

Accountable Care Units

Redesigning how hospital teams work and communicate

Saskatoon's first Accountable Care Unit (ACU), 7th Floor Medicine at St. Paul's Hospital, was launched on April 3, 2017 and is already generating excellent results.

The new accountable care structure has already:

- **Decreased length of patient stay in hospital by 19 per cent, or 2.5 days.** Shorter stays improve patient satisfaction. Patients in the Emergency Department who need a general medicine bed now wait less time before being moved up to the unit for care.
- **Reduced average number of transfers of patients off the unit.** Before the ACU, 45 patients per month were transferred. In May, only 8 patients were transferred. This means less disruption to patients and better flow within the system.

The Accountable Care Unit structure has already decreased length of stay for patients on 7th Floor Medicine.

Accountable Care Units have four key components that drive their success:

1. Teams of physicians, nurses, occupational and physical therapists, dietitians, pharmacists, social workers and Client Patient Access Services (CPAS) physically located together on the unit;
2. Bedside rounds that involve all members of the care team, including the patient, and meet at the same time every day;
3. Measuring patient outcomes at unit level rather than hospital or health system level; and
4. Nurse and physician co-leadership (on traditional units, physicians are not included in unit management).

Saskatoon plans to expand Accountable Care Units to two more medicine units in St. Paul's Hospital before the end of January 2018. The Accountable Care Unit is part of a larger Connected Care Strategy that is building on our strengths and creating seamless, connected care for our patients in hospital and the community.

