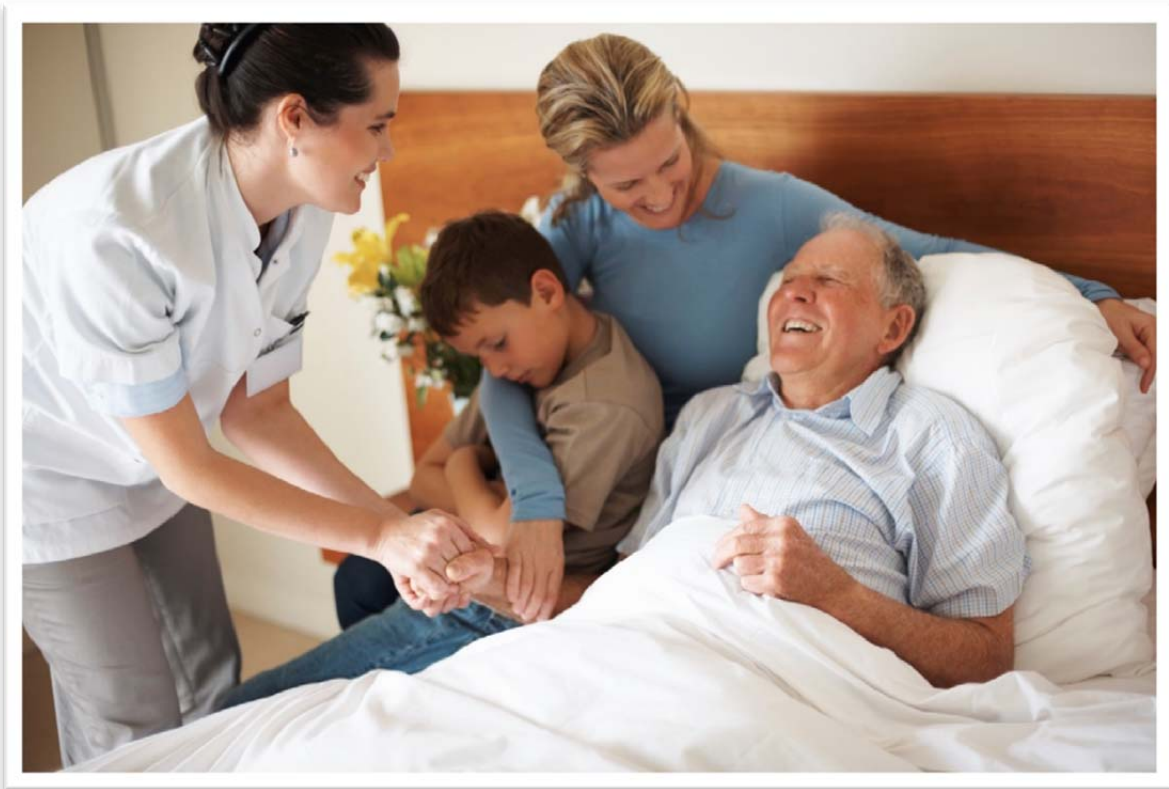




# Heartland Health Region's Communication Plan



## 2017-2018



# Heartland Health Region



## *OUR VISION*

*Healthy People, Healthy Communities,  
and Service Excellence in an Enduring  
Health System*

## *OUR MISSION*

*To be responsive and innovative in supporting people and  
communities in rural Saskatchewan in their pursuit of optimal  
health.*

## *OUR VALUES:*

- ❖ *Compassion*
- ❖ *Respect*
- ❖ *Collaboration*
- ❖ *Stewardship*
- ❖ *Excellence*

## *WE WILL FOCUS ON:*

**Better Health**

**Better Care**

**Better Teams**

**Better Value**

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## **Introduction**

Heartland Health Region (HHR) has been in existence since August 2003. Communication has always been a priority for the region. New provincial and organizational initiatives and challenges are ahead for HHR and the health system as a whole in 2017-18 and beyond. Communication will have an integral role to play in these opportunities, as well as continuing to build on ongoing initiatives and requirements.

