

Health quality council to visit region

11-member provincial panel in Thunder Bay for 2 days

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A new council that reports to the public on health care performance is coming to Thunder Bay next week for a meet-and-greet, and to lend an ear to the Northwest.

The Ontario Health Quality Council, an independent agency funded by the province, will visit the city Wednesday and Thursday to explain its role and to gather comments about the state of health care in the Northwest.

"We have to have different ways to access health care in the North," said Lyn McLeod, one of the council's 11 members and a former Thunder Bay MPP as well as provincial Liberal leader.

She said the two main issues in the Northwest involve health care delivery to remote communities and aboriginal health care.

The council, which started work in January, will interact with Northwestern health care leaders through a videoconference Wednesday from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m., and meet with more leaders in person from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Invitations were sent to all community health leaders in the city and surrounding region, and

a turnout of about 30 is expected by the council, which wants to discuss ways to improve health care quality.

A discussion with aboriginal health care experts is set for 6-8 p.m.

On Thursday, the council will hold a regular private meeting to carry out housekeeping agendas, but is open to meeting with anyone by appointment during its visit to Thunder Bay.

So far, the council has visited Ottawa and London.

"We're trying to get to diverse spots," council spokeswoman Harpreet Bassi said Thursday.

The council produces a yearly report on the kind of access the public has to

health care and human health trends. It also describes the effect the health system is having on patients.

The next report is expected early next year.

Contact with the council about its visit can be made by calling 1-866-623-6868 or by sending an e-mail to ohqc@ohqc.ca.

