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Deputy Minister of Health and Wellness

Atlantic Health Quality and Patient Safety Collaborative

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Rodd Charlottetown, PEI

Thank you for inviting me. I am pleased to be able to join my colleagues from the Atlantic Provinces as we take another step toward improving quality and patient safety in health care.

For several years now, the Canadian Patient Safety Institute has been the “glue” that holds the patient safety movement together. The institute has been a long-time partner, and is a national leader to us all.

Today, each of our provinces have councils and committees working on quality and patient safety.

I believe that by co-operating, by sharing best practices and lessons learned that this Atlantic Health Quality and Patient Safety Collaborative will add to the momentum underway thanks to CPSI -- and within our own jurisdictions.

The Nova Scotia Government and the Department of Health and Wellness recognize the importance of patient safety.

That’s why we asked Dr. Pat Croskerry to chair the new Quality and Patient Safety Advisory Committee -- and why Government announced this in the Speech from the Throne as a key priority.

You heard Dr. Croskerry speak earlier today.

You likely already know that he is a national and international leader in the field -- and that he started the Canadian Healthcare Safety Symposium called the Halifax Series a decade ago....

And that he also pushed to have patient safety included in the curriculum of Dalhousie Medical School. It was the first school in Canada to do this.

Dr. Croskerry has been a key player in helping us develop the Quality and Patient Safety Initiative in Nova Scotia.

It only made sense for him to lead the committee.

The group will provide advice and recommendations and bring stakeholders together, to promote and inform a provincially coordinated, innovative, and patient-centered approach.

It will bring provincial perspective and provide strategic direction, facilitate capacity building and expertise, and decide the research agenda.

It will facilitate and support education and help DHAs and other service delivery partners in their efforts to improve the safety and quality of care.

The committee will provide strategic advice and recommendations and inform the work of the new Health System Quality, Patient Safety and Wait Times Improvement Division.

The NS Department of Health and Wellness is expanding the capacity of this division.

It now has its own executive director – MJ MacDonald.

We're working in collaboration with the DHAs and the IWK – through the use of best practices.

The division already sets standards for the health care system – and will be doing more of this.

It monitors health care performance and patient outcomes, in areas such as ...

- infection prevention and control
- wait times
- improved accessibility to health care services
- safer surgeries
- prevention of adverse events, diagnostic errors, and risk management
- continuity of care, handoffs of care and patient navigation
- medication reconciliation
- reduction of falls for older adults
- mental health care and improved accessibility and continuity of care
- emergency services and accessibility and appropriateness of use, and more...

Recently, members of the division conducted site visits in Cape Breton to consult and make recommendations to address *C. difficile*.

The division is working on Wait Times Improvement, through the Patient Access Registry and clinical prioritization tools.

And it has been working with the Nova Scotia Surgical Care Network on implementing surgical safety checklists in operating.

When Dr. John Ross delivered his report to the Nova Scotia Government on emergency care last fall, a focus of his recommendations was emergency room standards.

Our province will be the first in the country to have provincewide ER standards -- standards that will improve patient safety and ensure we are providing consistent approaches to triage care and staffing qualifications across the province.

Nova Scotia's new advisory committee will work with the division to improve health system transparency and accountability.

A first assignment will be development of a province-wide electronic platform for quality and safety monitoring.

Several leaders in the field have joined Dr. Croskerry on the committee to help with this work...including Theresa Fillatre, Atlantic Node Lead for Safer Healthcare Now!

Theresa has been pushing for the Atlantic Health Quality and Patient Safety Collaborative for a long time. I am grateful for her energy and vision.

I am involved in conversations about improving health care every day. But nothing underscores the importance of improving quality and patient safety like hearing how a patient suffered due to an adverse event, an error, a medical mistake....

A health system that puts quality and patient safety first is better managed, a better draw for health care providers and will provide better care for Atlantic Canadians.

Together, we will improve the quality and safety of health care... through the passion and expertise of those here today and of professionals working in health care every day, and through the commitment of Governments to make it so.