



NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Think-tank funding for initial pilot concludes - work of Northumberland PATH to continue thanks to new initiative with Ontario Centres of Excellence/Ontario Telemedicine Network

Northumberland County, ON (Wednesday, April 6, 2016) – Seniors, caregivers and partners involved in the innovative Northumberland PATH project came together at Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) on Thursday, March 31 to formally mark the conclusion of the initial pilot funding from The Change Foundation.

PATH – an acronym for *Partners Advancing Transitions in Healthcare* – began as a \$3-million project launched in Northumberland in June 2012 following a call for interest from its original funder and champion, The Change Foundation.

In its final reports on the project, issued last week, The Change Foundation summarized the many lessons learned during the unique community-based, multi-partner and cross-sector project that was co-designed with local patients and families.

“The Change Foundation is enormously proud of the work of the PATH project and the west Northumberland community,” said Cathy Fooks, President and CEO. “Watching the enthusiasm, capacity development and commitment of all involved, was a true honour. As the work continues, Ontario’s health system will benefit from all that has been learned, and Ontario patients, family caregivers and health care providers will benefit from better health care experiences.”

The Change Foundation’s full reports on PATH, titled “Charting a New PATH”, were released March 30 in three parts together with a Top Ten Lessons Learned summary. They are available from The Change Foundation’s website, www.changefoundation.ca.

“The Change Foundation’s generous financial support for the Northumberland PATH pilot project concluded last summer and, since that time, we have been making do with what we’ve called our ‘Transition Support Phase’, sustaining certain elements while awaiting news on go-forward funding options,” said Helen Brenner, Executive Lead for the Northumberland PATH Project, and VP, Patient Services and Chief Nursing Executive at Northumberland Hills Hospital, one of the PATH partners. “I am very pleased to confirm that additional support and funding has been secured for PATH.”

The [Ontario Centres of Excellence \(OCE\)](#) will fund a new, very focused pilot of an additional PATH e-tool in the region which, with PATH technology partner QoC Health Inc. and a small group of local patients, caregivers and health care providers, will be integrated with the PATH tools developed in the initial pilot.

The new funding (up to \$350,000) has been awarded through OCE’s *AdvancingHealth* program—a partnership between Ontario Centres of Excellence and Ontario’s Ministry of Government and Consumer Services.

“Among the benefits of the new the OCE initiative is the fact that it will add [Ontario Telemedicine Network \(OTN\)](#) technology (videoconferencing) into the existing PATH tools,” confirmed Sue Bhella, Project Manager with PATH technology partner QoC Health. “This expansion of current PATH tools will realize a request that many local patients, caregivers and health providers expressed during the initial PATH pilot: the ability to attend health care visits from the comfort of their own homes/offices, reducing in-person visits where possible and saving transportation costs within the local health care system.”

In addition, as a result of the new OCE funding, and support from QoC Health, many of the core PATH tools developed through the PATH project element teams (specifically, the My Health Experience mobile technology tool, the My Health Experience portal it connects to and the [PATHway to Aging Well website](#)) will continue to be supported for at least the duration of the OCE project.

“The OCE initiative will begin shortly and will provide Northumberland with further opportunity to build a compelling story for potential funders of what our community has achieved in PATH: a first-ever, patient-centred, holistic approach to care,” said Helen Brenner.

For further information, please contact the Northumberland Community Partnership c/o Jennifer Gillard, 905-377-7757 or jgillard@nhh.ca.

Background on PATH

In July 2011, The Change Foundation announced \$3 million in funding for the first project of its kind in Ontario: **Partners Advancing Transitions in Healthcare** or, simply, **PATH**. Twenty-seven communities and organizations competed for this unique project focused on improving experiences for seniors with chronic conditions and their caregivers as they move in, out of, and across the healthcare system.

In June 2012, the **Northumberland Community Partnership**—a partnership of patients, caregivers and 12 other partners—was announced as the successful coalition.

Thanks to The Change Foundation's funding, Northumberland seniors, caregivers, healthcare providers and support agencies came together as equal partners in the PATH project. This "experience based co-design" was one of the key elements that made PATH unique. Together the partners aim to:

- **improve** experiences for seniors and their caregivers as they move in, out of and across Ontario's healthcare system;
- **seek** solutions to the real needs of patients and caregivers;
- **test** a totally new approach for Ontario - experience-based co-design; and
- **prompt** system-wide change that will enable seniors and caregivers to live the highest possible quality of life, at home, for as long as possible.

PATH is an exciting local effort with provincial -- and, arguably, national -- potential. To read more about the PATH project, go to www.changefoundation.ca/projects/path.

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