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#### Visit thehealthline.ca to

- ▶ Find local health services and supports
- ▶ Participate in local health related events
- ▶ Browse health career postings

#### Call the South West CCAC at 310-CCAC (2222) to

- ▶ Get help connecting with care
- ▶ Speak with an Information and Referral Specialist



#### Follow thehealthline.ca on Twitter

Our team of tweeters will keep you up-to-date and in touch with the latest health-related events, jobs and news at [twitter.com/THLnews](http://twitter.com/THLnews).

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## Full Steam Ahead

TEN YEARS. A long time by any standards. And for a website, an eternity! Work on thehealthline.ca began a decade ago. It was launched in London and Middlesex in 2002. Over the intervening years, it has grown and changed, expanding to serve the entire South West region and spawning a sister site in the Champlain LHIN. In 2010 thehealthline.ca had some 1.3 million visits.

What has made thehealthline.ca successful over so many years? One word: partnership. From the first group of four community partners to today's more than 2,000 listing organizations, thehealthline.ca has always been about partners and their commitment to building a shared resource.

With the help of our partners, we have continually expanded and enriched our listings while keeping the information accurate and up to date. We have created value-added features such as the South West Health Careers Network, events and news listings, a resource library, and a variety of mini-sites designed to meet specific communication needs. We have improved searchability and interactivity, making valuable information easier and quicker to find. We have kept pace with new media, introducing a blog and twitter feeds.

Thehealthline.ca has become the database of choice for the South West LHIN (see page two), for South West CCAC Information and Referral specialists, and for the Windsor-based 211 service (see page four). Recently it was selected by the Ontario's 14 Community Care Access Centres as the model for health services information sites across the province.

Through it all, we have stayed true to the principles with which we began. Thehealthline.ca is a virtual community, but it is grounded in the real communities it serves. Through our Regional Community Partnership Coordinators, we meet face to face with our partner organizations, sharing our expertise and listening to your suggestions. Our vision is to connect people to the right information and care to help them stay healthy and get well.

Thehealthline.ca belongs to you, the organizations and individuals who have supported its growth. This newsletter celebrates what we have achieved together. It also sets the stage for the expansion of thehealthline.ca across Ontario.

Thank you for ten years of innovation and growth. Stay tuned for the next decade!

Michael Robbins  
thehealthline.ca project coordinator



## thehealthline.ca redeveloped to serve broader needs

It sounds a little dry – the South West Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) Program and Services Inventory. But the reality is an exciting step forward for thehealthline.ca

Thehealthline.ca Information Network is partnering with the South West LHIN to expand the existing database to include more detailed information on health services providers in the region. The resulting database will provide high-quality information for patients, health care providers, and health system planners.

**“People will have access to more information about how to find services, providers will have more information to guide their clients and make better referrals, and planning staff will have more information about the services available in the LHIN.”**

“The South West LHIN’s Integrated Health Service Plan identifies the need for a ‘tool that enables multi-level system navigation,’” says Kelly Gillis, the LHIN’s Senior Director of Planning, Integration and Community Engagement. “That’s what thehealthline.ca is. It’s a proven solution that attracts more than one million people a year. This project takes it to the next level.”

Before this project, thehealthline.ca started out with a single listing for each provider organization across the South West. In the first phase of the Program and Services Inventory project, all of the services offered by each provider were identified and added to the database. In total, more than 2,700 service listings were added, almost doubling the total number of profile/

organization records. By 2012 it’s expected that there will be close to 10,000 records on thehealthline.ca.

For example, Meals on Wheels London had one service profile record on thehealthline.ca until recently. Now it is broken down into five records, one for the main organization and one each for standard meal service, the frozen meal service, the “Out for Lunch Bunch,” and transportation services.

