

## WWLHINnews

### **New Health Funding to Launch Major Cardiac Care Program in Waterloo Wellington Area**

*Waterloo Wellington LHIN and St. Mary's General Hospital increase lifesaving cardiac procedures and services for local residents.*

#### NEWS RELEASE

*Waterloo, ON – November 8, 2012* In order to create a fully comprehensive cardiac care program close to home, the Waterloo Wellington Local Integration Network (WWLHIN) is providing up to \$2,326,500 in base funding to St. Mary's General Hospital. Funds will be used to launch the final essential components of a Major Cardiac Care Program for Waterloo Wellington residents.

By funding this program, St. Mary's General Hospital will be equipped with the best possible cardiac care unit in order to meet the needs of a community with some of the most complex heart patients in the province. This new program will support the needs of cardiac patients at St. Mary's, where the average required resources to care for patients are ranked third highest amongst Ontario's cardiac centres.

New funds will allow St. Mary's to provide full service care to the majority of local patients with heart arrhythmia (irregular heartbeat) currently in need of implantable cardioverter defibrillators (ICD). The ICD is a small battery-powered electrical impulse generator that is implanted in patients who are at risk of heart failure.

For Waterloo Wellington residents this means that the majority of patients will no longer have to travel outside of our local area for implantation. Patients will be able to receive pre-ICD, implant and follow-up care locally, improving the patient experience and providing a more seamless continuum of care. St. Mary's Regional Cardiac Care Centre currently monitors about 400 patients annually who have received their device elsewhere.

St. Mary's is a leader in cardiac care within Ontario, and funding for a fully comprehensive program will put St. Mary's General Hospital's cardiac care services on par with top ranking care units in the province.

The WWLHIN will also provide up to \$689,100 in base funding and one-time funding of \$241,300 in 2012-13. This base and one-time funding of \$930,400 is to be used to support selected cardiac services in the Waterloo/Wellington region.

This funding will provide over 200 opportunities for additional lifesaving cardiac procedures including: 54 heart valve surgeries, 55 angioplasty procedures and 21 pacemaker surgeries. This funding is over and above the \$892,500 base funds provided in 2011/12 for ongoing monitoring of patients that are receiving implantable cardiac defibrillators.

## QUOTES

“Most patients, who require implantable cardioverter defibrillators, have significant structural heart disease and congestive heart failure. Allowing these patients to receive both their implant and follow up care closer to home is an important component of integrated care. This closes the loop on providing total cardiac care, in keeping with the vision of the St. Mary’s Regional Cardiac Care Centre”

-Dr. Stuart Smith, Chief of Cardiovascular Services at St. Mary’s.

“This investment better aligns funded volumes to patient’s needs in Waterloo Wellington. We are grateful for the support of the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care and the Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network in helping St. Mary’s enhance care for those living with cardiovascular disease.”

-Don Shilton, President at St. Mary’s General Hospital

“The expansion and enhancement of the cardiac care program at St. Mary’s General Hospital, to include implantable cardioverter defibrillators is great news for our community. This means patients will no longer have to travel outside of the Waterloo Wellington area to access these cardiac procedures. Local access to care keeps patients close to their families and homes, as well as their established health care providers for follow-up during the recovery process.”

-John Milloy, MPP Kitchener Centre

“Our investment in this program at St. Mary’s General Hospital brings a whole new level of complete cardiac service to local residents and further solidifies the St. Mary’s team as leaders alongside the top cardiac programs in the province. The positive impact of being able to deliver full cardiac care locally will make a real difference in patient’s lives.”

-Bruce Lauckner, CEO of the Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network

## ABOUT THE WWLHIN

The Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network is responsible for planning, integrating, coordinating and providing funding to 79 health service providers including hospitals, long-term care homes, community support services, community health centres, the Community Care Access Centre and community mental health and addictions agencies in Waterloo Region, Wellington County and South Grey. The WWLHIN operates an annual health care budget of close to \$858 million dollars.

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