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For more information   
contact:

**Todd Stepanuik**  
President & CEO  
519 245-5295, #5592

or visit our website:

[www.mhalliance.on.ca](http://www.mhalliance.on.ca)

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

***FCHS and its partners improve access to primary care after hospital stay***

**(Newbury, ON) –** Four Counties Health Services, part of the Middlesex Hospital Alliance, recently formalized service agreements with two of its partners that will improve access to care for their patients being discharged from hospital.

As part of a coordinated discharge process, the hospital will contact the Four Counties Family Health Team and the West Elgin Community Health Centre to book an appointment with their patient’s primary care provider (family physician or nurse practitioner) to occur within 7 days of discharge.

Patients eligible for this coordinated discharge process include -- but are not limited to – those admitted for an acute inpatient hospital stay for cardiac conditions (excluding heart attack), congestive heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, pneumonia, diabetes, stroke and gastrointestinal disease.

Continuity of care and the timely access to a patient's primary care provider is of great importance after a hospital stay, as it can reduce the number of readmissions to hospital.

“We welcome this opportunity to build on our great partnership with Four Counties Health Services”, says Andy Kroeker, Executive Director of the West Elgin Community Health Centre. “When we talk and plan earlier for a safe transition home, our clients will be less likely to end up back in the Emergency Department or hospital. This is better for both our clients and the health care system.”

Jean Ray, Executive Director of the Four Counties Family Health Team, is also pleased to formalize this service.  “The coordinated discharge plan will ensure that our patients have the appropriate follow-up, so that we can seamlessly reintegrate discharged hospital patients into a primary care setting”, she says.

“These partnerships with West Elgin Community Health Centre and the Four Counties Family Health Team are a win-win for our patients as it ensures a seamless transition and continuum of care from hospital to home,” says Steph Ouellet, VP Strategic Partnerships, FCHS Site Director.

About MHA:

The Middlesex Hospital Alliance (MHA) is comprised of two fully-accredited partner sites: Four Counties Health Services and Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital.

A progressive, team-oriented and technologically adept organization of excellence, the MHA is creating a more integrated and seamless approach to treatment by embracing and seeking out partnerships, through collaboration and investing in people. This coordinated approach helps to ensure that a high level of service is provided while reducing costs and continually enhancing quality.

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