St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital

IMAGINE 2023

Creating a Healthier TOMORROW
Our Mission


Our Shared Vision

Together, creating health care excellence for our community.

Our Values

Compassion
We are empathetic, offering comfort and care to those in need.

Innovation
We create and adopt better ways to deliver health care.

Accountability
We are honest, reliable and responsible for our decisions and actions.

Respect
We are inclusive, understanding and considerate.

Collaboration
We work together to provide excellent patient care.
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Creating a Healthier Tomorrow

Health care is constantly changing. To achieve the best possible health outcomes for our patients, St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital (STEGH) must continually seek innovative ways to deliver services, engage our patients and community, invest in our people, and collaborate with our health care partners.

Now is the time to set a new direction for our Hospital that will enable us to achieve continued success. Our new Strategic Plan – Imagine 2023: Creating a Healthier Tomorrow – maps out that direction and is guided by a new Mission, a Shared Vision and a strong, redefined set of Core Values.

Throughout the planning process, we sought and received a wealth of input from our community. We have listened to you.

Imagine 2023 is a comprehensive, four-year road map that takes a multi-pronged approach in transforming STEGH to meet today’s challenges and take advantage of tomorrow’s opportunities. It is anchored on the following commitments to you:

• We will focus relentlessly on quality and draw on the best ideas, so that everything we do continually strengthens our Hospital and creates a healthy community.
• We will work closely with the people we serve – our patients and their caregivers – to continually improve what we do and how we do it.
• We will continue developing leading programs and services to better serve the needs of our community.
• We will deliver our patient services in more coordinated, connected and responsive ways.

Based on these commitments, we have mapped out an exciting path forward. We are pleased to share our plan with you. We invite you to learn more about our Hospital’s new direction – where we’re going, how we’ll get there and what it means to you.

Our Hospital has a proud history and legacy in this community with 65 years of service. We draw strength from our past and look to our future with more confidence than ever before. We have a clear plan, exceptional programs and services, dedicated and caring staff, and truly collaborative partnerships. STEGH is well poised to achieve our Shared Vision: Together, creating health care excellence for our community.

Cathy Crane
Chair, Board of Directors

Robert Biron
President & CEO
About STEGH

St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital is a 157-bed facility serving the City of St. Thomas and all seven municipalities within the County of Elgin. STEGH is a fully accredited hospital offering a full range of hospital services, including: outpatient care (surgery and ambulatory clinics), diagnostic imaging, inpatient acute care (medicine, surgery, maternal child), emergency services, post-acute care (rehabilitation and continuing care), as well as regional satellite services (chemotherapy and stroke unit).

More than 850 professionals work at STEGH and over 200 credentialed Professional Staff (physicians, dentists and midwives) who provide care and ensure the highest quality and safety to each and every patient. STEGH is also supported by 160 volunteers and 130 students.

Our Reach

Providing care closer to home is at the heart of a community hospital. When the residents of St. Thomas and Elgin County access care – 76 per cent receive Emergency Department care at STEGH and 63 per cent receive acute inpatient care at STEGH (for the year ending March 31, 2018). As well, STEGH has partnered with London hospitals to provide specialized services in our community, such as the District Stroke Centre and the Outpatient Chemotherapy Clinic. What’s more, STEGH provides a broad range of outpatient ambulatory clinics and diagnostic imaging services – serving tens of thousands of patients every year.
Our Patient Programs and Services

STEGH is a medium-sized full-service community hospital serving the St. Thomas and Elgin communities by ensuring that high quality care is available close to home when our patients need it most.

With an annual budget of over $100 million, we are one of the largest employers in the region.

In 2018/2019, the Hospital had over 56,000 emergency department visits, more than 50,000 patient stays and over 9,000 surgical cases.

### Urgent/Emergent and Pre-Operative/Pre-Admission Care
- **Emergency Department**: 56,106 Patient visits
- **Pre-Operative / Pre-Admission**: 2,644 Visits

### Post-Acute Care
- **Complex Continuing Care**: 10,853 Inpatient days
- **Rehabilitation**: 3,817 Inpatient days

### Clinical Support Services
- **Diagnostic Imaging**: >74,000 Exams
- **Laboratory**: >1,300,000 Tests
  - >368,000 Pathology specimen tests

### Ambulatory / Outpatient Care
- **Ambulatory / Outpatient Clinics**: >54,000 Visits
- **Operating Room / Post Anesthetic Recovery Room**: 7,205 Day surgery cases

