

Working together to support a pilot project for critically ill neonatal patients in the Southwest LHIN

CritiCall Ontario and the Southwest Local Health Integration Network are partnering on a six-month pilot project to provide physicians in the LHIN with **one number to call for assistance caring for critically or seriously ill neonatal or paediatric patients.**

This will represent a change in process for hospitals in and that refer to the Southwest LHIN in that they will be calling CritiCall Ontario for assistance rather than contacting the London Neo/Paediatric Transport Team directly. A Call Agent from CritiCall Ontario will then connect the calling physician with a neonatologist at London Health Sciences Centre on a dedicated bridge line for a consultation. From there, the physicians will determine whether or not transfer is required and contact the appropriate transport team if necessary.

While this pilot focuses on the Southwest LHIN, given the highly specialized nature of neonatal care, there will be implications for all neonatologists, NICUs and Neonatal Transport Teams in Ontario. The biggest change that you might notice is that if a neonatal patient needs to be sent outside of the London area for care, CritiCall Ontario will be contacting a neonatologist directly to arrange patient acceptance. In this instance, the consulting neonatologist in London (and possibly the attending community physician as well) will be connected directly to the neonatologist at the destination hospital to relay patient information and arrange transport. Since a consultation has already been provided through London Health Sciences as per the pilot protocol, the call will focus on patient acceptance and transport.

The Provincial Council for Maternal Child Health supports this pilot and Neonatal Transport Teams have been informed about the temporary process change in the Southwest LHIN and the potential implications to them. For example, Transport Teams that contact CritiCall Ontario for assistance referring a patient to London will be connected to the neonatologist for further discussion. In the past, Transport Teams have contacted CritiCall Ontario for a status update on beds only so this will represent a change in process.

The goal of this pilot is to streamline the process for physicians who need support caring for their critically or seriously ill neonatal patients and further ensure that transport teams are utilized as effectively as possible. By facilitating consultations in the first instance, unnecessary patient transfers can hopefully be reduced.

At the end of six months, CritiCall Ontario will provide an evaluation of the pilot to the Provincial Council for Maternal Child Health.

I want to thank you in advance for your assistance and cooperation as we try a new approach to caring for critically or seriously ill neonatal patients in the Southwest LHIN. If you have any questions or require additional information, please don't hesitate to contact me.