

*February 2, 2015*

## **Linen transition teams are planning together for new service**

*3sHealth Provincial Linen Service transition team visits health region and Cancer Agency sites to begin detailed transition planning*

Building relationships and confidence in the Provincial Linen Service (PLS) transition process is a high priority for the 3sHealth PLS transition team. For this reason, the team spent the fall visiting health region and Cancer Agency transition teams to conduct detailed planning site visits. Between July and December the team, that includes representation from service provider K-Bro Linen Systems (K-Bro), visited all health regions and some Cancer Agency facilities.

It has been 19 months since the new provincial linen service for Saskatchewan healthcare was announced. Since then, there has been much work done to prepare for the transition to the new service, which will begin implementation in the fall of 2015. Now that the transition is nine months away, health regions, agencies and facilities are gearing up to be ready for implementation.

Since the transition process was launched last spring with a kick-off meeting for designated linen transition leaders, transition planning has moved into high gear. Over the summer, the 3sHealth transition team conducted “touchpoint” meetings in each region to introduce the team and provide an overview of the transition process. In October, linen transition leaders from each organization met face-to-face for one day to gain information about the transition and the new service, including product demonstrations and information about the new plant being built in Regina by K-Bro.

At the same time, 3sHealth began gathering important data from the regions and Cancer Agency to ensure 3sHealth and K-Bro have the information needed to provide a seamless transition to the new service.

Beginning in October, members of the PLS transition team began making one- or two-day visits to each region to meet with the region transition teams. The purpose of these site visits was to provide detailed information about the transition process to region transition teams, which include finance, operations, human resource, change, Lean, communications and other staff members. Another important component of the visits was for the 3sHealth and the region transition team to tour facilities and to identify the stages of readiness for different processes. Everything from loading docks, soiled linen hampers, and linen carts were observed and discussed.



Viewing clean housekeeping linen carts in Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region

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Demonstrations of new products were held and staff members outside the transition team were invited to attend and ask questions of the K-Bro staff. The “show and tell” portion of the site visit allowed workers who will be using the products to see and touch them. Many of these new products will provide improved quality and a better experience for patients.



K-Bro product demonstration in Sun Country Health Region

“The product demonstration was a great opportunity to learn more about our new service provider, K-Bro,” said Greg Schutte, Regional Director, Housekeeping and Linen Services for Five Hills Health Region. “Not only did we learn about how they run their operation, but also about the quality measures that they have in place. I really appreciated that they brought samples along. It will allow us to engage our staff.”

Another important part of the visit was the chance to view each region’s linen service Value Stream Map. This Lean tool identifies internal processes for providing linen to facilities and units. By

reviewing a region’s processes, the 3sHealth team was able to identify areas that could be improved utilizing some of the standard work that 3sHealth has developed. These improvements can be planned for and implemented once the transition has occurred.

In addition to visiting sites and gathering data, the 3sHealth team has been developing tools for regions, agencies and facilities to use during the transition. A Transition Workbook with chapters on topics ranging from change leadership and communications to standard work required for transition has been developed and posted on a secure section of the 3sHealth website. In addition to the workbook, templates for tools ranging from budget and inventory calculation to communications about product changes will also be available on the site. The contents of the workbook were presented at the site visits and feedback from those using it will ensure it continues to be relevant and helpful.

“I appreciated the opportunity to meet the representatives of 3sHealth and K-Bro, and the interest they took in visiting our Gemba (workplace) and learning about our linen processes,” said Connie Glaves, Vice President, Corporate Services for Kelsey Trail Health Region. “They were very supportive and helpful and gave us the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. Our team also had the opportunity to see the new linens, learn more about the timelines involved and the potential cost savings.”

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For the 3sHealth team, perhaps the best outcome is meeting the transition teams that they will be working with over the next year. “There is a lot of work ahead,” says Paula Koch, Change Specialist for the 3sHealth transition team. “It was great to meet the people we will be working with face-to-face and to see their communities and facilities. The 3sHealth and region team members are getting to know each other and working together to make the transition seamless for the patients and care providers.”