The Heartland Health Region Communication Plan summarizes current communications activities and provides a framework for future initiatives designed to strengthen the program. Heartland Health Region has worked hard to have a transparent, open, dynamic communications program. HHR believes in an open communications program with consistent timely responses, effective postings, internal newsletters, open Board meetings, and opportunities for information sharing and feedback from all staff, physicians, families and clients. Some examples of current communication initiatives that have been effective and successful in fostering relationships with our stakeholders are:

- Our website continues to be a valuable communications tool within our health region. It is easily maintained and updated and provides us with a better communication tool that allows us to share information with our internal and external stakeholders.
- We continue to work collectively with Five Hills Health Region and Cypress Health Region to take advantage of the efforts of our neighboring communications departments, reduce duplication among all three, take advantage of quantity discount opportunities when applicable, working together to develop a product once (versus three times) and use it three times between the three regions, (influenza campaigns, health promotion campaigns, training/educational videos, etc.). We also work with other health regions in the province for information sharing from time to time through the provincial Health Regions Joint Communications Committee (JCC).
- We continue to provide quick, consistent media responses whenever we are asked.
- We are using the web site as a tool for posting information specific to regional activities and events.
- We continue to use the internal newsletter as a primary method of sharing various pieces of information with our staff, Board and Physicians as well as the CEO newsletter article that is written and provided by the CEO for each edition.
- We consistently try to share any information in a timely manner.
- We are having regular meetings with the CEO and Resident Family Councils in all the Long Term Care facilities in the region.
- We have established partnerships with our town councils, foundations, school divisions, pharmacies and other stakeholders within the region. Our plan is to continue to work with these groups to ensure that our communication tools are effective and that we live up to our commitment to be transparent and accountable for the decisions that we make.
- We attend meetings or send reports to our external stakeholders groups such as the West Central Government Committee, Waterwolf Planning Commissions, Community Advisory Network groups and Foundations.
- We share important information via e-mail distribution to external stakeholders such as school divisions, pharmacies, foundations, clinics, Municipalities and RM's.
- We have set up a Community Advisory Network (CAN) in the Kindersley area in response to the Kindersley Needs Assessment.

- Continue to work with the Client and Family Centred Care Steering Committee. We have membership from a member of the West Central Government Committee, a physician, RHA member, and five patient or family advisors. We also have staff representation on the committee. The membership is very representative of many areas of the region. The work of this group will help to inform SLT and the Board about improved ways of communicating with the people we serve and will also help us to achieve new standards that have been set by Accreditation Canada.

This continued effort to work with internal and external stakeholder groups and inviting opportunities for sharing and feedback with the region has allowed the region to develop trusting relationships with these groups that will only get stronger and make the communications process better in the coming years.

### **Purpose of the Communication Plan**

The primary objective of the communication plan is to regularly update our key stakeholders on the progress in the region. The communication plan will build in accountability on system performance and will promote transparency when reporting to the stakeholder groups. The Communication Plan will emphasize the importance for the region to build trusting relationships with both internal and external stakeholders. It is important to foster a relationship that is open and promotes sharing and feedback and build partnerships that are important to the success of the Health Region and the activities it undertakes throughout the year. If stakeholders are well informed, educated and engaged, they will be the best advocates and communicators for our region.

The purpose of the Regional Communication Plan is to outline Heartland's communication goals and objectives for the year ahead, and to identify the actions to be undertaken to achieve them. How we report to the stakeholder, what we are doing and why we are doing it. Communications should be proactive, transparent, educational, and show that the organization is accountable to its stakeholders.

The 2017-18 Communication Plan will continue to support the four key elements of the provincial and regional strategic focus for the year:

- ♥ Better Health
- ♥ Better Care
- ♥ Better Value
- ♥ Better Teams

### **Communications Department**

The Heartland Health Region Communications Department functions with one Communications Coordinator position. The Communications Coordinator provides leadership in communications planning and initiatives, as well as in media relations. The role supports HHR's Senior Leadership Team, Board members, Directors, Managers, Physicians and Staff to assist them in meeting the communications needs of the region.

