



# Minister's Medal Honouring Excellence in Health Quality and Safety

*Team-Based Initiative*

## North East LHIN Virtual Critical Care Unit

The Virtual Critical Care (VCC) Unit, based at Health Sciences North (HSN) in Greater Sudbury, uses the latest in videoconferencing technology and electronic medical records sharing to connect HSN with smaller critical care units and emergency departments at hospitals across northeastern Ontario. The VCC model uses a specially designed software program created by the Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN), with the coordination of consults provided through CitiCall Ontario. It is the first virtual critical care unit of its kind in Canada.

VCC was launched in May 2014 with four hospitals participating. By May 2015, 23 hospitals across northeastern Ontario had joined VCC. Under the VCC model of care, a team of intensive care physicians, specially trained nurses and intensive care unit respiratory therapists based at HSN are available for around-the-clock consultations and follow-up visits for critically ill patients at participating hospitals. Other allied health professionals such as dietitians and pharmacists are also available for consultation during scheduled hours.

VCC reduced avoidable transfers to a higher level of care by 36%, meaning patients were able to remain in their home hospital instead of being medically transferred away from their families and support systems. In its inaugural year of operation, VCC saved the health care system \$901,000 in transport costs alone. Further, VCC builds the critical care experience and skill of clinicians in smaller rural hospitals.

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