



MEDIA RELEASE

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Strategic Operations Review recommendations presented to Brant Community Healthcare System

Brantford, ON (May 9, 2016) –

The Brant Community Healthcare System (BCHS) has received a list of recommendations from consultants Ernst & Young based on a voluntary strategic operations review of all operations and aspects of the local healthcare provider.

Ernst & Young consultants have found approximately \$22M in potential savings through a combination of improved management of patient admissions and length of stay, better use of hospital resources, realignment to better support the patient journey, and better overall financial spending control.

“Through this voluntary review process Ernst & Young has identified opportunities for the BCHS to capitalize on our great foundation and work we are already doing,” says Jim Hornell, President & CEO of the BCHS. “While we were not totally surprised by many of the findings, the review has afforded us an unbiased and external set of expert eyes. Ernst & Young has drawn on their vast knowledge of best practices and engaged stakeholders, staff and physicians. They shared data and have challenged us on several aspects of how we have worked and used resources and are now suggesting ways we can overcome our financial shortcomings and provide the best care possible to our patients in ever-changing funding scenarios. We welcome their recommendations and have already begun reviewing and organizing our approach to these recommendations.”

The biggest opportunity for the BCHS relates to bed and patient management with a potential of \$11.5 million in savings. “Another substantial recommendation involves our operations at The Willett, Paris. For years this facility has operated at a loss. It has been recommended that we develop a plan to cease operating and owning the Urgent Care Centre and pursue the sale of the building,” said Hornell. A complete business plan and impact assessment is recommended. In the meantime, a variety of interested parties, including healthcare providers, have approached the BCHS about purchasing the facility to be used for urgent care or private development. “We think there are opportunities we can pursue so patients in the area have access to appropriate care in the best setting possible,” added Hornell. BCHS is aware that local residents depend on the healthcare provider to offer and sustain acute care services, however the report shows that the BCHS is using significant funds to maintain a facility and service that

could be provided in a more effective and efficient way. “We will continue to work with whoever we need to explore options and transition us from being a landlord. In looking at other communities, there are some exciting possibilities for organizing health services for a future that would better suit a growing region that would not compromise everyone’s acute care,” said Hornell. Changes to the Willett are expected to take place over the next number of months as the BCHS engages with interested parties and leverages community healthcare partnerships to sustain services.

The Ernst & Young report also suggests improvements in organizational alignment to better support the patient journey and similar and related clinical activity. This supports the evolution of value streams and provides opportunities to have the organization structure more clearly match how patients enter, stay and eventually leave the hospital. The report supports the view that patient flow has to be everyone’s responsibility, so alignment should ensure clear accountabilities and that unnecessary administrative structures or silos do not become barriers. The report identifies opportunities to consolidate similar functions and there are also suggestions for reductions in a limited number of roles. According to Hornell, “it is too early to say if and when these may be enacted. We are governed by collective agreements for these types of scenarios and as always, we look for ways to minimize the impact on patients and staff.”

“The report also encourages us to look at more potential integrated shared services similar to those we recently implemented with our accounts payable system as well as to explore and maximize more regional relationships with partners & agencies,” added Hornell.

The voluntary review began in January 2016 after a *Request for Proposal* and was recently completed in April 2016. Consultants met with staff and physicians from all areas of the healthcare system and community organizations and a number of working groups representing both inpatient and outpatient programs and support services.

A steering committee consisting of front line nursing, support services, physicians, board members, leaders and a patient advisor met regularly with Ernst & Young and acted as advisors to facilitate the review.

According to Hornell, “the good news is there are savings identified that should move us to greater financial sustainability. The challenge is many of the recommendations involve changes that may be seen as difficult. In fact, if they were easy, they would have likely been done. I am confident we have the people and the capacity to make the changes and the people who care enough about sustaining us into the future, to be open to the suggestions in the report. For all of us, the status quo is not an option. The necessary changes are achievable.”

The report is available on the BCHS website at www.bchsys.org.

Members of the public are invited to review the document and provide feedback to communications@bchsys.org or by telephone at 519-751-5558.

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About The Brant Community Healthcare System

The Brant Community Healthcare System is a fully accredited, award-winning health-care organization and an affiliated teaching site of the McMaster University Michael G. DeGroot School of Medicine.