The nature of the position means the Communications Coordinator is involved in or responsible for a number of projects and initiatives throughout various areas of the operation. It is therefore

necessary to set priorities so that the health region's most essential communications needs are being met.

In practical terms, it is necessary that managers throughout the organization communicate directly with staff and other stakeholders, with guidance or assistance from the Communications Coordinator where required and appropriate.

## **Media Relations**

Heartland's position is to be proactive, open and accountable to the public and media. We initiate, receive, and respond to requests for the news media where possible and appropriate. Processes are in place to achieve this. Accurate and appropriate response times are crucial to not only the impact a story may have, but also the development of the relationship with the receiver of the stories. It is important to build relationships with the media and keep them informed. This will enable us to have a trusting and open rapport with the media and they can count on the region to be open and transparent.

Consistent with the Board's policy on communication, the Board chairperson or designate shall speak on policies, positions and/or decisions of the Board.

The CEO or designate shall speak on operational policies, procedures, decisions or issues pertaining to Heartland Health Region.

As designates and in consultation with the Communications Coordinator, Heartland's Vice-Presidents are responsible to speak to the media concerning information and/or issues pertinent to their roles and portfolios. They too may designate individuals they deem appropriate to speak to the media on specific issues or areas of expertise, in consultation with the Communications Coordinator. In circumstances where it is not possible or practical to consult with the Communications Coordinator before issuing statements or written information, Communications is to be advised verbally, or through written documentation, as soon as possible. The Communications Coordinator will assist with the formulation of key messages prior to any communication with media. The Communications Coordinator may be designated as the Region's spokesperson by the Board Chair and CEO.

## **Key Audiences/Stakeholders**

Heartland Health Region's Key Audiences/Stakeholders are defined in two main groups: Internal and External.

The broadest information generally goes to all stakeholders under the Region's commitment to be as transparent and accountable as possible (for example, news releases and information from the Ministry of Health, Strategic Plan, and Annual Report).

HHR's practice is to share its information as widely and promptly as possible, with consideration given to areas of interest, anticipated impact and need to know, confidentiality and privacy requirements, timeliness, transparency, and accountability.

Generally, information destined to both internal and external audiences is distributed first to internal stakeholders. HHR believes in informing its internal stakeholders first, rather than having its staff,

physicians, and others learn about the Authority's decisions and the Region's actions from outside sources including the media.

The following list of key audiences is not intended to be all inclusive:

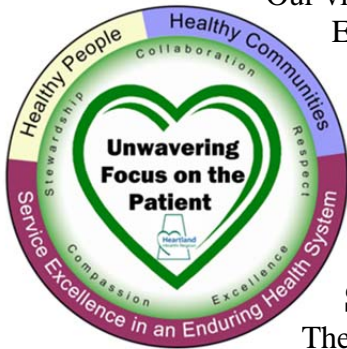
### **INTERNAL AUDIENCES**

- Staff – SLT, Directors, Managers, OOS, Frontline (including affiliates)
- Board Authority
- Physicians

### **EXTERNAL AUDIENCES**

- Patients/Residents/Clients & their Families/Guardians/Advocates
- Health Foundations
- Community Advisory Networks
- Media
- Ministry of Health
- Joint Communications Committee
- General Public
- Rural Municipalities - West Central Government Committee. Waterwolf Planning Commission
- Municipalities not belonging to West Central Government Committee
- Community Based Organization – Bridgepoint
- Affiliate St. Joseph's Health Centre
- Health Quality Council (HQC)
- 3sHealth
- Members of Legislative Assembly
- Business Community & Chambers of Commerce
- Health Professional Associations including SMA, College of Physicians & Surgeons of Saskatchewan, Sask Docs, SRNA, SALPN, & others
- Education including local schools, school divisions, regional colleges, & post-secondary institutions
- Optometrists
- Chiropractors
- Other

## Vision, Mission and Values



Our vision is "Healthy People, Healthy Communities, and Service Excellence in an Enduring Health System" is the vision. The mission is "To be responsive and innovative in supporting people and communities in rural Saskatchewan in their pursuit of optimal health." Our values are Compassion, Collaboration, Excellence, Respect and Stewardship. All communications should echo the vision and values of the Heartland Regional Health Authority.

