
Norfolk General Hospital joins Southwestern Ontario Diagnostic Imaging Network

June 9, 2010 (Simcoe, ON) – Patients and physicians in Norfolk County are benefitting from quick access to electronic diagnostic images now that Norfolk General Hospital has connected to the Southwestern Ontario Diagnostic Imaging Network (SWODIN), the largest diagnostic imaging repository (DI-r) in use in Ontario to date.

The network is one of four across the province that enables participating health care facilities to electronically store, retrieve and share patient diagnostic health information such as X-rays, ultrasounds, CT scans and MRIs. Annually, the Southwestern Ontario Diagnostic Imaging Network will manage more than 3 million exams.

“Norfolk General Hospital’s ability to share images with other healthcare facilities will be of enormous benefit to the patients we serve,” said William Lewis, President & CEO, Norfolk General Hospital. “The repository will facilitate discussion with Specialist Consultants and assist in determining whether or not it is necessary to transfer the patient to a regional centre.”

Norfolk General Hospital joins a growing list of health care facilities in the HNHB LHIN to connect to SWODIN. To date, five health care systems representing 29 hospitals are sharing their diagnostic images via the repository.

Mohawk Shared Services Inc. (MSS) has established a Diagnostic Imaging Division and will work with the participating organizations in Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant (HNHB) & Waterloo Wellington (WW) Local Health Integration Networks (LHIN)s to connect them to the SWODIN DI-r over the next 18 months.

Canada Health Infoway (*Infoway*) has provided \$37 million and eHealth Ontario has provided \$26 million in funding to support the transfer of diagnostic images and reports between the health care organizations in Southwestern Ontario. The project is part of the Ontario government’s ehealth agenda and *Infoway’s* vision for a pan-Canadian electronic health record system.

“We are proud to provide the network and be a funding partner of an initiative which advances health care delivery and benefits Ontarians,” said Greg Reed, President and CEO, eHealth Ontario. “This project illustrates how collaboration within the health care system can improve patient care.”

“With Norfolk General Hospital now connected to SWODIN, patients in Norfolk County will benefit from more modern, efficient health care resulting from investments in electronic health record systems,” said Richard Alvarez, President and CEO of Canada Health Infoway. “The ability to share important health information, like diagnostic images and reports, is key to a more efficient health care system with shorter wait times.”

Canada Health Infoway is an independent, not-for-profit organization funded by the federal government. *Infoway* jointly invests with every province and territory to accelerate the development and adoption of electronic health record projects in Canada.

MSS began in 1972 as a central laundry for hospitals in southern Ontario. Today, in addition to Linen and DI-r divisions, services are also provided throughout Ontario via Supply Chain and Hurst Place Employee Assistance divisions. The vision of MSS is to excel as a shared services organization by delivering services that support health care and our communities.

Benefits of the repository include:

- Secure, quick and easy access by clinicians and radiologists to patients' diagnostic imaging records, allowing them to diagnose regardless of the location of the patient and where the images were taken
- Enhanced clinician collaboration and knowledge transfer, resulting in better treatment, fewer retakes and a reduction in radiation exposure
- Quicker treatment for patients thanks to the ability of specialists at different facilities to now share images faster and discuss and develop treatment plans concurrently
- Additional functionality including superior image quality and the ability to zoom in and out on an image.

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For more information contact:

SWODIN	Mohawk Shared Services	Canada Health Infoway	eHealth Ontario	Norfolk General Hospital
David Veeneman	Diane Larwood	Dan Strasbourg	Heather Brown	William Lewis
Manager - PACS/DI-r Regional Shared Service	General Manager, Diagnostic Imaging Repository Division	Director, Corporate Communications	Communications Advisor	President & CEO
519-685-8500 ext. 57199	905-633-3899 Ext. 2704	416-595-3424	416-586-4238	519-426-0750