

North West LHIN – June 14, 2010

Aging at Home Strategy – Admission Avoidance/Timely Discharge Initiatives

While there are many initiatives focusing on improvement in patient care, most patients agree it would be best if we could help prevent hospitalization the first place. Through the Aging at Home Strategy, the North West LHIN is focusing on admission avoidance and timely discharge of those individuals no longer requiring hospitalization.

One common injury experienced by seniors is being addressed through the **LHIN-Wide Falls Prevention Program**. Health service providers from across sectors are working together to better coordinate care and achieve greater consistencies in clinical practice, as well as developing quality improvement capacity throughout the region.

The LHIN-Wide Falls Prevention Program has provided falls prevention education to over 120 health care providers from acute care, long term care and community settings across the LHIN. Additionally, eligible seniors have been supplied with falls prevention equipment (i.e. hand rails for bathing). This program is now linked with the Ontario Health Quality Council's Resident's First initiative as a quality improvement initiative in the long-term care sector.

Another contributing factor to emergency room wait times is when patient flow is compromised and patients cannot be admitted in a timely manner to an inpatient bed in the acute care setting. Timely discharge impacts patient flow at every stage. Many elderly patients need support transitioning to home and settling safely after being in hospital. To meet this need, funding is being provided by the North West LHIN for **Smooth Transitions**, a program that assists seniors when they are discharged from hospital. Services include a ride home, grocery shopping, filling prescriptions and providing short term support until services are arranged by the North West Community Care Access Centre. Clients describe this program as wonderful:

"I couldn't believe it when the nurse asked me if I wanted help home. I was worrying how I would get up my steps as they were so icy. The worker met me at the hospital and packed my clothes and took me home. Then she went and got me groceries and made me homemade soup, which was delicious. They helped me for a few days and called to check I was ok. It made me feel so safe knowing I had support when I got home. Thank you all very much!"

In 2009/10, Smooth Transitions assisted with 614 safe discharges from hospital.