## Strategic Plan

The Heartland Regional Health Authority (HRHA), also known as the Heartland Health Region (HHR) is responsible to deliver health care services to citizens living within its borders. The Health Plan for 2017-18 sets out how we turn our strategies into actions that are aligned with the Provincial Health System. It is the 'Strategic Directions' that establish the actions the Region will take.

There are four long term strategies (the Four Betters) that have been identified as priorities for the provincial health system and they include 'Better Health', 'Better Care', 'Better Value', and 'Better Teams'. Provincial and regional strategies are built around the 'Four Betters' which provides the structure for a consistent provincial movement towards successful achievement of objectives.

# Provincial Health System Goals

### Better Health

Improve population health through health promotion, protection and disease prevention, and collaborating with communities and different government organizations to close the health disparity gap.

### Better Care

In partnership with patients and families, improve the individual's experience, achieve timely access and continuously improve healthcare safety.

### Better Value

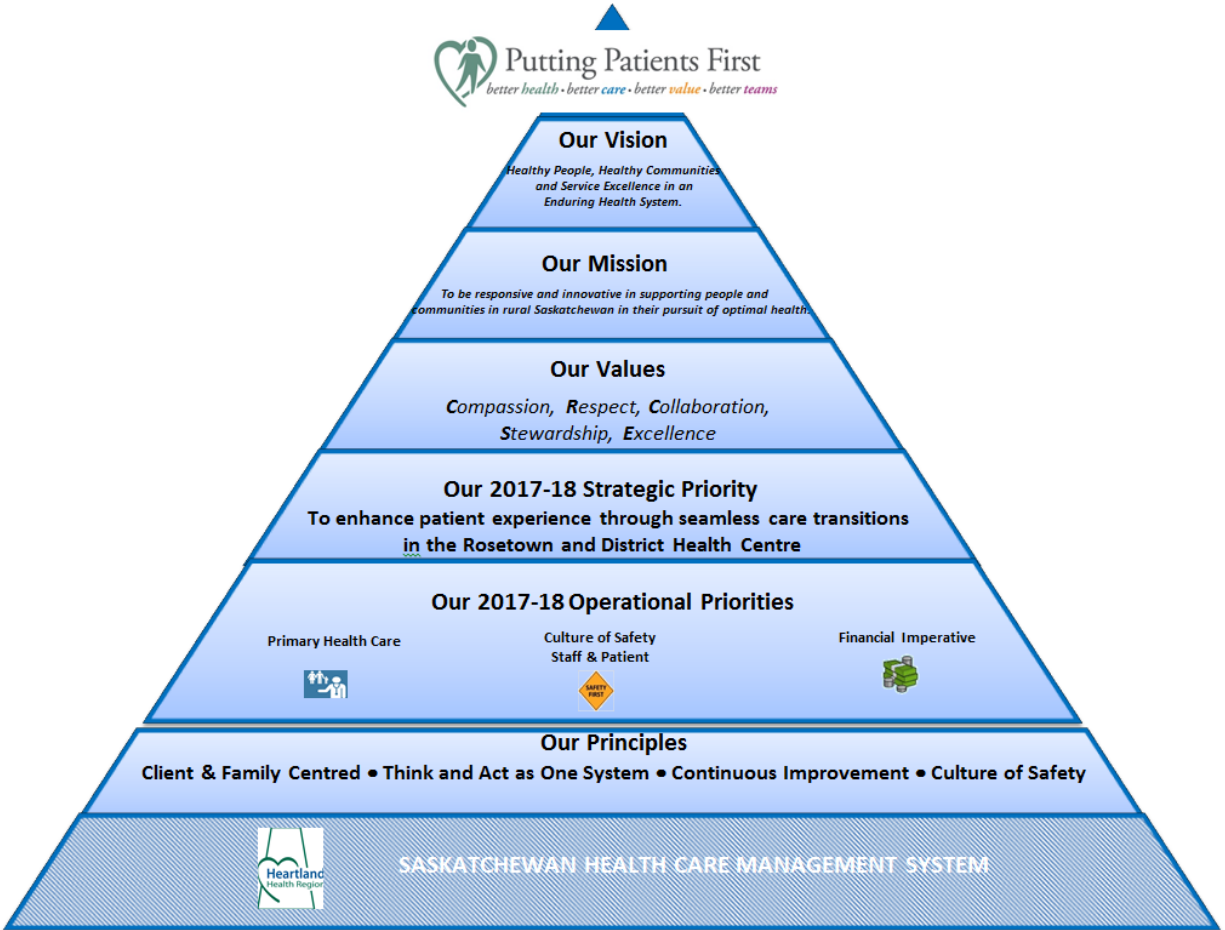
Achieve best value for money, improve transparency and accountability, and strategically invest in facilities, equipment, and information infrastructure.

