

The Gateway Backgrounder

Gateway Rural Health Research Institute is committed to showing rural citizens how they can control their health and stay out of the hospital.

In 2004, Dr. Claudio Munoz, a research associate at the Stroke Prevention Clinic in London, Ontario, was consulting with a patient about the importance of exercise, diet and other lifestyle factors that affect cardiac health. The patient was a young man for cardiac disease, only in his forties. The discussion evolved. Dr. Munoz shared his belief that new advances in medicine will come more often from research at the community level, especially research on prevention and better management of chronic diseases. Dr. Munoz added that he hoped to start a research institute to engage primary care health professionals in conducting research relevant to their setting. The research institute would contribute to document best practices and facilitate adoption of new knowledge in medicine (knowledge translation research).

The patient was a little surprised. He said he knew some else that shared the very same dream.

Within a few short days, the patient introduced Dr. Munoz to his sister, Gwen Devereaux. A registered nurse, a health clinic administrator and physician recruiter, Gwen was diligently working towards improving the local access to health care in Huron and Perth counties. Lin Steffler, the mayor of Seaforth, Ontario in 2004, had heard Devereaux's frustration on rural health issues and agreed: they needed new ways to address the high numbers of rural citizens with serious diseases.

Munoz, Devereaux and Steffler met over many lunches, coffees and emails. They built a team of community members and the vision of a rural health research institute grew. Their goals expanded to encompass the lack of rural health resources, health care providers and other key rural issues. Local business leaders and community groups stepped in with funds to help realize the goals in 2008 business plan. The McCall MacBain Foundation provided funding for a Scientific Director. The rural health research wheels were in motion.

In 2009, the research teams at the Lawson Health Research Institute and Gateway Rural Health Research Institute joined together to conduct an industry-linked pilot research study in rural Southwestern Ontario. This pilot fell within a larger multicentre international research initiative (ARTEMIS), aimed to determine and implement strategies to reduce the CVCs of type 2 diabetes across a continuum of populations and factors. The pilot started at the community level. The Diabetes and Technology for Increased Activity (DaTA) study assessed the effects of a 12-week lifestyle modification (exercise) and technology intervention for the prevention of diabetes and CVCs and improved well-being, in 24 subjects with prediabetes risk factors, in Huron County, Ontario.

Gateway research studies are gaining attention as the public becomes more aware of rural health issues. They continue to operate at the community level, especially research on prevention and better management of chronic diseases.

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The Gateway Facts 2011

Gateway Mission

Gateway is working to improve the health and quality of life of rural residents through research, education and communication.

Gateway is providing solutions to reduce the extremely high rates of diseases in rural Ontario.

Gateway Vision

Gateway's vision is to build a centre of excellence dedicated to advancing rural health teaching and frontline research across the Huron-Perth-Bruce-Grey region.

Through participatory studies with rural community members currently living with cardio vascular disease, diabetes and other diseases, Gateway's vision is to:

- Improve patient health, productivity and wellness
- Reduce rural disease rates
- Provide province-wide savings on health care
- Reduce strain on emergency rooms and hospital beds
- Reduce impact of disease on rural families and communities
- Improve education, recruitment and retention in rural medicine and health care professionals
- Improve patient adherence to prescribed medication

Boilerplate

Located in Seaforth, Ontario, Gateway is the only community-driven rural health research institute in Canada.

History and Leadership

Established as a not-for-profit organization in 2008.

Gateway is governed by a high-profile, volunteer Board of Directors led by Chair, Rob Evans and President, Gwen Devereaux. Gateway's Scientific Director is Claudio Munoz, MD, PhD, and Gateway Administrator is Shelly LeBlanc.

Higher Rates of Disease Incidence in Rural Ontario

(see separate *Rural Health Crisis for more info*)

Huron, Perth, Grey and Bruce Counties are experiencing significantly higher rates of heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, some forms of cancer, chronic lung disease, depression, mild cognitive impairment (Alzheimer's) than urban rates.

The rate of diabetes in Bruce County (8.0%) is twice the rate of diabetes in London (4.0%) as well as the provincial average of (4.1%). The rate of stroke in Bruce County is 51% higher compared to the provincial average.

Number of Rural Community Member Participants

Over 350 rural community members have participated in Gateway studies since 2008.

Family Health Team Partners

Clinton Family Health Team (*finalizing details of partnership*)

Huron Community Family Health Team (*finalizing details of partnership*)

North Perth Family Health Team, Listowel
Brockton and Area Family Health Team, Walkerton
STAR Family Health Team, Tavistock

Research and Education Partners

Lawson Health Research Institute, , The University of Western Ontario Schulich School of Medicine, Southwestern Ontario Medical Education Network (SWOMEN), University of Waterloo School of Pharmacy, McMaster University Michael DeGroote School of Medicine, Georgian College, HealthKick

Business and Community Partners

McCall MacBain Foundation, Ontario Trillium Foundation, South West Community Care Access Centre^[GR7], Huron Business Development Corporation, Huron/Perth Poultry Farmers, The Municipality of Huron East, Huron East/Seaforth Community Development Trust, AY McLean Estate, Progressive Turf Equipment Inc., United Communities Credit Union Ltd. , The Seaforth Golf and Country Club

