
North West LHIN – May 31, 2010

CEISS: An Innovative Mix of Options for Seniors

Within days of the province's announcement of its new Aging at Home Strategy in 2007, a project was announced in Thunder Bay that was perfectly aligned with the strategy's aim to support seniors to age at home.

The North West LHIN was asked to prepare a plan to replace 300 municipal long-term care beds being turned over to the province by the City of Thunder Bay. Based on recommendations from earlier studies and on information gathered through community engagement, the LHIN saw an opportunity to create a true continuum of services for seniors, from those needing mild-to-moderate care at home to the elderly requiring long-term care.

The Centre of Excellence for Integrated Seniors' Services (CEISS) project was announced consisting of 336 long-term care beds (including 64 regional beds for seniors with responsive behaviours like dementia) and 132 new supportive housing apartments. These facilities are to be operated by St. Joseph's Care Group and built on its park like Hogarth-Riverview site.

The project also includes service enhancements for seniors in existing supportive housing, community support services for 120 additional clients and special funding for LHIN-funded service providers to support a senior client who temporarily requires a higher level of care.

How the CEISS has Progressed

Planning for the project has involved multiple providers talking about and sharing ideas on the vision of the CEISS and how to better meet client needs in the community to promote the ability to age at home.

The project's community support services, enhanced supportive housing and special funding for clients' temporary high care needs have been benefitting seniors in Thunder Bay since 2008.

The construction of the CEISS is currently underway, with the long-term care building scheduled to open in 2012 and the supportive housing apartments by late fall 2011. In response to the urgent need for supportive housing in the community, the North West CCAC, North West LHIN and St. Joseph's Care Group recently announced that 75 of the 132 CEISS supportive housing apartments will be available temporarily at McKellar Place starting October 1, 2010. The tenants of McKellar Place will then have the option to move into the CEISS supportive housing when it opens.

This progressive seniors' project is the first of its kind in Ontario and is likely to become a model for the rest of the province, as integration of services - looking at the health system as a whole rather than in parts - is the way to go for health care.