

CEO Update February 2017

Non-Urgent Patient Transport

As you may be aware, especially if you work in a clinical area, the practice around transporting a patient home from the hospital has changed. At the regular meeting of the Cochrane District Social Services Administration Board (CDSSAB) on June 16, 2016, the Board passed a resolution that saw CDSSAB cease the practice of making its ambulance service available to complete non-emergency transfers by January 1, 2017. This has resulted in changes to the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) deployment plan and a projected eventual end to providing non-urgent patient transportation.

Previously, if a patient was brought to the hospital by EMS (Emergency Medical Services), assessed by medical staff and deemed fit to return home, EMS would transport the patient back home. In the past, a discharged patient requiring stretcher or wheelchair support was able to access EMS to return to their home, nursing home or retirement residence. EMS will no longer transport patients home, unless deemed medically necessary. It is the responsibility of patients and their families to arrange and cover the costs for transportation to their home.

As you can imagine, there have been challenges implementing these changes. The patient and/or their family are required to secure arrangements such as using a personal vehicle or taxi service. If the patient requires special accommodations for a stretcher or wheelchair, they will need to utilize local non-urgent patient transportation services.

Non-urgent patient transportation services are private (unregulated) patient transport services used for transports which do not require an ambulance. Timmins and District Hospital is currently purchasing non-urgent patient transport services from a private company for patient transfers to other hospitals or to the airport. The NELHIN is leading the future implementation of a Timmins and Cochrane District non-urgent patient transportation service in collaboration with our hospital and district hospitals.

A pamphlet is being created to inform patients, families, and visitors what options are available, and provides answers to their most frequently asked questions. The pamphlet will reinforce that ambulances are used to respond to emergencies and to transfer people who are critically ill, medically unstable and need a paramedic to support them.

Please become informed and familiar with this pamphlet once it is available in your unit for when your patients and their families ask you questions. If you have questions or need clarification please ask your manager.

As always, thank you for your commitment to providing excellent care to patients each and every day.

Sincerely,

Blaise MacNeil
President & CEO