Things get even more interesting in the second phase of the project. That’s when thehealthline.ca will be re-designed to help both consumers and experts find the information they need. In addition to the extra listings, there will be several changes:

- A specialized interface for providers, giving them access to additional information
- A specialized interface for healthcare leaders, giving them access to additional information to support system-wide planning
- Easier importing and exporting of data, making data sharing easier
- A postal code search that allows users to search for services by location and/or by topics
- A sidebar menu for service profiles, providing links to additional information about the organization, job listings, news and events
- Better linking among related services
- Ongoing (at least annual) updating of listings

“This project will lay the foundation for a powerful integrated health service information system, capable of adapting and scaling up to meet service provider and LHIN needs,” says Gillis. “People will have access to more information about how to find services, providers will have more information to guide their clients and make better referrals, and planning staff will have more information about the services available in the LHIN.”

The next step will be a series of webinars for health service providers, explaining progress on the PSI project, showing them how to update their service profiles, and introducing them to the new features of the site. “Thehealthline.ca is there to serve the organizations it lists,” says Lisa Misurak, Manager of thehealthline.ca. “We want to involve them as we move forward and ensure that they’re benefiting from the changes.”

Sandra Coleman, CEO of the South West CCAC and Chair of the Board of Directors of thehealthline.ca Information Network says thehealthline.ca has come a long way since it was first launched in 2002. “We’re delighted that its value has been recognized and is being leveraged by the LHIN,” she says.

“This is the culmination of a lot of hard work and creativity.”



## NEWS BRIEF

**Coming soon:** Thehealthline.ca family continues to grow with the addition of two new websites powered with thehealthline's data and project expertise. Each one deals with a hot topic in health care today.

### *Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions*

(www.swselfmanagement.ca) supports consumers to manage their own chronic conditions, and helps health professionals support self-management. The site promotes the Living a Healthy Life workshop series, offered at no cost in communities across the South West.

*Living a healthy life with chronic conditions*  
South West Self-Management Program

### *Quest for Quality*

(www.questforquality.ca) supports health professionals who want to get involved in quality improvement projects, and those who are already involved. Growing out of the highly successful Partnerships for Health initiative, it includes a range of resources and tools to make quality improvement easy and accessible.



Quest for Quality

Both sites are in development, with spring launches expected.

# caregiverexchange.ca continues to pick up steam in the blogsphere

## Fourteen months in, the blog has gathered a loyal following and recently underwent a redesign

Ever wonder what a “professional blogger” does on a typical day? Ruta Pocius, editor and regional coordinator of caregiverexchange.ca, looks for ideas and information in many different places. She scans local, national, and international newspapers for news of interest to caregivers. She also follows other websites and blogs, reviews subscription newsletters, and participates in community support groups and training sessions.

The result? A daily blog that, as she puts it, “sees the world through the eyes of a caregiver.” The topics range from the debate on replacing DNR and the value of laughter, to the benefits of deep breathing and tips on handling difficult behaviours. Ultimately, it’s all about supporting caregivers — spouses, siblings, adult children and others — who often experience stress, fatigue and isolation.

And obviously it’s striking a chord. Caregiverexchange.ca receives 150 to 240 visitors a day and the Twitter account has more than 300 followers.

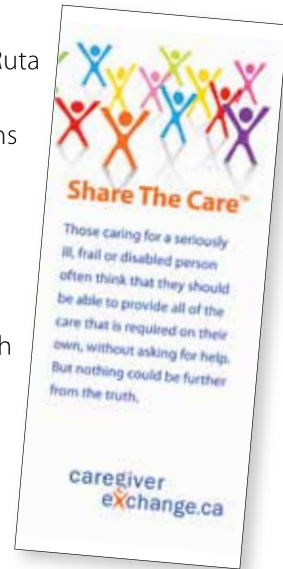
“It’s my role to drive the conversation, to raise issues and concerns, and to build dialogue,” Pocius says. “I try to respond to what’s happening in the bigger picture and make it relevant to caregiving. A big part of what I focus on is self-care, because it’s something caregivers aren’t generally good at.”

Recently the blog underwent a re-design. The home page features the most recent post with a link to previous ones. There is also a news feed that is updated throughout the day. “It’s great,” says Pocius, “because it allows us to bring caregivers new information whenever they come to the site.”

A news archive searchable by key word has also been added. After more than year in operation, there are some 1,500 stories in the caregiverexchange.ca archive, and the number is growing daily.