### Acute Inpatient Care
- **ICU**: 1,843 ICU
- **Telemetry Inpatient days**: 1,209
- **Maternal Child Care**: 1,155 Obstetrics Inpatient days
- **Newborn Inpatient days**: 939
- **Special Care Nursery Inpatient days**: 950
- **Operating Room / Post Anesthetic Recovery Room**: 1,842 Inpatient surgery cases
- **Surgery**: 3,557 Inpatient days
- **Medicine**: 20,490 Inpatient days
- **Paediatrics**: 617 Inpatient days
- **Mental Health**: 4,757 Inpatient days

### Regional Partner Programs
- Ontario Breast Screening Program (OBSP) [partner is Cancer Care Ontario]
- Satellite Systemic Chemotherapy [partner is London Regional Cancer Program (LRCP)]
- Integrated Stroke Care
- Behavioural Support Ontario (BSO)
Local Community Context: By understanding the people in our region, we can continue to provide relevant and excellent care. A key input to the strategic planning process was an analysis of the population demographics and socioeconomic needs of the communities served by St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital, namely the City of St. Thomas and multiple towns, townships and municipalities in Elgin County and surrounding areas.

Elgin County is a dynamic region that is home to a diverse demographic of communities. From young families and professionals to aging adults and retirees, Elgin County offers a range of recreation and community service agencies to support various lifestyles. Elgin County’s rich agricultural community has attracted populations of migrant workers to the area. STEGH also serves the Low German-speaking Mennonite community as well as Indigenous communities in neighbouring counties.

Population Growth: The population in the Elgin census division is expected to grow at an annual rate of 0.40 per cent from 2016 to 2041. This rate of growth is lower than the province of Ontario (1.1 per cent) for the same period.

Aging Population: While the overall population in the Elgin census division is expected to remain relatively flat over the next 25 years, the growth rate among older age groups – 65 years and older – is projected to increase by 80 per cent. Health care needs are greater in older populations and STEGH will need to prepare its patient programs and services to accommodate this demographic shift.

Education: The percentage of residents in our region who do not have a high school certificate is 17 per cent, which is 10 per cent higher than the provincial average. Education is crucial to health and prosperity because it equips people with knowledge and skills for problem solving, skills necessary to access and understand information, and other resources required to maintain or improve their health.

Employment & Income: Six per cent of residents are either unemployed or have a low income. These factors not only provide the means to purchase necessities such as food, warmth and shelter, but also influence quality of life, the ability to make healthy lifestyle choices, the ability to participate in society and the extent of one’s coping strategies when stressful life events occur.

Fifteen per cent of residents reside in a single-parent household. Especially when headed by a woman, these households can be some of the most economically vulnerable.

“The person who made the most impact on my husband while at St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital was Barb, the housekeeper. He saw her on a daily basis and she took the time to engage in conversation while she cleaned his room. She was respectful, caring and compassionate.”

— Linda Chapman, Patient Partner
About Our Health Care System

Ontario’s health care system, like systems throughout the developed world, is in the midst of significant change in order to modernize the system to meet the needs of an aging and increasingly complex population.

To meet the needs of our patients and to provide the right services for our community, we must respond to the following societal trends:

Changing Demographics: In the next decade, one in four (25 per cent) of Ontario’s population will be over 65 years of age.

Chronic Diseases & Conditions: Chronic conditions are increasing due to demographic trends and lifestyle behaviours, creating long-term and costly health problems.

Patient & Family Engagement: Patients and families want more control over their own health experiences, which require effective models for education and engagement at all levels of the health system.

Population Health: The shift to a population health mandate to proactively improve the overall health of the population requires a broader approach to the organization and delivery of health services.

Accountability & Transparency: Advancing health research has raised the bar on quality and safety, and has paved the way for renewed expectations surrounding system performance, public reporting, transparency and accountability.

Integrated Care: Care needs to be coordinated and consistent between health service providers to enhance patient experiences and health outcomes.

Innovation in Health Care: Growing demand and opportunity to innovate in care delivery, particularly in the use of virtual technologies and ensuring patients can access their own health information.

Greater Efficiency: Given the fiscal constraints of provincial budgets, providers will need to continue to realize operating efficiencies in order to meet the growing demands for health services.
Our Process and Engagement

More than 1,000 internal and external stakeholders across St. Thomas and Elgin County were consulted during the strategic planning process. These stakeholders offered their thoughts on what the future of health care should look like at STEGH.

Feedback was gathered through numerous engagement sessions hosted within the hospital and across the community, as well as online surveys. Many consistent themes emerged from the discussions with stakeholders:

**Importance of hospital to the community**
A strong community hospital helps to attract businesses, families and retirees to the area. The ability to recruit and retain talent for business is facilitated by having a local community hospital. As the largest employer in St. Thomas, the Hospital is an important economic pillar.

