

Improving musculoskeletal care through Rapid Access Clinics

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the South West LHIN are committed to improving appropriateness of care for people with musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions. One way to improve care is to expand MSK central intake, assessment and management models that have proven benefits to patients and providers.

This new model of care is focused on appropriate assessment and education; assessors will stream patients who require surgical consult, while connecting non-surgical patients to available community-based resources. This model will seek to simplify and standardize the referral process for primary care providers, reduce initial assessment times for patients to under 30 days from time of referral (Wait 1), as well as balance out and offer transparency to the wait-times per surgeon across the LHIN.

Implementing Rapid Access Clinics is the first step in an ongoing process to improve hip/knee and spine treatment and should help identify the true number of surgery patients and funding needed. While this strategy will be rolled out based on a provincially standardized model, it will evolve with process improvements over time.

The South West LHIN looks forward to working with system partners to build a sustainable health care system that provides appropriate care for patients with MSK conditions including low back pain and hip and knee osteoarthritis.

Project updates

<p>Implementation timeline</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similar to most areas of the province, the South West LHIN will take a phased implementation approach for both the hip/knee and low back pain models. • A plan is being developed to address the existing wait-listed patients for both models. At this time, there is no need to hold referrals or to re-refer. More details will be circulated in the form of a frequently asked questions (FAQs) document at a later date.
<p>Advanced Practice Leads (APLs)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Practice Leads Ravi Rastogi (low back pain focused) and Rhonda Butler (hip and knee focused) have now joined the project and will be the primary point of contact for consultation and assessment of musculoskeletal patients.

Advanced Practice Providers (APPs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A South West LHIN working group, with representation from the partnering hospitals, has been established to discuss operational requirements regarding the on-boarding process for the Advanced Practice Providers.
Communication planning – Rapid Access Clinics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the new models roll out, the LHIN will communicate with partners via webinars, meetings, fact sheets and social media. • Brochures and other communication tools will be used to communicate directly with patients and the public. • For more information on communications, please contact Faadia Ghani, Communications Business Partner, South West LHIN at: faadia.ghani@lhins.on.ca.
Referral process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The South West LHIN MSK Working Group and Steering Committee are finalizing options for primary care to receive and see referral statuses. • Once the project is implemented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There will be a single fax number to send referrals ○ There will be a standardized referral form available for download as pdf or to incorporate into your EMR ○ Patients and providers will be able to check the status of referrals by calling a central number ○ All referred patients will be seen by an Advanced Practice Provider within 30 days and with conservative interventions initiated where appropriate

Clinical Advisory Group (CAG) is a group represented by clinical experts who are consulted on clinical issues related to this South West LHIN strategy. The CAG membership list is below for reference:

Dr. Steven MacDonald (Co-Chair)	Orthopedic Surgeon, London Health Sciences Centre
Dr. Christopher Bailey (Co-Chair)	Orthopedic Surgeon, London Health Sciences Centre
Dr. Jay B Adlington	Orthopedic Surgeon, Grey Bruce Health Services
Rhonda Butler	Advanced Practice Lead, South West LHIN
Dr. Neil Duggal	Neurosurgeon, London Health Sciences Centre
Dr. James K Guy	Orthopedic Surgeon, Stratford General Hospital
Dr. James Howard	Orthopedic Surgeon, St. Joseph's Health Care

Dr. Tatiana Jevremovic	Family Physician with focus practice in sport and exercise medicine, Fowler Kennedy Sport Medicine Clinic
Dr. Stephen Michael Petis	Orthopedic Surgeon, Woodstock General Hospital
Dr. Vaishnav Rajgopal	Orthopedic Surgeon, Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital
Ravi Rastogi	Advanced Practice Lead, South West LHIN
Dr. Jackie Sadi	PhD, Physiotherapist
Dr. Andrew Van Houwelingen	Orthopedic Surgeon, St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital

For additional questions related to this strategy, please contact your sub-region Clinical Lead:

Grey Bruce	Dr. Keith Dyke keith.dyke@lhins.on.ca
Huron Perth	Dr. Paul Gill paul.gill@lhins.on.ca
London Middlesex	Dr. Gord Schacter gord.schacter@lhins.on.ca
Oxford	Dr. Jitin Sondhi jitin.sondhi@lhins.on.ca
Elgin	Dr. Kellie Scott kellie.scott@lhins.on.ca