

## **Sandra's Message – April 2010**

Spring is certainly here. Flowers are starting to come up, the robins are actively building nests, and judging from the size of some of the sheep in the pasture, lambs will soon be born. It's great to live in such a rural area!

Recently, the WWLHIN conducted a review of rural health services to better understand the health status of rural populations, health services that are available and challenges to accessing those services. The complete Rural Health Care Review Final Report is available here on the website.

Following up on the review, later this spring the WWLHIN will be participating in a 'rural housing summit', focused on the Southgate area. Together with the area municipalities, business development, neighbouring LHINs, and interested individuals, we will look at the unique needs rural residents have for housing options.

We will look at options such as affordable or assisted housing, supportive housing, retirement homes or long-term care and nursing homes. Understanding that people want to live 'close to home' we will also explore what that means in a spread out, rural environment.

Also in June, and also about homes – Sunnyside Supportive Housing in Kitchener will be officially opening their new supportive housing facility. Recently, Sunnyside completed construction of the facility that will offer much-needed, affordable, supportive units in our community. Twenty-seven, one-bedroom apartments and three, two-bedroom apartments are now available to seniors and individuals with mental health issues.

Residents will receive services that enable them to live independently in their own apartment including assistance with personal care, housekeeping, nutritious meals and social and recreational programs. Apartments are large enough to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters, and residents also have access to services at Sunnyside Home such as clinics, foot care, hairdressing, the gift shop and café.

Thank you for visiting the WWLHIN website. Much is happening in our community and I invite you to visit often so you can read about how our health care system is being positively transformed to meet our community's unique needs.

*Sandra Hanmer*