### Better Teams

Build safe, supportive and quality workplaces that support patient and family-centred care and collaborative practices, and develop a highly skilled, professional and diverse workforce that has a sufficient number and mix of service providers.







The engagement and support of staff, physicians and managers is **key** to accomplishing our vision of a transformed health system. It is important that we engage all and staff and physicians at every level in the new process of strategic planning and help them understand how every employee’s and physician’s work supports our shared vision. This is a major change in how we have managed our work in the past. It will take time and dedication all staff and physicians to make it happen.

## Goals of the Communication Plan

### 1. Strengthening Internal Communications (Employees, Physicians, Managers and other Internal Stakeholders)

Employee communication plays a critical role in informing and motivating employees and Physicians, and by extension (through word of mouth), the communities served. HHR’s employees, physicians, and specialists are arguably our most effective communicators within our communities, and in fact can be important ambassadors of the health care region and system. Employees and Physicians are vital to the success of our organization and the larger provincial healthcare system as well.

The provincial Employee and Physician survey results received in 2014, although response rates were lower than hoped, have provided feedback for continuously improving the workplaces throughout our region. Successful change requires engaged and participating managers, employees and physicians.

Plans and actions continue to work toward our common goals of healthy and quality workplaces and employees and physicians, including the numerous structures and processes in place for participation through regional and/or workplace committees, meetings, etc. Other surveys are currently underway as we prepare for our 2017 Accreditation Survey.

We will also be committed to finding ways for managers to work more closely with staff on the front lines so that they have the opportunity to show and tell us what we need to know so that we are making informed decisions about what will help them to produce the best outcomes for our patients, clients and residents. These are some key features of Quality Improvement Initiatives in healthcare – the methods provide structural opportunities for us to step back and take a second look at how we are doing things, and then engage in shared decision-making about what we can do to improve. We hope this open and widespread communication will demonstrate to employees that their feedback has been heard and results will be acted on and impact future workplace programs, initiative and culture.

### **1.1. Building Capacity for our Managers**

The region will encourage management to share information and keep staff and physicians informed through regular wall walks, staff forums, and meetings. The region will encourage management to be open to feedback from staff through surveys, question and answer sessions, and (the use of) feedback in planning. It is important to build capacity for good two way communication with our managers.

- Help to develop manager skills by providing appropriate education and support by focusing on responsive communication and relationships and providing manager communication workshops in each of the four PHSA's
- Provide managers with communication tools
- Engage the leaders in the organization by communicating the strategic goals and objectives to all leaders, staff and service providers and ensure the goals of the programs, teams, and units align with the strategic plan

### **1.2 Corporate Newsletters and CEO Updates**

Newsletters build healthier relationships with staff by keeping them informed. In an effort to create equity in the amount of information shared with employees within different areas and within various facilities, a weekly staff newsletter has been implemented. *"The Heartland Link"* provides the same information to all staff, Physicians and Board members regarding programming and personnel. The CEO will continue to provide a regular update on the first page of the newsletter, facilitating communications from the highest-level while promoting familiarity. This will also provide an avenue for staff to relay thoughts and concerns and have access to senior management.

