electronic health records are especially important for primary health care in rural areas where all of the members of a health care provider team travel back and forth between several communities," she says.

The team is also participating in a research project called Interprofessional Collaborative Practice & Learning Environments.

"The team was selected to participate in this research project. Through the research the team is exploring the effects of collaborative practice on team functioning, student experiences, community involvement and improvements in client care," says Leila McClarty, Facility Manager for Pangman and Bengough Health Centres.

CELEBRATING SUCCESS — Members of the Sun Country Health Region Rural West Primary Health Team met with health officials and members of the public in Bengough Health Centre in mid-March to celebrate the team's successes. Here, Sharon Bauche, Chair of the Sun Country Regional Health Authority, left; Leila McClarty, Nurse Manager of the Bengough and Pangman Health Centres; and Marga Cugnet, Interim CEO, Sun Country Health Region chat about the team.



MEETING SOME OF THE KEY PLAYERS — Weyburn Big Muddy MLA and Environment Minister Dustin Duncan, left, meets with Mike Sjare, Regional Systems Operations Manager and Dr. Werner Oberholzer, Family Physician for the Pangman, Bengough and Radville communities.

Find regular updates about Sun Country Health Region on our blog at <http://suncountryblog.com/>



The Brain Walk travels Sun Country Health Region

Paula Ealey, ABI Coordinator (Acquired Brain Injury) for Sun Country Health Region, demonstrates the last of 10 stations in a program she provides for students called Brain Walk.

Brain Walk is an interactive tool that walks through the brain to help students from Kindergarten through Grade Six learn about the different functions of the brain and about how to keep their brain safe and healthy. "The only cure for brain injury is prevention," says Paula. "Once a brain is damaged, it's forever," she says.

"So the more children learn about the brain, the more they are willing to do things like wear helmets when they ride bikes or ski, and seatbelts when they are in a vehicle."

They also learn about the possibility of hurting their brain through the use of alcohol and drugs, she says.

Brain Walk is a partnership project between the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health and SGI.

The time required for Brain Walk depends on the number of students involved.

It takes approximately 70 minutes for a group of 60 students to fully experience Brain Walk.

**Paula Ealey can be reached
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Another side to health care



Good health is about more than doctors and nurses.

It's also about improving the education levels of children to raise their future income levels which leads to better health.

The Maryfield Holistic Health Team, which includes the staff at the Maryfield Health Centre, knows the situation: low literacy levels among family heads leads to lack of preparedness for children beginning school, which leads to lower income and poorer health.

The determinants of health include education, income and employment, says Nicki Ford, Registered Nurse Practitioner at the Maryfield Health centre.

"Early reading with children has been proven to increase their chances of success at school."

The needs of the Maryfield community are changing.

"New people are moving for employment in hog barns, oil industry and construction. Some are unemployed and looking for low cost housing. Some come from other countries and speak little English. Some have moved many times and children's education has suffered," says Nicki.

"The staff of the Maryfield Health Centre has witnessed young adults who are unable to complete government forms."

To help improve reading skills, the Team raised \$1,500 from the Raise a Reader Grant. They needed another \$500 to purchase books for the program, which Sun Country Health Region (SCHR) provided.

"We were pleased to support the initiative," says Heather Tant, Regional Director for Primary Care and Rehab in SCHR. "It fits with a key Regional strategy, that is, to promote healthy environments that allow residents of SCHR to live healthy lifestyles."

The Maryfield Holistic Health Team is an organization that is a result of partnership between community organizations. Teachers, students, health professionals, clergy and seniors are included in this partnership.

The team has been in existence for approximately 10 years and has spearheaded many community projects. The purpose of the group is to improve life for the residents of the Maryfield Community. Its members are the Maryfield School, Maryfield Community Library, Maryfield Playground Committee, Maryfield Health Centre, Maryfield Churches, Maryfield Playschool and SCHR Public Health.



READ FOR YOUR HEALTH — In the top picture, Kelly Kay, Maryfield student volunteer, reads to a group of children at the Maryfield Raise a Reader Program held at the Maryfield Library. In the bottom picture, Laura Low reads to daughter Hannah.

Starting early to recruit



THE PRE-HEALTH PROFESSIONALS CLUB — Representatives from the University of Saskatchewan's Pre-Health Professionals High School Club met Grade 11 and 12 students from all over Sun Country Health Region (SCHR) recently to discuss future careers in health care. The club is a student development group with long term connections to students. Health care professionals from SCHR spoke to the students as well. In the picture above is Dr. Alain Lenferna, Vice President, Medical, SCHR. In the picture below are Marga Cugnet, Interim CEO, left, and Stella Swertz, Clinical Coordinator, both from SCHR.



What is this Club?

The Pre-health Professionals High School Club features a series of sessions that engages students in the exploration of career pathways to medicine, nursing and pharmacy professions and provides information about these careers. Club sessions are divided into general and cultural perspectives streams to accommodate the needs of all students. The Pre-Health Professions website features information for students, mentors, Aboriginal Perspectives and general information for individuals who are seeking information about the club.

To view the web site go to: www.prehealthclub.ca

For more information, contact Christel Gee, Pre-Health Professions Coordinator,
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