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MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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New Home for Busy Diabetes Education Centre

The epidemic of Diabetes in Ontario is being keenly felt in our area. The Diabetes Education Centre at Four Counties Health Services (FCHS) experienced a 347 percent increase in patient load in the last year.

“The World Health Organization predicted a global 39 per cent increase in Diabetes over the last ten years. But a Toronto-based research team says this period has actually seen a 69 per cent increase. Now, one in eleven Canadians has the disease,” Alison Lenny, Diabetes Educator at FCHS, says.

Diabetes is a serious disease. It can cause blindness, serious kidney disease, heart disease and shorten your life. Diabetes can be managed – through lifestyle choices, medication and blood glucose testing – to reduce the risk of serious complications. Learning how to manage the disease is one of the major roles played by the Middlesex Hospital Alliance’s Diabetes Education Centre (DEC).

According to Mike Mazza, CEO of Middlesex Hospital Alliance, the Diabetes Education Centre has locations at both Four Counties and the Strathroy sites. The Centre is staffed by Diabetes Educators, who are registered nurses and registered dietitians. “Support, education and care are the three key areas of the programming,” Mazza says.

The program provides both individual and group sessions where people with diabetes can share knowledge and have their questions answered about important management tools such as food choices, exercise and monitoring. And, the DEC offers group classes on specific topics such as label reading, carbohydrate counting and weight control.

Renovations are currently underway at FCHS to accommodate the increased client numbers and needs. A new DEC area is being created just inside the front doors of Four

Counties. The new area is a suite with a reception area, an office for the educators and a large sunlit classroom that can accommodate 30 people.

The classroom also has a projector and screen for presentations and equipment such as a refrigerator, countertops and blenders, for food preparation demonstrations. And, the new space comes with a new local phone number: 519-693-4441 ext. 2489

“The new suite is entirely wheelchair accessible,” Lenny says, “Plus it’s an advantage to our clients to have an onsite classroom and the equipment to now do cooking demonstrations. We didn’t have any of these benefits before,” Lenny says.

Outpatient services at Four Counties, such as the Diabetes Education Centre, are essential to the care that the hospital can provide to residents. And the predominance of outpatients over inpatients is a shift being felt across the province in small hospitals. According to CEO Mike Mazza, outpatient services at Four Counties, including the Diabetes Education Centre, are four times the volume of one year ago. Says Mazza, “For a small community hospital, it isn’t about beds anymore. It is very much about efficient and excellent outpatient health clinics that serve the needs of our clients.”