Current Funding

\$1.365 million over five years from above contributors and community individuals

Research Studies

- The DaTA Study:Diabetes & Technology for Increased Activity
- Stroke Symptom Awareness in a Rural Population
- Frequency of Mild Cognitive Impairment in a Rural Population
- Prevalence of Peripheral Arterial Disease in a Rural Population
- Rural Pharmacy Intervention for the Detection and Management of Cognitive Impairment (planning phase)

Space

Gateway currently operates in a 900 sq. ft facility as a tenant of Huron East Health Centre. Gateway RHRI has successfully completed its pilot phase and urgently requires additional facilities and resources. A capital campaign will be launched in September 2011 to build Gateway a 25,000 square feet permanent home. Over two acres of land has been donated to Gateway by the A.Y. and Winn McLean family as a site to build their new headquarters and lecture hall.

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The Gateway Results

As a result of Gateway studies, clinical insights into disease activity, new treatments options, lifestyle management and applications of technology are being discovered. All of these things are guiding patients into healthier lifestyles and keeping them out of the hospital.

Study participants have shown dramatic health improvements.

A high percentage of participants have:

- reduced their need for medication(s)
- require fewer doctors appointments
- reduced emergency room visits
- lost weight
- have more energy

- reported an improved quality of life

Participants are vocal about how much the studies and the education and support have helped them shift out of disease and toward health.

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The Gateway Board of Directors

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- Claudio Munoz, MD PhD, Scientific Director, Head of Research
- Feng Chang RPh, BScPhm, PharmD
- Gwen Devereaux, President
- Linda Knight, Vice President
- Rob Evans, Chair
- Dan Stringer, Vice Chair
- Mary Lapaine, Secretary/Treasurer
- Lin Steffler, Past President
- Ralph Laviolette, Director
- Chris Lee, Director
- Jim Whaley, Director
- Paul Nichol, Resource Director
- Sherry McCall, Resource Director

Claudio Munoz, MD PhD, Scientific Director, Head of Research

Claudio Munoz has an MD degree from Chile, and MSc and PhD degrees in Pharmacology and Toxicology from University of Western Ontario. Since 1988, he has participated as a co-investigator or sub-investigator in more than 50 clinical trials of new cardiovascular drugs in Canada, first at the Hypertension Research Unit, and since 1996 at the Stroke Prevention and Atherosclerosis Research Centre (SPARC) of the London Health Sciences Centre and the Robarts Research Institute, London. Through this work, he has gained extensive experience in all aspects of conducting academic- and industry-sponsored clinical research. He will be responsible for promoting Gateway as a centre of excellence for community-driven clinical research and ensure a constant stream of appropriate research projects. He will be also be responsible for ensuring proper training of clinicians to obtain investigator certification, supervising research coordinators, and organizing and coordinating an external ethic review board. He will also continue his involvement with SPARC, and maintain strong networking and collaboration with other rural research centres and academic institutions.

Feng Chang RPh, BScPhm, PharmD

Feng graduated from the University of Toronto Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy, followed by her Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) degree from Ohio State University and post-PharmD fellowship in Geriatric Pharmacotherapy at Wayne State University. In the

past decade, she has served as a frontline clinician, specialist, consultant, and educator in diverse settings including acute care, community, and ambulatory care. She is currently an assistant professor with the University of Waterloo School of Pharmacy, and concurrently appointed at the Universities of Western Ontario and Toronto. Feng serves as the Associate Editor for Canadian Pharmacists Journal and has won numerous awards provincially and nationally. Her research with Gateway will focus on delivering integrated interprofessional solutions to safe, effective, and efficient medication use; amplifying local health care professional manpower capacity while expanding access to care that has well defined outcomes and demonstrable impact.

Gwen Devereaux, President

A Huron County native, registered RN and former clinic administrator, Gwen is a physician- and healthcare- recruiter for a number of local hospital agencies. As a community key volunteer, she conceived and initiated the Healthkick program and was also instrumental in creating one of the first community-driven Family Health Teams in Ontario with a mandate of delivery of primary healthcare to local residents. A keen community activist, she continues to promote health care services in the region in both work and private settings.

Linda Knight, Vice President

One of three of Gateway's newest Directors, Linda is a long time resident of Ashfield Colbourne Township in Huron County, Linda is exceptionally familiar with rural health care. She started a home nursing company 25 years ago and it has since grown to over 600 employees and has 10 branches throughout Southwestern Ontario and now sits as the CEO for CarePartners. In 2002, Linda won the Canadian Woman Entrepreneur of the year and she attended Wilfrid Laurier University, graduating in Business. Linda's familiarity of rural health care is a definite asset to Gateway and she sits on the Executive and Project/Programming Committee for Gateway.

Rob Evans, Chair

A graduate of Pickering College, Newmarket with a B.A. from Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo. Rob is President and CEO of two private asset management companies and a consultant in business advisory services. Rob has received business awards, also serves on several community boards and municipal committees and is an active community leader and volunteer. Rob sits on the Executive and Financial committee for Gateway as well and utilizes his business knowledge and familiarity of procedures/policies for non profits. Rob leads the Governance committee and sits on the Executive committee.