Caregiverexchange.ca is now playing a coordination role with Share The Care™, a model of care that helps a group of people pool their talents, time and resources to form a care group around a friend or family member who is seriously ill. The website will provide the hub, linking five Share The Care™ “stations” across the region. The stations – organizations such as local hospices — will raise awareness of Share The Care™ and offer information sessions and support in their communities.

“It’s the old-fashioned idea that many hands make for light work,” says Pocius. “We want to remind caregivers to think about other ways of doing things, before they’re at a place where they can’t do anything at all. Our goal is to anchor Share The Care™ in our communities and continue to build momentum around it.”



## SHARING DATA WITH 211



The new 211 phone service for community information and referral is spreading across Ontario. Soon operators in the Windsor regional centre, which serves Essex, Kent, Lambton, Middlesex, Elgin and Oxford, will be using thehealthline.ca data to answer questions and refer callers. The first data export is expected to happen in April 2011. Lisa Misurak, thehealthline.ca Manager, says this is recognition that thehealthline.ca is a "quality data provider." She adds that the project builds on the history of Information London, a service that is now part of thehealthline.ca.

## Mentalhealth4kids.ca EXPANDS



Mentalhealth4kids.ca, a web project of the Student Support Leadership Initiative (SSLI) in London, Middlesex, Elgin and Oxford, provides access to community resources and information for families dealing with mental health issues. Launched in February 2010, it also includes an event calendar, publications, articles and interactive mental health resources.

Now the Huron-Perth SSLI is following suit, expanding the site's content to serve its region.

"We see this as an excellent tool to help youth and their families," says Michael Ash, Superintendent of Education for the Avon-Maitland School Board. "It also provides support for frontline service providers across the area. The ease of access and searchability of the site will make it the first stop for people when seeking supports for youth mental health."

## What in the world is an RCPC?

"Information is critical, and in health care it's always changing. It's important that there is one organization keeping tabs on all the changes and maintaining information that is accurate and up-to-date."

That's Teresa Zohorsky, thehealthline.ca Regional Community Partnership Coordinator (RCPC) for the north part of the South West region, talking about the value of the site and the role she plays on a daily basis.

There are two other RCPCs, Darren Robbins in the south and Barbara Hagarty in the central portion. Each serves as the public face and point of contact for thehealthline.ca in her or his community. They interact regularly with local organizations, keeping their listings up to date, providing information and training, and promoting value-added services such as job and event listings and other websites in thehealthline.ca family.

Zohorsky enjoys the variety in her job. In addition to connecting with organizations by phone, she travels around the region, raising awareness of thehealthline.ca at meetings, health fairs and other events, presenting workshops, and gathering information.

"Grey Bruce was the last area to be added to thehealthline.ca," says Zohorsky, "When I first started here three years ago, I spent one year just educating people to the fact that the site existed! Now I work with organizations to help them get the most benefit out of it."

For example, last year Zohorsky met with hospital HR directors to tell them about the South West Health Careers Network, a free job listing service.

"Now all the hospitals send all their external postings to thehealthline.ca."

Zohorsky has developed an in-service manual and workshop about the website. It's designed to help health professionals access valuable information for their clients. She delivered her first workshop at the Owen Sound hospital in February, and expects to do more in the coming months.

Zohorsky was also responsible for adding the frozen meal order form to the listings for a local community support agency. Other special projects have included piloting a new service, Myhealthline, with the Brockton Area Family Health Team, developing an URL for the Owen Sound Health Fair, and working with the Grey Bruce Chronic Disease Prevention and Management committee to develop a new category.

"People are often surprised that all these services are free," she says. "Most things cost money today. There's a lot of value in a community resource that everyone can access at no cost."

### thehealthline.ca INFORMATION NETWORK

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You can also learn about the work that our regional community partnership coordinators are doing in the community to provide health care consumers with the best information possible. You can follow them at [twitter.com/THLcommunity](https://twitter.com/THLcommunity) or [twitter.com/THLgreybruce](https://twitter.com/THLgreybruce)