

NEWS RELEASE

Embargoed until 2 p.m.

Virtual Critical Care initiative wins Minister's Medal OTN a proud partner with Health Sciences North

TORONTO, October 14, 2015 – The Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN) congratulates Health Sciences North (HSN) and its other partners on receipt of the 2015 Minister's Medal for Virtual Critical Care (VCC).

The 2015 Minister's Medal Honouring Excellence in Health Quality and Safety was presented today at Health Quality Transformation, Health Quality Ontario's annual event. The theme was "Putting Patients First."

Launched in May 2014, VCC is supported by the North East Local Health Integration Network. VCC uses the latest in videoconferencing technology and electronic medical records sharing to connect HSN in Greater Sudbury with 22 Critical Care units and Emergency Departments at hospitals across northeastern Ontario.

The VCC model uses a specially-designed software program created by OTN, with the coordination of consults provided through CritiCall Ontario.

"Virtual Critical Care is a unique partnership that ensures patients and families in the North East LHIN get the care they need," says Laurie Poole, vice president of telemedicine solutions, OTN. "It enables equitable access to specialist care for patients and it supports healthcare providers. We are proud to be a partner."

The goal of VCC is to enhance the diagnosis and treatment of critically ill patients across northeastern Ontario and potentially avoid the transfer of patients out of their local hospitals, away from their families and support systems. It also builds the critical care experience and skill of participating clinicians.

Under the VCC model of care, a team of Intensive Care physicians, specially-trained nurses and respiratory therapists based at HSN are available for around-the-clock consultations and follow-up visits for critically ill patients at participating hospitals. Other allied health professionals such as dietitians and pharmacists are also available for consultation during scheduled hours.

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About OTN

The world leader in telemedicine, OTN helps Ontarians get more out of the health care system by bridging the distance of time and geography to bring more patients the care they need, where and when they need it. Using innovative technology, OTN streamlines the healthcare process, while also expanding the way knowledge is shared and how the medical community interacts with each other and with patients. An independent, not-for-profit organization, OTN is funded by the Government of Ontario and Canada Health Infoway.

For more information please visit www.otn.ca and www.otnresults.ca.

To arrange an interview with Laurie Poole, please contact Sharon Airhart, 416-312-3779, sairhart@otn.ca.