
North West LHIN – July 26, 2010

Reducing Emergency Department (ED) Demand:

Initiatives in the community aimed at reducing visits to emergency departments

Reducing unnecessary emergency room visits is a strategy to help improve the wait times in emergency departments and improve access to in-patient hospital beds. The North West Local Health Integration Network is addressing this complex issue by providing funding support for initiatives that help individuals navigate the system in non-hospital settings in the community. Some of the solutions funded by the North West LHIN include:

System Navigator in Senior's Apartment Buildings (Thunder Bay)

Through the North West Community Care Access Centre (NWCCAC), a System Navigator works with 1241 seniors' apartments in Thunder Bay to provide early identification and intervention for "at risk" seniors to help them remain healthy at home. In 2009/10, the program:

- Served 379 clients
- Referred 45 new individuals to health and social service agencies
- Prevented 66 avoidable ER visits.

LHIN-Wide Wound Management Program (Region)

The North West LHIN funded the NWCCAC to create a regional wound management program. The goal is to establish consistent and evidence based practices for assessment and management of wounds; and implement common processes and tools across the various health care settings such as hospitals, CCAC, family health teams, clinics, health centres and long term care homes.

Mental Health and Addictions Program: GAPPS (Thunder Bay)

The GAPPS (Getting Appropriate Personal and Professional Supports) program is designed to reach out to and provide services to the most vulnerable persons in our society who have serious, unstable and complex mental illnesses, most frequently with concurrent addictions and socioeconomic issues. It provides services in non-traditional locations such as shelters, food banks, soup kitchens, and the streets in Thunder Bay.

Available data indicates that referrals to the ED from the Balmoral Centre has resulted in a 51% reduction in ED visits, from 330 in 2008-09 to 168 in 2009-10

After its first year of operation the GAPPS program has:

- Registered 463 clients registered and the target was 300;
- Initiated 4311 contacts while the target was 1500;
- Improved the level of appropriate support for issues related to need for accommodation, addictions and psychological distress intervention.