Dan Stringer, Vice Chair

A pharmacist, Dan graduated from Carleton University (B.Sc. 1968) and U.of T. (B.Sc. Phm. 1971). He practiced retail and hospital pharmacy in Ottawa, Pembroke and Goderich. He purchased Rieck Pharmacy, Goderich in 1978 and practiced as an independent pharmacist/owner until 2001. Currently employed by Rexall PharmaPlus as dispensary manager in Goderich, and Huron community FHT as consultant pharmacist.

Has been active in Goderich Lions Club, on executive of local Pharmacy associations and as councillor for local district at Ontario College of Pharmacists. Currently serve on executive of Goderich BIA and on Huron FHT board of directors. Dan was an essential element in the Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Waterloo-School of Pharmacy, and helps mentor the Pharmacy Cooperative Education students from the UoW – School of Pharmacy for Gateway. Dan sits on the Project/Program and Marketing/Communications Fundraising Readiness Committees for Gateway as well.

Mary Lapaine, Secretary/Treasurer

A native of Goderich, Huron County, Mary attended Bishop Straughan in Toronto and later Michigan State University. Operated a family hotel, the Bedford in Goderich, and a motel and in 1993, was chair of the Ontario Motel & Hotel Association for two years. Also served on the Goderich Marine Hospital board and in 2003, became chair of the Ontario Hospital Association. In May 2004, became chair of the Canadian Healthcare Association. In January, 2007, appointed to the new South West region Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) Board for a three year term and now serving as vice-chair.

Lin Steffler, Past President

A resident of Huron East, the last 20 years in Seaforth, Lin has many years experience working with provincial ministries and committees and over 10 years local experience as Police Services Board chair, municipal councilor, municipal reeve and mayor following the Ontario amalgamation process. Lin is also an active community leader and volunteer.

Ralph Laviolette, Director

Ralph is a resident of Bayfield and holds degrees in Engineering (BEng McGill) and Business Administration (MBA, York). Ralph served 30 years in operations, finance and senior management positions with CN rail and following early retirement, contacted with various businesses in engineering or management. He's served as Huron East Economic Development Officer and formed Huron East Chamber of Commerce, not to mention managing the start up of the Huron Community Family Health Team (HcFHT). Ralph is also an avid volunteer in numerous community endeavors.

Chris Lee, Director

A resident of Walton in Huron East, Chris is a self-employed businessman and consultant with wide-ranging interests as an entrepreneur. He has had diverse experience on a local and international scale in farming, manufacturing, event promotion and management. He has served a variety of organizations with special interest in issues affecting our community such as the environment, health & wellness and economic development. Chris brings his business and technological background to help Gateway explore new ways of marketing and communication through our website, social media and participating in technology conferences for Gateway. Chris sits on the Finance Committee for Gateway.

Jim Whaley, Director

Jim is a seasoned health care executive and health systems planner with recognized expertise in the planning, organization and delivery of rural health services. His health care consulting practice is focused on strategic planning, organizational renewal and the development of strategic partnerships. Clients include hospitals, family health teams, community health agencies and the new LHINs. In addition to his consulting practice, Jim has been a part-time faculty member in the University of Western Ontario's bachelor of health sciences program, teaching courses in health policy and innovative rural health care delivery. Prior to teaching and consulting, Jim worked for 20 years in Ontario's District Health Council (DHC) system and was the Executive Director of both the Grey Bruce/Huron Perth and Wellington-Dufferin DHCs. Jim holds a Master's degree from the University of Waterloo in Regional Planning and is a Certified Health Executive (CHE) with the Canadian College of Health Service Executives. Jim sits on the Governance Committee for Gateway. In terms of other volunteer commitments, Jim is the inaugural Board Chair of the new Rural Ontario Institute.

Paul Nichol, Resource Director

Paul Nichol has always had a vested interest in rural Ontario. He determined at an early age to pursue an education that would allow him to live and work in a rural area. This education includes a Bachelors Degree in Agriculture at the University of Guelph in 1986, followed by a Masters Degree in Rural Development in 1991. Since that time, Paul has managed the Huron Business Development Corporation, an award-winning Community Futures organization located in Seaforth. Over the years, Paul has piloted many rural development tools such as 10 Steps to Community Action and Business Retention & Expansion. In addition, he has been instrumental in building new rural development organizations such as the Lake Huron Learning Collaborative, the Countryside Energy Co-operative; the Centre for Applied Renewable Energy and most recently, the Gateway Rural Health Research Institute. Paul sits on the Development Committee for Gateway RHRI as well.

Sherry McCall, Resource Director

Sherry brings a strong community component to the Gateway table. She has been the driving force behind several groups of adults and children, teaching them community, cooperation and physical/cardio fitness with dance classes in clogging. Sherry has organized numerous talent programs for the community and raised funds for a number of organizations. She comes from a strong rural lifestyle and has worked for a number of years promoting Seaforth and its Hospital. Sherry sits on the Marketing/Communications/Fundraising Readiness Committee for Gateway Home