

Draft Vision Statement

***HEALTH IN NIAGARA:
A VISION FOR OUR FUTURE***

Niagara's health system of the future will be consumer-driven and dedicated to the well-being of the people of Niagara. It will be easy to access and use, offer appropriate services which improve or maintain health to all age groups, and be more efficient and cost-effective.

Niagara's health system will be led and managed by a single, local organization. This organization will be responsible for ensuring appropriate and equitable distribution of resources and health services across the entire region.

Niagara's fully integrated health system will be built upon the strengths of the existing system. The physical, emotional and mental health needs of individuals and communities will be met by:

- community wellness networks which will coordinate primary care and other services that contribute to health and well-being;
- networks of specialty services which will address specific health needs (e.g., mental health, long-term care, chronic care, women and children's issues, etc.); and,
- state-of-the-art emergency and acute care, including the diagnosis and treatment of complex medical conditions.

Fundamental to this system will be the use of advanced communication and information technologies.

Niagara's health system will focus on consumer responsibility to ensure appropriate use of services, and quality and accountability from the system's providers. The system will be caring and foster mutual respect between those who deliver and those who use its services.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE VISION STATEMENT

Focus on the Consumer

Paragraphs #1 and #5 highlight the important role of the consumer in our vision. Consumers have a key role to play, along with the system's planners and providers, in redesigning and improving Niagara's health system. The system's services will strive to be caring, flexible, easy to use, confidential and accessible to all Niagara residents.

Paragraph #5 focuses on the responsibility of the individual, the community and the provider regarding appropriate use of the system's services.

Efficiency, Cost-Effectiveness and Quality Care

Paragraphs #1 and #5 highlight the importance of shifting the focus and limited resources of our system to support the provision of high quality care and services which contribute to improved health. The goal is to provide the right service, at the right time, in the right place at the best cost.

Paragraph #1 supports the development of services and medical procedures which have been proven to contribute to maintaining and/or improving health and well-being. For example, it is anticipated that future compensation of the system's providers will be based on standards and guidelines regarding which procedures and services improve health for a given condition, and are most cost-effective.

Local Management Structure

Paragraph #2 supports the establishment of one local organization that will direct and oversee changes required to implement our vision of a new health system. It is anticipated that this organization would be responsible for the allocation of government funding and coordination of all health-related services within Niagara's health system.

Integration of all Health-Related Services

Paragraph #3 emphasizes the need to build critical links between all services in Niagara which contribute to the overall health of our population (e.g., health, social, environmental, economic services, etc.). Niagara's health system will support collaboration and mutual respect across and within all health-related sectors to ensure that the health needs of the people of Niagara are being adequately met.

Networks of Excellence

Paragraph #3 highlights the key components of Niagara's health system early into the next century. The focus here is on the establishment of regional "networks" and "centres of excellence" which together address the various health needs of the people of Niagara (e.g., acute care, mental health, long-term care, health promotion needs, etc.). Mechanisms for co-ordinating and linking services which address similar consumer groups or service areas will be explored.

As the first point of contact for the consumer, wellness centres will be established throughout Niagara to co-ordinate primary care services of family physicians and allied health professionals (physiotherapists, chiropractors, massage therapists, etc.) with others services which promote health and well-being. Regional networks of specialty services, which would be supported by satellite facilities, will be established as a second, more specialized level of care. The most specialized level of health care will be provided by state-of-the-art hospital and emergency services which are supported by satellite ambulatory clinics. Paramedic services will be enhanced to ensure that they can appropriately respond at the right place and the right time in emergency situations.

To strive for excellence, it is expected that there will be fewer hospitals, as we know them, in Niagara's future health system. The details regarding this issue will be studied this year as part of the Niagara DHC's Hospital Restructuring Project.

Advanced Communication and Information Technology

As noted in paragraph #4, Niagara's future health system must utilize advanced communication and information technology to link the system's networks of health services to ensure timely access and care for the consumer. In addition, the system will use information technology tools to monitor, evaluate and make improvements to the system and its services, as required.