**Strong sense of pride in the hospital**
St. Thomas and Elgin County residents take great pride in the hospital. Many stakeholders commented on our North Building, which opened in early 2018. The Emergency Department and Mental Health inpatient unit were often mentioned as having enhanced the care experience. Throughout the engagement process, participants spoke frequently about the kindness and friendliness of the staff.

**Some concerns about local health system gaps**
While quality of care is perceived to be high, participants mentioned clinical care services that either could be strengthened or were not offered at the hospital, such as mental health and MRI services, respectively.

**Understanding of the need for partnerships**
Community agencies and organizations are ready to partner with the hospital to improve services and patient experiences. Suggested opportunities include improved coordination of patient transfers, scheduling and follow-up care. Administratively, the hospital is seen as having deep expertise and resources in areas such as LEAN quality improvement methods that could support other partners.

**Opportunities for improved communication across the continuum**
Access to patient information and documentation was cited as an area for improvement by community agencies and primary care physicians.
Our Guiding Principles

The following principles were established to guide the development of our four-year strategic plan:

**Collaborate and Engage:** We believe that collaboration and meaningful engagement will lead us to better solutions for our patients.

**Innovate and Learn:** We believe we can leverage the collective wisdom and creativity of our team, our community and others to develop innovative solutions that meet or exceed our patients’ expectations.

**Network and Partner:** We believe together with our partners and patients we must co-design and provide coordinated care across the whole patient journey.

**Strengthen and Sustain:** We believe our primary responsibility is to deliver better value and care outcomes for our patients through sustainable change.

Our new strategic plan represents our new Mission, Shared Vision and Values – the foundation of which will support us as we continue to evolve and meet the needs of our patients, staff and community. Our Mission and Vision statements were developed through a comprehensive process, including various engagement touchpoints, such as vision exercises, think tank activities and round table discussions.

Based on the feedback gathered through internal and external engagement sessions, some key words and concepts emerged that serve to frame the new Mission statement:
Our Mission:

The words care and heal are derived from “health care.” Our health care team is committed to delivering outstanding experiences and quality patient care – care that is safe, accessible and integrated. Healing the body, mind and spirit are at the heart of all that we do as a hospital – crystallizing daily goals and aspirations for our patients.

The word connect speaks to our work with our patients and each other. When delivering services, we connect with each individual as a person and not just as a patient. It also means that we treat the person as a partner in their health care journey. Staff connect to foster a spirit of collaboration and teamwork.

Our Shared Vision:
Together, creating health care excellence for our community.

STEGH leaders described our future state with high expectations of performance and outcomes. Words such as leader, best, excellent, innovation and forward-thinking were used to describe high standards. STEGH leaders also conveyed their strong affinity toward the community we serve. STEGH is a community hospital that is supported by its community.

Our Values:

Nine Value Ambassadors – front-line staff representing a range of roles and departments – were involved with approximately 75 hours of face-to-face consultations, surveys, forums and more to inform the creation of meaningful and relevant values and definitions.

**Compassion**  
We are empathetic, offering comfort and care to those in need.

**Accountability**  
We are honest, reliable and responsible for our decisions and actions.

**Respect**  
We are inclusive, understanding and considerate.

**Innovation**  
We create and adopt better ways to deliver health care.

**Collaboration**  
We work together to provide excellent patient care.
Partnering with patients
to enhance their care experiences.
What this means:

We will engage patients and caregivers in a meaningful way to enhance their experiences, facilitate self-care and improve quality and safety of care.

Why this matters:

We believe patients should be at the centre of their care, by designing and coordinating care around their needs. We recognize that patients have changing expectations, increased knowledge and want to share their voices. By partnering with patients, we can better serve and meet the community's needs.

What you can expect:

Patients and caregivers are engaged and valued in affecting change in hospital operations and the delivery of care. They take an active role in developing their treatment plans and self-management, resulting in decreased negative outcomes and reduced costs to the system.

For example...

We are committed to developing and implementing a plan to guide patient and caregiver participation in hospital activities. Over the next four years, STEGH will implement Experience-Based Co-Design methods and integrate them with our LEAN continuous quality improvement system, which will bring staff and patients together to co-design services and processes.

In early 2019, STEGH introduced a new model of communication to staff and volunteers across the hospital. The model, known as iConnect with AIDET, is an acronym that stands for five communication behaviours: Acknowledge, Introduce, Duration, Explanation and Thank You. The framework ensures that staff communicate with patients and caregivers in a way that decreases anxiety, increases participation and improves clinical outcomes.

