Thorhild County Family Medical Clinic – Nurse Practitioner Model

What happened?

► In December 2017 our local Doctor informed the County he was going to stop operating his clinic as of January 2018, this clinic was open 2 mornings per week serving county residents.

► Also notified us that he would no longer be seeing patients at NewThoRad Lodge in Thorhild

► Being a rural county of approximately 3500 with the largest Hamlet being Thorhild with a population of approximately 500 this was not enough of a draw to attract a full or part time doctor

► Knowing that having no health care is a sure way to kill a community County CAO and Council did some quick thinking and came up with a solution

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The solution

▶ First solution they found a doctor in a neighbouring community that would be willing to see patients at the NewThoRad lodge; but only willing to see the patients of the existing doctor not any new patients

▶ Contacted some neighbouring communities to see if their Doctors might consider coming to work in Thorhild 1 day per week

▶ At this point with no other options had to look outside the box and decided to open their own clinic and hire a Nurse Practitioner

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How…

► Where?

► What is the cost?

► Is their any funding?

► What regulations do you have to follow?

► What about Electronic Medical records system versus file system?

► How to get Netcare

► When

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- Where

  - Space identified that was easily accessible was within the County building, as this was the space to be used we had to re locate our Parent Link Centre

  - Longer term solution for the NewThoRad Lodge would be the Nurse Practitioner would go over one day per week to see patients there

- Cost, Funding

  - Council put $200,000 in budget for us to set up a clinic and hire a Nurse Practitioner

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- Regulations
  - For regulations and funding the following resources were contacted:
    - Minister of Health
    - AHS – Alberta Health Services
    - RhPAP – Regional Health Professionals Action Plan
    - NPAA – Nurse Practitioner Association of Alberta
    - CARNA – College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta
    - PCN's – Primary Care Networks
    - AAMD&C – Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties
    - The above contacts led to many more

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What did we learn?

► Everybody loved the idea and thought it was a great way to have health care in a rural community; however because it hadn't been done no one had answers

► Found out regulations and parameters of a Nurse Practitioner from RhPAP, NPAA and CARNA

► Main item no funding, Alberta Health has no funding model to address the work of a nurse practitioner

► So even though a NP can oversee patients health, prescribe, order and interrupt lab results – similar to what a doctor can do they would not fund it

► Health systems main mandate is to provide accessible health care to all and here is a municipality funding a health clinic out of tax dollars, because many of our residents face transportation barriers or doctors not taking new patients

▶ Hiring a Nurse Practitioner

▶ Job Ad and job description

▶ Who should interview

▶ Interviews and hiring completed

▶ Would be responsible for reception and seeing patients until the point the clinic becomes too busy

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► Setting up the clinic and ordering supplies

  ► A local doctors office assisted in ordering all the basic supplies necessary to open up a clinic

  ► Ordered office and exam room equipment

  ► The lodge also agreed to have the Nurse Practitioner come in one day per week to see all patients at the lodge because the interim solution was now on maternity leave

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Clinic opened April 10, 2018

Now that were open

- Set office hours Monday/Thursday/Friday 9:00am-3:30pm, Tuesdays 11:00am-7:00 pm, and Wednesdays 10:00 am-3:30pm

- Visiting the Lodge on Tuesday mornings from 9:00am – 11:00 am

- Some days before opening or after closing she will go to visit a patient on behalf of the Public Health Nurses request

- Community Partners
  - Public health nurses
  - Pharmacist
  - Area Doctor

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Electronic Medical Records System (EMR)

▶ The EMR is a system enables you to schedule appointments, input patient notes, write prescription, etc. all in one spot, doing this we do not have individual patient files in a filing cabinet.

▶ Luckily our area Doctor that had said he would come 1 day per week let us become a site underneath his site

　▶ Easy nope this still took about 6 weeks to set up because of all the documents you need to sign and computer protection (thankfully our IT department took care of this)

NETCARE

▶ Well if we already hadn't jump through hoops we had new ones to jump

▶ Netcare – upon start they tell you this will take anywhere from 6mths to 1 year and is a very long lengthy process

   ▶ We started this process April and final completion of having our own account was November (7 months)

   ▶ Thankfully we had NETCARE within one month of opening due to the Primary Care Network letting us sign on under them

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Going Forward & Highlights

▶ From April 10 to December 31 between the Nurse Practitioner and the Doctor the clinic had a total of 1454 patients come through its door increasing from 4 patients per day to 8

▶ Public is still trying to fully understand what a Nurse Practitioner is and what she can do – continue educating the public (the phrase Nurse Practitioner is very confusing as many don't see how it is different from a regular Nurse)

▶ Helped with having a doctor in one day per week who also referred some patients to her for women's health

▶ Known for Women's Health in the community being our NP came with a background with working in this area she has held 2 very successful pap clinics, pessary care (which isn't easily available elsewhere) and overall women's health

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Going Forward & Highlights

▶ Working on setting up our own EMR now as the doctor is no longer coming once per week

▶ Finding a PCN that will take us as currently you belong to the PCN your doctor is associated with and as of March 1 we don't have a doctor only our Nurse Practitioner

▶ Continue to advocate to the Minister of Health for funding and support of the Nurse Practitioner model of care

▶ Latest update in from the Deputy Minister of Health is funding has been allocated to PCN's to support NP's already working in the field and to hire 50 more across the province over the next two years. As well the PCN funding formula will be revised to allow nurse practitioners to create their own patient panel.
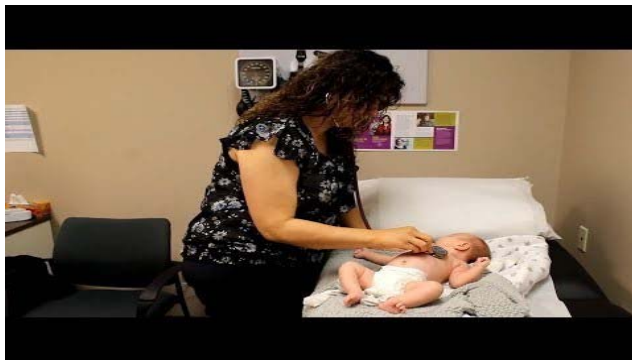
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Recap of Challenges

- Learning and understanding the health care system
- Learning the lingo of health care (wow the acronyms)
  - NPAA, CARNA, AHS, PIA, PORA, OIPC, EMR, PCN, RhPAP
- Associating with a Primary Care Network
- Frustration at no one having answers
- Funding
- Access to Electronic Medical Records system and Netcare access
- Regulations if any that you need to meet
- Insurance requirements
- Getting Mobile Mammography clinic to come out

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Video done up by RhPAP

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