

Pembroke Regional Hospital Launches Geriatric Rehabilitation Program

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PEMBROKE – The Pembroke Regional Hospital is piloting a new inpatient program that supports local seniors. This program is set up for our geriatric population who meet a particular set of criteria and wish to maintain their independence but are experiencing health issues which are making it difficult for them to live at home.

Modelled after the Geriatric Rehabilitation Service at Bruyère Continuing Care in Ottawa, the new program was launched in early July based on an identified need in our region.

“Based on demographics in hospital admissions and visits to emergency departments, we saw the need for specialized geriatric care and began working towards development of this new program last fall, with the intent of launching in March of this year,” said Beth Brownlee, Director of Rehabilitation at PRH.

Co-located within the hospital’s general Rehabilitation and Integrated Stroke Unit, the Geriatric Rehabilitation program was deemed to be a good fit for available space.

With the goal of maintaining independence, Ms. Brownlee said patients are referred by a physician and on average, can expect to be admitted for approximately 21 days during which time they have access to a multi-disciplinary team of health care professionals who work with the individuals to achieve their identified goals.

Rehabilitation Manager Dean Quade said members of his team have received additional geriatric rehabilitation education, spent time working with staff from Bruyère and did site visits to learn best practices that support the geriatric population.

He added that an individual could be admitted to the program for a multitude of reasons including frailty and mobility issues, trouble with multiple medications, frequency of admissions/visits to the emergency department, or other factors that are causing difficulty living in an independent setting with minimal to moderate assistance.

Dr. Linde Corrigan who is the program’s lead physician and is certified in Care of the Elderly said she’s very enthusiastic about being part of this new program with a focus on seniors’ health. “Typically, with in-hospital care, we are always working reactively. For example, a patient has a hip fracture from a fall due to weakness and then we start rehab to strengthen deconditioned muscles. Now, we can identify seniors who are falling and start rehab proactively to hopefully avoid the hip fracture in the first place,” Dr. Corrigan said.

“In addition, we can focus on issues specific to the elderly population. This includes a focus on medication use, loneliness, assisting family members with the stress of caring for their loved one, optimizing cognition, and mobility to promote independence and the ability to live at home for as

long as possible with the best quality of life possible. I hope to be a senior one day and this high caliber interdisciplinary Rehab team is exactly the care I would want,” she said.

Through Dr. Corrigan’s involvement with this new program, she has also been able to provide education on geriatric care to other staff and physicians throughout the organization.

Sabine Mersmann, Vice-President of Clinical and Support Services – Partnerships and Integration said the program is being launched in a phased approach in order to solidify policies and protocols. The first few patients were admitted directly from the hospital’s Rehabilitation Unit with others now coming from the Medical program, Surgical unit and regional orthopaedics program. Over time, the hospital is looking to expand admission to those from other Renfrew County hospitals.

And Physiatriest Dr. Debbie Timpson said she’s excited to be able to offer this increased service to patients.

“Many of the patients who require inpatient rehabilitation are seniors who have multiple medical problems above and beyond the issue that brought them in to hospital initially. Patients who are admitted to the Geriatric Rehabilitation program will not only benefit from the usual care our Rehab team provides, but also from the additional help that Dr. Corrigan and our Pharmacy team will add.”

Geriatric Rehabilitation Program Admission Criteria:

- