

### Improving supports for seniors with complex mental health needs

**December 18, 2012** – The North West LHIN is working with a LHIN-wide project team of providers, physicians and consumers to develop an integrated regional *Behavioural Supports Ontario* (BSO) system of care for residents in Northwestern Ontario. St. Joseph's Care Group (SJCG) – Hogarth Riverview Manor, with its expertise in geriatrics, is the lead agency for the Regional Behavioural Health System (RBHS), in partnership with the North West Community Care Access Centre and the Alzheimer Society, Thunder Bay Chapter.

The North West LHIN has invested in 20.6 (FTE) new front-line workers across our region. New services, programs and training are being introduced to support specialized care for seniors and their families and caregivers, who live and cope with dementia, mental illness and/or other neurological conditions:

- The North West Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) has created a **System Navigator** role for clients and their caregivers. Standardized assessment/intake criteria and referral processes are being developed to improve and simplify client access to the appropriate services in a timely manner.
- New **regional mobile teams** are being added in the Kenora/Rainy River District (through Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Fort Frances) and in Thunder Bay (integrated with SJCG Geriatric Outreach Resources). These personal support workers will provide care to residents in the long-term care setting. They will help stabilize behaviours and work with a Psychogeriatric Resource Consultant to create an individualized care plan for the client.
- Both new and existing workers are receiving **specialized training** on skills required to provide patient-centered care to seniors who have responsive and complex behaviours:
  - The Canadian Mental Health Association trained 273 staff and students in long-term care homes in the Kenora/Rainy River area in “Gentle Persuasive Approach” and shared general information about dementia and aging.
  - A regional education task force is developing training tools to be used throughout the North West LHIN.
  - The Alzheimer Society is developing training and educational resources for the long-term care and community sectors, and families and caregivers.
- Planning is underway to develop a **specialized Behavioral Support Unit (BSU)** at Willow Grove in Hogarth Riverview Manor and it is anticipated this resource will start up in the new year.

#### About BSO

First announced by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care in August 2011, *Behavioural Supports Ontario* (BSO) makes a bold prediction: by working together, we can reinvent the system of care for seniors across Ontario, their families and caregivers who live and cope with responsive behaviours\* associated with dementia, mental illness, addictions and other neurological conditions.

To this end, BSO is a comprehensive system redesign that breaks down barriers, encourages collaborative work, shares knowledge and fosters partnerships among local, regional and provincial agencies.

*\* Responsive behaviours include aggression, wandering, agitation and others.*

## BSO Success in the North West LHIN

*This story was sent to us by the Canadian Mental Health Association, Fort Frances Branch.*

“Joan” has dementia and had been admitted to long-term care from her home. She was having a hard time adjusting to her new surroundings and began displaying responsive behaviours including exit seeking, wandering, increased agitation and aggression. The long-term care home did not feel its staff could adequately care for Joan and was considering an alternative placement for her.

Instead, Joan was referred to the Psychogeriatric Resource Consultant (PRC) who did a thorough review of her health care history, personal background, social history and life events in order to reveal what might be triggering her behaviours. The PRC also observed staff interactions with other residents during challenging times like personal care and bathing.

After careful review, a care plan was developed for Joan as follows:

- Changes were made to her medications;
- Staff members were educated on understanding dementia and responsive behaviours as a form of communication;
- Her surroundings were rearranged to divert her attempts at escape;
- Her environment was changed to promote comfort and a calming home-like environment; and
- Interventions such as daily exercise and activities are being used to distract her and reduce her anxiety and agitation.

These adjustments have made a big difference for Joan, whose behaviours have stabilized, allowing for her to continue to be cared for at the long-term care home. Staff at the home also benefitted through a better understanding of dementia and non-pharmaceutical interventions that can be used to stabilize residents with responsive behaviours.

### Why BSO is so Important

- In the North West LHIN, seniors with responsive behaviours represent over 10% of the population aged 65+, distributed as follows:
  - 2,530 individuals in the District of Thunder Bay
  - 386 individuals in the District of Rainy River
  - 671 individuals in the District of Kenora
- 65% of long-term care home residents in Ontario have dementia.
- By 2020, the number of persons with dementia in Ontario will increase by 40% to 250,000.

### Additional Resources

- The [North West LHIN BSO Regional Action Plan](#) is available on our website.
- For more information on the BSO program, please visit the [BSO page](#) of the Alzheimer Knowledge Exchange Resource Centre.