- Continue to distribute a bi-weekly newsletter to all internal stakeholders
- Continue to have the CEO article on the front page of the Newsletter

### **1.3 Senior Leadership Team & Staff Meetings**

Every opportunity for interactive dialogue among SLT, employees, and physicians provides a venue for information sharing and feedback. The region will continue to facilitate periodic meetings for staff to hear from the top level of the organization through personal appearances of SLT across the region. SLT should take time to discuss the region's vision and strategic directions, report on the progress of initiatives, and to listen to feedback and questions/concerns. This will foster a sense of character in SLT and enhance the level of trust in those running the organization.

- Continue to have SLT meetings
- Continue to take opportunities to have leadership presence at facility staff meetings if requested.

#### **1.4 Social Media to target all age groups and all audiences**

We have a younger generation of workers entering our workplace who traditionally communicate by using various social media outlets. Twitter, Facebook, and You-Tube are some of the different tools that the younger generation use to communicate. We need to find a more effective way to communicate to all age groups and audiences using a variety of communication tools. Health Promotion could be best communicated using some of the newer methods. We need to explore options and figure out ways to target all age groups in our communication materials.

- We set up a new Facebook page in October 2014 and have a large number of followers. Communications plans to expand the content to include more informational content going out to our followers/public.
- We continue to roll out Facebook to other program requests with health promotions and related materials being the main focus of the content.
- We have rebuilt our external website to make it more 'user' friendly and interactive and allow us to be able to share information in a better way including posting to Facebook directly from the website and accessing YouTube links for staff and public to access.
- We continue to broaden our options to use social media such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube as communication tools.
- We set up a Twitter account in October 2016.
- Increase staff's ability to access various forms of social media.
- Emergency Medical Services has worked within our website and a web designer to set up a new program linked to our website to be able to offer staff and some public education through our external website.
- Our SharePoint site is being used for many forms of information sharing to our staff and Physicians.

## **2. Strengthen External Communications**

External communication refers to all promotional initiatives the region is undertaking, including stakeholder relations, public relations and advertising, and government relations. The main goal of strengthening external communications would be to have a continued positive, supportive relationship with the Ministry of Health and 3sHealth and to develop and sustain positive relationships with local governments and stakeholder groups.

## 2.1. Build Public Relations

Public relations strives to change peoples' perceptions by providing them with information and having that information 'validated' through the endorsement of others - namely the media, our clients and patients, and opinion leaders. It is third party endorsement that is the foundation of the success of public relations programs. The region can increase the effectiveness of its public relations and communication services by implementing a marketing communication strategy, which uses a variety of tools - including paid advertising. The campaign would:

- Give the region control over its message;
- Ensure the messages are 'relevant' to the people receiving them;
- Ensure that messages are delivered on a regular, frequent, and repeated basis;
- Ensure the region presents positive news on a regular basis.

The region will engage the community and seek input in a variety of formal and informal ways when planning services:

- Focus groups
- Other community engagement activities and consultation processes. Improving the client experience through Client and Family-Centred Care is often described as a “journey” and not a project. It will require cultural transformation within the entire system and at every level of healthcare delivery. It recognizes the client and family members as important members of the patient care team. They will advocate and provide emotional support for the client and often provide continuity of care when the client is discharged from the hospital.
- Recruited members for a Client and Family Centred Care Committee. The expectations for this committee are; to attend meetings, to participate in an advisory role using their experience in our health care system to work collaboratively with us to improve our processes, to participate in committee projects and to bring their client and family perspective. The committee is made up of equal numbers of client/family advisors and staff/physicians: client or family representatives including one HRHA Board member and a member of the West Central Government committee and the staff members also include a physician.
- The Communications Coordinator sits as a Vice Chair on the Client and Family Centred Committee and assists in the messaging to both internal and external stakeholder groups regarding Client and Family-Centred Care and any communications surrounding the open family presence policy rollout in the region.
- A welcoming banner is in every facility in the region. The banner was developed with consultation from staff, 3sHealth and provincial communications. The message on the banner is “Welcome Working with you to provide the best care for you and your family.” The slogan is also promoted as part of our branding message and is also used on our home slider page of the new website.
- Every opportunity will be made to reduce cluttered signage and make our entrances more welcoming to the public. New posters were designed within our Client and Family Centred Care committee to promote Shared Respect in the facilities and a rollout of these posters will happen throughout the region in early 2017.

