

*May 12, 2016*

## Provincial linen now a 3sHealth service line

Saskatchewan now has a provincial linen service. It took three years from concept to reality but effective Feb. 29, every health region in the province along with the cancer agency became part of one streamlined linen service.

At a recent tour of the K-Bro Linen Systems (K-Bro) plant in Regina, health region staff who have been part of the transition for years got their first glimpse of how hundreds of pounds of hospital laundry are processed every day.



“It was amazing to see the inner workings of the new plant first hand,” said Shirley Wheeler, Director, Environmental Services for Sun Country Health Region. “I have been part of the transition planning from the very beginning and to see how our linen is being processed now is great. It will allow me to answer questions my staff have about some of the changes we have experienced as a result of the new service.”

The decision to move to a provincial linen service was made in May 2013. Later that year, it was announced that K-Bro was awarded the contract to deliver the service with 3sHealth administering the contract and leading the project to transition health regions and the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency to the new service.

On April 15, those who led their organizations through the transition met in Regina to discuss the transition, share the lessons learned and to plan for the work ahead as the project moves to program status. The day ended with a tour of the new K-Bro plant in Regina.

The transition project encompassed change management, using the Saskatchewan Healthcare Management System tools to identify process changes, stakeholder communications and monthly check-ins with each region and agency. Some facilities incorporated some of the process changes and new inventory early, to make the transition flow easier.

“We worked in partnership with the 3sHealth transition team to prepare for a seamless transition in our region”, says Terry Fjeld, Regional Director Environmental Services at Prince Albert Parkland Health Region. “They helped us identify and work to solve issues ahead of time,

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like implementing night delivery of carts so the fresh linen is available first thing in the morning and helped us find a solution for temporary storage of soiled linen. The information and support our region received from the 3sHealth team was invaluable.”

As the linen transition project becomes its first new service line, 3sHealth and its linen customers realize there is still much work to do to streamline processes, improve inventory management, and ensure consistent quality. But customers are also finding some immediate improvements as well. For example, in Kelsey Trail Health Region, the switch from cloth to disposable plastic bags has made a significant difference in worker safety. Aside from improved protection from contagion from the soiled linen, the new bags, which are lighter and hold less, have decreased worker injury from lifting.

“We used to have to use an overhead patient sling to lift the old bags onto the soiled linen carts”, says Michael Lummerding, Manager, Support Services for Kelsey Trail Health Region. “Now our staff can manage the weight of the bags quite easily and we can use the patient lift for patients, not dirty laundry!”



The provincial linen team will now engage region and cancer agency partners to develop provincial standards for infection prevention and control – already improved through introduction of a modern, state-of-the-art laundry facility. They will also work with customers to create a standard linen inventory list for both general linen and surgical linen. Standardizing linen products and work processes will enhance the patient experience, improve worker’s safety and create efficiencies in the service.

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“We have come a long way since this project was announced,” says Jim Crawford, Director, Provincial Linen Service for 3sHealth. “Working in partnership with our health system partners transformed the way we deliver linen by transitioning 13 organizations to one new service. We are looking forward to continuing to work together.”