



# News Release

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## **Faster Access to Residential Withdrawal Management** **Bluewater Health and Lambton EMS Streamline Process**

**SARNIA & PETROLIA – March 19, 2019** – Bluewater Health and the County of Lambton’s Emergency Medical Services Department (Lambton EMS) are working together to improve access to care for individuals in Sarnia-Lambton seeking Residential Withdrawal Management Services (RWMS).

If individuals do not require medical care, they can be brought directly to RWMS by EMS, rather than to the emergency department. Education and awareness of RWMS is being rolled out to improve collaboration to help paramedics identify appropriate clients. This process decreases the time for appropriate patients to access withdrawal management services, while reducing pressures on the emergency department, decreasing ambulance offload delays and allowing paramedics to get back into the community sooner when the emergency department is not required.

According to Steve Pancino, Manager of Emergency Medical Services, County of Lambton, “Paramedics are uniquely positioned as the first medical professionals on scene and have the assessment skills and knowledge to help determine the best destination for care – not everyone needs to go the emergency department and this another example of providing proactive, community-based care.”

“This is a great example of how we can work together with our healthcare partners to better serve our patients,” said Livia Manica, Manager, Addictions Services, Bluewater Health. “By identifying patients who are better served in an addiction program rather than the emergency department, we can help them access the most appropriate services for their needs as quickly as possible. Admissions to our residential services are completely voluntary and are taken 24/7 if beds are available. A referral is not necessary; patients can call or walk in.”

Bluewater Health and Lambton EMS are strong partners in providing high-quality, seamless, proactive care to patients in Sarnia-Lambton. The two work closely together on Code Stroke initiatives, the Community Paramedicine Program, and to improve ambulance offload times at the Sarnia and Petrolia emergency departments.

Bluewater Health, with locations in Sarnia and Petrolia, cares for the residents of Sarnia-Lambton. With close to 2,500 staff, Professional Staff and volunteers, Bluewater Health provides an array of specialized acute, complex continuing care, allied health and ambulatory care services. Bluewater Health’s Mission is: *We create exemplary healthcare experiences with patients and families every time.* For more information about Bluewater Health, visit [www.bluewaterhealth.ca](http://www.bluewaterhealth.ca) or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube.

The County of Lambton operates a wide variety of programs and services available to the public such as 25 library branches and related digital services, provincial offences court, three Long-Term Care Homes and Adult Day Programs, two museums, an art gallery, archives, local roadways, housing and social services, building services, and planning and development. The Emergency Medical Services Department provides land ambulance and community paramedicine services to the residents of Lambton County, operating out of nine base stations across the community. The County employs approximately 1,200 staff across over 40 sites.

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