

Choosing Wisely at Bluewater Health

Physicians at Bluewater Health (BWH) are ordering fewer x-rays and looking at ways to reduce the frequency of other commonly-used diagnostic procedures, thanks to a program known as Choosing Wisely implemented in the hospital through a grant from the Innovate Erie St. Clair (ESC) Alumni Fund, developed by TransForm and the Erie St. Clair LHIN.

Choosing Wisely is a national campaign to help clinicians and patients engage in conversation about unnecessary tests and treatments, contributing to smart and effective care choices. In BWH's case, its implementation has led to a reduction of rib x-rays in Emergency where 109 were ordered in the first four months of 2018. That compares to 179 over the same period in 2017, and 294 in the year prior.

"When patients ask for a test I don't feel they need, I try to help them see the test will not change the diagnosis or treatment," says Dr. Charles Winegard.

Dr. Paul Martin agrees and encourages patients to ask "do I really need this test?"

"Unnecessary testing is potentially harmful, since the results can lead to additional unnecessary tests or procedures, which may have risks," Martin explains. "Using a 'choosing wisely' approach can support recommendations against additional testing and lead to paradigm shifts in treatment."

In addition to rib x-rays, the hospital is collecting data to assess changes related to other types of x-rays and is attempting to better rationalize test ordering in other areas, including orthopedics, blood transfusions and antibiotic use.

Two other projects were funded through this fund at the same time as BWH's Choosing Wisely campaign, including a 12-lead early ECG transmission project involving Windsor Regional Hospital and Windsor-Essex EMS, and an educational initiative led by the Thamesview Family Health Team.

The ESC Alumni Fund was developed by TransForm and the Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network for alumni of the Executive Program in Health System Innovation (EPHSI). The Executive Program training is delivered by the World Health Innovation Network at the Odette School of Business. Cohort 7 of the EPHSI begins in November of 2018. If you, or a colleague, are interested in taking this interactive three-day course, please contact Sara Donally, Coordinator of Innovation & Partnerships at sara.donally@transformssso.ca, for an application package.