

## FRANKLY SPEAKING: Behind the scenes...

Behind the Scenes in Our Health Care System

By Frank Klees, MPP

Newmarket-Aurora

The calls were adding up and the theme was consistent. Patients were arriving at Long Term Care Facilities throughout York Region with incomplete medical information from the hospital that initiated the transfer, making it impossible for the receiving facility to properly prepare for and provide the care required.

The implications were obvious, both to the patients and to the staff and administration of the long term care or retirement home that was now forced to deal with these circumstances. Little if any information about the psychological state of the patient, what treatment they had been receiving while in hospital, and what the short and longer-term medical or psychological needs of the patient will be. What to do?

Bring the parties to the table and find a solution

In my twenty-five years of business experience and the past eighteen in elected office, I have always found that when you bring decision-makers together and take the time to understand the issue from everyone's perspective, inevitably a solution will be found. Over the past eighteen years, the board table in my constituency office has been at the centre of many discussions. No matter how contentious the issue, in most cases, there was a resolution at the end of the discussion.

And so it was on this past July 17, when seated around that table were nine key people who could do just that: be willing to listen, understand the issue and find a solution.

Representing Southlake Regional Health Centre was Gary Ryan, Chief Operating Officer and Helena Hutton, Vice President, Quality, Emergency, ICU, Medicine & Surgical Programs. The Community Care Access Centre was represented by Jennifer Scott, Cheryl Cheung and Tina Li.

The concerns of the long term care facilities were passionately presented by Jennifer Pimek (Aurora Resthaven), Diane Brunelle-Marleau and Debbie Sedore-Kola (Eagle Terrace) and Diane Smith (Mackenzie Place).

Following a robust discussion that focused on the need for more timely and reliable information regarding patient transfers, the ability for facilities to communicate directly with each other about individual patient care and standardized expectations regarding transfer notes, an Action Plan was agreed to that will address the identified challenges regarding safe transfer of patients between sending or receiving institutions.

That plan was subsequently formalized through minutes that set out a commitment to conduct a LEAN process engineering project that would establish among other initiatives, standardized communication and documentation between hospitals and long term care facilities.

In a recent email, Southlake COO Ryan confirmed that as a result of these discussions, similar solutions have been established for group homes with the result that "communication and cooperation have been greatly improved".

On behalf of the patients and families who will benefit from this outcome, I thank this group of nine for their leadership.

More Good News from Southlake for Transplant Patients

On Friday, August 23, I listened to a son's appeal on behalf of his father who is on a lung transplant list. As part of his pre-transplant treatment, he is required to visit the Southlake Rehabilitation Centre three times a week. They had just been advised that the Southlake Centre will be closing and that his father would now have to get his treatments at Toronto General in the heart of the city. The concern was that the stress of making that trip three times a week through congested traffic would make the father's deteriorated condition even worse. Was there anything that could be done for his father? That afternoon I asked that Southlake do its utmost to consider accommodating the five transplant patients who are depending on this service.

On September 12, at 12:01 p.m., I was advised by Mr. Ryan that every effort would be made to ensure the transplant patients could get care closer to home. In an email time-dated at 10:46 p.m. that evening, Mr. Ryan advised that Southlake would continue to provide service to the five transplant patients who were previously receiving treatment at the Respiratory Rehab program. Welcome news for the patients and their families.

On behalf of those transplant patients and their families, I thank the Southlake administration and health care providers for facilitating this life-saving solution.

Register to be an Organ Donor Today

More than 1,500 people are waiting for an organ transplant in Ontario. You can register to be an organ donor by going to [www.beadonor.ca](http://www.beadonor.ca). Please do it today.

As always, I welcome your comments and advice. I can be reached directly at 905-750-0019 or through my website at [frankklees.com](http://frankklees.com).