## **2.2. Building Partnerships**

It is important to form partnerships with community, foundations, community councils and other outside agencies. An engaged and informed community is very beneficial to any project that the region undertakes. Communications will assist and participate in community events to engage the residents and celebrate such projects. Some examples of this might include:

- Community Advisory Network set up in Kindersley in response to the Kindersley Needs Assessment
- Working with the community leaders and West Central Government Committee and Waterwolf Planning Commission groups to plan and efficiently and effectively coordinate services in the region (physician planning meetings, emergency medical services, health care summits, community needs assessments);
- Working with Sunwest School Division and Living Sky School Division to deliver the P.A.R.T.Y. (Preventing Alcohol and Risk Related Trauma in Youth) and talking to Youth Live (TTYL) programs in all schools in the area;
- We have established partnerships with our town councils, foundations, school divisions, pharmacies and other stakeholders within the region. Our plan is to continue to work with these groups to ensure that our communication tools are effective and that we live up to our commitment to be transparent and accountable for the decisions that we make;
- Continue to provide messaging to the public for the Influenza Prevention Campaign to try and increase our influenza immunization rates for the public;
- Working with communities to form partnerships to support and participate in ongoing community initiatives to help prevent chronic disease and promote a healthy lifestyle; and
- Physician recruitment working groups as identified. Our Primary Health Care team has been working very closely with many of the communities in the region for Physician Recruitment and Retention and development of a sustainable primary care model. These connections have been very helpful with recruitment efforts in the communities of Rosetown, Outlook, Kindersley, Biggar, Unity, Wilkie, Macklin, Davidson and Eston over the past few years. Many of the community members on these recruitment committees are leaders and influential members of the community. In many ways the committees function as advisory networks as they generally include people who show up for any discussion about health service delivery.

## **3. Supporting the Initiatives in the Region that are aligned with Regional priorities**

The Communication plan will focus on the initiatives in the region that are:

- Aligned with the Provincial Health System Plan from the Ministry of Health; and
- Aligned to produce a balanced budget.

All Stakeholders need a better understanding of the mission, vision, values, strategic directions, annual priorities, and key initiatives of the region. Communications will support the region by developing and facilitating the completion of comprehensive plans for large-scale projects that are currently underway in the region. The goals would be to increase understanding about the project among employees, physicians, residents, and the general public.

As a health region in Saskatchewan we have a key role to play in communicating about Lean. We need to be finding and telling stories of how we are using Quality Improvement Initiatives to make things better for clients, patients, residents and staff. In both internal and external communications about these initiatives we want to highlight the benefits to patients, families and staff with less focus on the tools/methodology and lean terminology. This can be achieved by using a people-oriented, story-telling approach to highlight the successes and engage audiences.

### **Accountability and Governance Feedback**

In order to ensure effective message delivery, various tools need to be employed to evaluate strategies. These include satisfaction surveys as well as staff, patient/resident and family feedback. Evaluation needs are ascertained on a project-by-project basis.

Areas to explore for evaluation of regional communication strategies – will use one of the following methods in the year:

- Random focus groups
- Input from the Client and family Centred Care Committee
- Questions in the patient/client/resident satisfaction survey

### **Performance Measures**

Communications will define a work plan and attach timelines from the annual communications plan. The work plan will be reviewed at least quarterly to ensure targets are met.

### **Reporting**

In order to keep the Board apprised of ongoing communication activity/progress, Communications will report regularly to the VP of Primary Health and Quality Services on year-to-date activities including accomplishments to date, initiatives still to come, and lessons learned. Communications will also report to the Board Authority regularly through the CEO Board report.

### **Conclusion**

In a dynamic and changing environment, the planned communication strategies and tactics may change over the course of time. As situations evolve, and feedback is received initiatives will be adjusted. The fundamental principles of openness, transparency and accountability will continue to guide our proactive style of communicating Heartland Health Region's strategic goals and objectives into the future.