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Ready, Set, Go!

Provincial linen service transition launched in September

State-of-the-art infection prevention and control, quality processes to ensure defects do not reach patients and residents, enhanced safety, softer, larger, and more comfortable linens, and a smaller environmental footprint – these are all innovations of the new provincial linen service.

It has been two years since the decision was made to create a single provincial linen service for Saskatchewan's health system. An extraordinary amount of transition planning has taken place since then. Working side-by-side, the health regions, cancer agency, 3sHealth and K-Bro Linen Systems (K-Bro) have been preparing the health system for change. Sunrise Health Region was the first to receive linen from the new processing plant in Regina on September 14. Five Hills and Heartland Health Regions and Valley View Centre in Moose Jaw transitioned on September 28.



“I remember touring the HLS Linen Services plant in Ottawa in 2012 with a group of health region linen managers from Saskatchewan,” says Mark Anderson, VP, Business Development for 3sHealth. “I kept thinking how great it would be if we could offer this kind of quality and technology here in Saskatchewan. When I toured the new K-Bro plant in Regina last week I thought ‘We did it!’”

Linen is readied for cart delivery in a K-Bro plant

There were many steps in the journey towards implementation. Planning involved:

- Site tours and data gathering in the summer of 2014. The data helped determine the current delivery schedules, linen volumes, types of linen required, type of service required, and the basic processes for how linen is handled within each facility.
- Transition planning kick-off for linen transition leaders in each region and the cancer agency in October, 2014
- Development and implementation of individual transition plans for each organization began in January, 2015 and continues until they transition to the new service

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- The development of, and training for, standard work and processes that will ensure patient safety and a quality patient and resident experience. Some examples include lost and found procedures to find patient belongings if they are inadvertently collected in the laundry; how to place orders through the product catalogue; and a *black mesh bag program* which allows staff to remove defective clean linen items from linen carts before they ever reach the patient.

While the work to get organizations ready for the new service has been on-going since the original kick-off, the preparation has intensified as regions move closer to their go-live transition date.

“Once we got the transition checklist from the 3sHealth transition team we knew we had our go-forward plan”, says Lori Dupuis, Manager for Housekeeping/Linen in Prairie North Health Region. “In addition to all the operational things we are doing, like ordering hampers and completing order forms, we are making sure everyone in our region knows about the change. That includes providing resource material, having face-to-face meetings and holding training sessions throughout the region.”

Training for the new processes is important. All regions and the cancer agency have attended “train-the-trainer” sessions so that they could take the information back to staff members in their facilities. Standards for safe handling of both clean and soiled linen, inventory management and the removal of defective items from the inventory are all part of the new processes. The goal is to provide a high quality service to both patients and staff members.



Linen leaders attend training on September 3rd

While the health care providers have been preparing for the change, K-Bro has been creating the infrastructure that will provide the service. The new plant in Regina will begin providing linen to its first customer on Sept. 14th. High capacity tunnel washers, dryers, and folding machines that are fully automated have built-in worker safety features. Soiled and clean linen processes are completely separated to ensure infection prevention and control. A

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completely separate and sterile section of the plant processes the surgical linen. In addition, a new distribution centre in Prince Albert is being completed and will be open for business on Oct. 12th.

“We are excited about our partnership with 3sHealth and its health system partners,” says Linda McCurdy, CEO and President of K-Bro. “K-Bro brings over 60 years of experience to health care linen service and is currently serving approximately 25,000 hospital and long-term care beds across the country. We welcome Saskatchewan to our family of customers and are committed to bringing a high quality linen experience to patients, residents and family members.”

“Change is always hard,” says Donna Hainstock, Manager of Support Services in Kelsey Trail Health Region. “But as I travel around our region and talk to people about the changes that will happen with the linen transition I am hearing good things. Some staff view the transition as an opportunity to make improvements they have been thinking about for a while. They are committed to making changes that will benefit our patients and residents.”