

April 10, 2014

Transition planning for the Provincial Linen Service continues

Representatives from Regina Qu'Appelle, Sun Country, Sunrise, and Saskatoon health regions, North Sask Laundry, and 3sHealth met on March 12, 2014 to discuss planning related to the transition to the new provincial linen service. The meeting provided region representatives the opportunity to share information about current work and to learn about the planning that 3sHealth is doing in partnership with K-Bro Linen Systems and the regions.

The group reviewed the progress that 3sHealth and the health regions have made over the 2013-14 fiscal year. Key achievements include the decision in May, 2013 to create a single Provincial Linen Service for the province and to contract that service to K-Bro Linen Systems. 3sHealth will administer the contract which provides detailed financial reporting, quality audits, agreed-upon service standards, and a menu of services that will be available to health regions and facilities. Since the transition began, 3sHealth and its region partners have already identified cost savings of \$700,000 relating to Just-In-Time inventory management, improved products and processes.

Lean events and tools are paving the way for a successful transition to the new linen service. 5S (Sort, Simplify, Sweep, Standardize, Sustain) and Rapid Process Improvement Events (RPIWs) have been held in the Cypress and Regina Qu'Appelle Health Regions to address Just-In-Time inventory, product flow, and infection prevention and control. A replication event at Wascana Rehabilitation Centre in Regina, the first of its kind in the province, was held to begin the process of creating standard work for A.M. care on long-term care units. The standard work developed can be replicated in units throughout the province. A standard Value Stream Map to assess the flow of linen in facilities from dock to unit and back again has also been developed.



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An important part of the transition plan is the need to work in partnership with each individual region to identify the steps needed to take to be ready for the opening of the K-Bro plant in June, 2015. The Provincial Linen Services project team at 3sHealth is developing a detailed transition plan that will identify key dates and actions for regions and facilities to transition to the new service. 3sHealth will also work with regions to identify current linen service requirements and areas of improvement to further enhance services. This work will ensure that the current and future service requirements of each region and participating facility are met.

Quality improvement is another important element of the transition to the new service. Linen standardization is well underway, and new opportunities are starting to surface as a result of Lean events. 3sHealth is working with its partners in the regions, including infection prevention and control professionals, to create provincial standards for storing and handling linen in care units. In addition, 3sHealth is developing Key Performance Indicators to measure standards for fill rates, quality, delivery, return rates, and customer satisfaction. The standards will be applied equally throughout the system.

New, improved products, such as underpads, terry products, and micro fibre cleaning cloths, are already improving patient and resident care, improving infection prevention and control and capturing savings. A new system for collecting soiled linen in plastic bags will significantly improve infection control and worker safety, and will save \$100,000 a year when fully implemented.

The first major step in the transition took place on March 31, 2014 when K-Bro Linen Systems opened a new Linen Distribution Centre in Saskatoon. This new facility replaced Saskatoon Health Region's central laundry, and K-Bro is now providing linen distribution services to region facilities. This new distribution process is part of the contract between Saskatoon Health Region and K-Bro for linen services within its region. The distribution depot will be integrated into the new provincial linen services when the new Regina plant is completed.

3sHealth will continue to work with health regions to support the transition activities that need to take place prior to and during the transition to the new Provincial Linen Service. The transition is anticipated to run on time and be completed on or before December 31, 2015.