“At STEGH, I witnessed all aspects of the ‘human side’ of care – the emotional intelligences of Empathy, Kindness, Compassion, Patience, Encouragement, Engagement, and Dedication – which are critical in the patient experience.”

– Sharon Keenan, Patient Partner
Creating collaborative networks to connect patients to the services they need.
**What this means:**

We will collaborate with other service providers to co-design and deliver accessible and coordinated services for our patients.

**Why this matters:**

Our health system must be better integrated in order to improve the patient experience and health outcomes. Health service providers must collaborate and create new ways to coordinate, communicate and transition patients along their health care journey.

**What you can expect:**

Seamless transitions, better outcomes and reduced readmission rates will lead to an improved patient experience. Collaboration can also improve management of chronic diseases resulting in fewer emergency visits and hospitalizations for patients who can be better served in other settings; as well, improved communication with family doctors will improve timely follow-up care when needed.

**For example…**

Over the next four years, STEGH will focus on improving transitions of care, or the movement of patients from one setting of care to another. We will collaborate with partner organizations to develop a process for coordinated care plans for patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and Congestive Heart Failure, and improve processes for transitions of care with local long-term care facilities.

STEGH recognizes the importance of our family doctors – referred to as primary care – to both our patients and the overall health care system. STEGH will initiate process improvement initiatives to streamline information sharing, care coordination and scheduling activities with our family doctors.

“As a Patient Partner, it is my responsibility to represent the patient voice. I’ve been there, and feel as though I truly understand where patients are coming from.”

– Jane Walker, Patient Partner
Empowering our team to reach their full potential.
**What this means:**

We will ensure a safe and healthy workplace and invest in our team’s development to meet the evolving needs of our patients and community.

**Why this matters:**

Improving the well-being of our workforce and the safety of our workplace will enhance the staff experience. By investing in leadership development and evidence-based leadership practices, we can drive transformational change together and meet the needs of our patients.

**What you can expect:**

By enhancing the staff experience, we can increase staff retention and attract employees, physicians and volunteers. Through meaningful engagement with our staff, we can achieve the highest level of outcomes in safety and service quality. Working with our team, we will update service delivery models that are reflective and responsive to changing patient needs.

**For example…**

Violence in the workplace is one of the top health and safety concerns facing Ontario’s health care sector today. STEGH recently established a Workplace Violence Prevention Committee to drive a positive shift in organizational workplace violence prevention efforts, and is committed to completing annual Workplace Violence Risk Assessment Action Plans to continuously assess and control risks of workplace violence.

STEGH is investing in its people to develop expertise and prepare the next generation of leaders. A Learning and Development Advisory Group has been established to provide input and guidance on organizational training. The adoption of evidence-based leadership practices, such as patient rounding, are helping leaders stay focused on what matters most – our patients, our staff and quality outcomes.

“Everyday I get the satisfaction that I assisted our health care team in making the patient feel safe and comfortable during their stay.”

– Vicky O’Sullivan, Registered Pharmacy Technician
Achieving operational excellence to ensure quality and sustainability.
What this means:

We will deliver quality care by adopting evidence-based practices while supporting the sustainability of our health care system.

Why this matters:

We can grow and spread our culture of continuous improvement and innovation to improve quality and reduce waste. By standardizing and adopting evidenced-based practices, we can reduce clinical practice variation and optimize ministry revenue streams to improve the hospital’s financial position.

What you can expect:

As a recognized leader in LEAN quality improvement methods, STEGH will continue on this journey by engaging staff and patients in initiatives to reduce waste and enhance services. The Hospital will also pursue clinical best practices through the implementation of order sets that will help reduce variation in how we care for our patients.

For example...

As part of our LEAN journey, we are in the process of redeveloping performance boards to visually display key processes, measures and improvement initiatives – from the front-line care units up to the Board of Directors. These boards are essential in promoting transparency, and help to direct staff to specific processes and activities that support STEGH’s strategic priorities.

In an effort to reduce clinical variation and achieve even better quality and system efficiency, STEGH will adopt best practices through new order sets, such as one for opioids. In addition, the Hospital will evaluate existing order sets for Quality Based Procedures, such as hip and knee replacements and cataract surgeries, to ensure they are updated to reflect best clinical practice.

“Knowing that I can make a difference in a patient’s health care journey is what motivates me. We see patients at their worst. If I can make their day better, I feel like I have done my job. Knowing that I have a supportive, knowledgeable team on my side makes all the difference.”

– John Stalker, Registered Practical Nurse