

## **Pembroke Regional Hospital's Independent Living Suite Provides Rehabilitation Patients With Unique Learning Space**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**PEMBROKE – For nearly 15 years, patients with a goal to return home following rehabilitation have been able to practice activities of daily living in the Pembroke Regional Hospital's Independent Living Suite (ILS).**

**Housed on the hospital's first floor as part of the Rehabilitation unit, the Independent Living Suite is a functional home-like setting for therapeutic activities and assessment. "It includes a kitchen, living room, bedroom and bathroom, and it offers the therapists a space to assess and provide therapy which concentrates on building abilities for patients so that they can return home safely and independently," said Dean Quade, Clinical Manager of the hospital's Rehabilitation program.**

**The space allows occupational and physical therapists to show patients and families how they might be able to make their own home environments more accessible with some basic equipment like grab bars, transfer poles, and bathroom equipment.**

**In the past two years alone, nearly 600 patients have been admitted to the Rehabilitation program, with many of them using the ILS for various aspects of their care.**

**"Both individual and group therapy activities take place in the ILS such as practicing cooking and learning how to transfer in and out of bed; skills that can help patients become more independent and safe as they transition to their home," Mr. Quade said.**

**Deep River resident Joanne Christopher recently took part in a cooking class on the unit and felt she greatly benefited from use of the space. "I was shown techniques to conserve my energy, achieve my goals and maximize my independence," Ms. Christopher said, in addition to learning how to create a safe environment in her kitchen.**

**Occupational Therapist Sonya Silver said the cooking class was launched in late spring as a weekly session for patients that teaches them how to navigate a kitchen with a walker or wheelchair, and assesses their abilities in sequencing, planning and safety in the kitchen. It was put on hold over the summer however, while a new oven was brought in.**

**“Rehabilitation is more than walking and physiotherapy,” Ms. Silver said. “It’s being able to do meal prep in a proper kitchen, using a bathroom with a regular tub, and assessing all activities of daily living.”**

**In the ILS, patients have an opportunity to use and trial a variety of adaptive equipment prior to leaving the hospital setting; items such as adaptive cutting boards and utensils so that they can determine if those types of items could make things easier at home.**

**The Independent Living Suite’s bedroom has a regular double bed as well as a support pole used for assistance in getting in and out of bed. Ms. Silver said that since this is the only area in the hospital that houses such equipment, patients from other units also use this for assessment and practice as needed.**

**“Overall, the ILS enables us to assess if patient goals have been met prior to discharge. We are able to run different scenarios based not only on an individual’s circumstances, but also their needs and the needs of their family,” Ms. Silver said.**

**She added that this facility which is unique to Renfrew County, is used by all stroke patients to help in fulfilling their care plans and discharge goals. It not only provides an opportunity to understand the level of care someone needs or requires, and identify issues, but it can also help to show that an individual is capable of returning home and caring for one’s self.**

**PRH Physiatrist Dr. Debbie Timpson said that both patients and caregivers have benefited from time spent in the ILS.**

**“Patients and caregivers spend most of their time on the Rehab unit in an accessible space, with 24-hour support. The thought of going home on a pass or at discharge can be very overwhelming as most environments are not as accessible and do not have such support. For those patients and caregivers who are concerned about this, a 24-48 hour stay in the ILS to practise tasks like washing, dressing, transferring, and cooking, while still having access to a call bell system to immediately reach staff should a problem develop, helps to build confidence and provides reassurance,” Dr. Timpson said.**

**“The ILS is a unique feature of the rehab unit that we are fortunate to have here in Renfrew County,” she said.**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**

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