GOOD HEALTH FOR ALL
Health Sciences North Annual General Meeting 2017

Report of the Chief of Staff
It is my pleasure to present my final report as Chief of Staff. It has been an honour to serve in this capacity for the past seven years. Between 2010 and 2016, more than 140 new family doctors and specialists set up practices in Greater Sudbury, with 16 of those physicians coming to Greater Sudbury in the past year. As a result, the citizens of Sudbury now have greater access to a family doctor. Our specialists have brought new skills, expertise, and procedures that were not available before, improving access to care for people right across northeastern Ontario.

During this time we also increased the overall number of medical learners spending time at HSN. We created a new Simulation Lab where medical learners and health care workers of all disciplines have received highly specialized training. This past year alone, 1,900 learners spent over 12,000 hours in the Lab learning and honing their skills.

This past year, we marked the 10th anniversary of our academic working partnership with the Northern Ontario School of Medicine. We are now renewing that arrangement as we work together to meet the health care needs of northerners for the next ten years.

In terms of front-line care, our physicians and the entire care team at HSN once again deserve praise for the remarkable work they do in very difficult circumstances. It was the busiest year ever in our Emergency Department with 74,000 patient visits. That’s an increase of 785 patients from the previous year. Despite this increase in volume, we experienced a decrease in most of our wait times. Overall length of stay decreased. The time to the first contact with a physician improved. Ambulance off-load times were reduced.

The only area in which the ED did not experience an improvement in wait times was the total time spent waiting for a hospital bed. That’s not due to problems in the ED, but rather, the inability to flow patients up to a ward. The problems with patient flow are well known in our community and the primary cause can be related to the high number of Alternate Level of Care patients in hospital beds.

On all of our patient units, physicians, front-line staff and managers did a wonderful job of dealing with a near-constant state of overcapacity. It’s a situation playing out in hospitals across Ontario. In this environment, HSN still managed to introduce new innovations. For example, Dr. Deljit Dhanoa performed HSN’s first-ever Radiofrequency Ablation (RFA) to remove a kidney tumour on a patient. This minimally invasive procedure leads to better outcomes and quicker recovery times.

Our challenges are not going away anytime soon. We will again rely on the skill and resolve of our physicians, employees, and patients to ensure we maintain the highest levels of care possible in a time of incredible pressures on the health care system.

I look forward to working with HSN’s new Chief of Staff, my physician colleagues, the health care providers at HSN, and our patients and families to ensure we continue to provide the highest levels of patient care.