

June 1, 2012

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MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Promise of fewer meetings and less duplication leads Docs to propose merger

The Board of Directors for the Middlesex Hospital Alliance (MHA) approved at its regular Board Meeting held on Wednesday, May 30, 2012 a new set of bylaws that will lead to the merging of the Medical Staff at the Four Counties Health Services (FCHS) and Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital (SMGH) sites.

In April of 2011, the FCHS Medical Advisory Committee unanimously passed a resolution to merge medical staff between sites after the benefits of such a move had become apparent. Essentially the FCHS physicians felt a merger would mean fewer meetings and sharing the burden of developing and reviewing policies and procedures with the much larger Strathroy Hospital Medical Staff.

Since 1999, Four Counties Health Services (FCHS) and Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital (SMGH) have achieved a great deal by working together in partnership under the Middlesex Hospital Alliance (MHA). Merging the medical seemed like the next logical step.

Since the merger was proposed over a year ago by the FCHS medical staff, there has been ample time to consider the benefits and potential obstacles. "There was no rush to approve the request by FCHS medical staff", said Michael Mazza, MHA CEO. "These bylaws were considered by the Governance Committee and by the MHA Board in addition to being reviewed jointly by the physicians of both FCHS and SMGH Medical Staffs", he added.

"The primary aim of the MHA is to improve access to care and to help patients navigate the health care system more easily. By merging the medical staff, we will be able to improve the patient experience at both sites by finding the right balance of operational and clinical knowledge," says Dr. Jon Dreyer, Chief of Staff, FCHS.

The move was initiated by Four Counties as a result of existing co-operative practice between staff at both sites who already work closely together on a daily basis. It is anticipated that this further integration will lead to greater efficiencies.

The merger of the medical staff will now allow this work to be allocated appropriately across both hospital sites. "Through this process, the MHA is ensuring effective

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allocation and utilization of resources in terms of medical and non-medical staff expertise, creating one patient experience through our two interdependent sites," says Dr. Paul Ferner, Chief of Staff, SMGH.

MHA Physicians have a long history of partnership dating back over 40 years, when Dr. Maurice Sanders first held medical privileges at both FCHS and SMGH. Currently a number of Active medical staff has privileges at both sites. Existing medical staff should see no change in their work assignments.

"In the end, looking after our patients, instead of attending meetings just made sense", said Cheryl Waters, Chair of the Board of Directors, MHA.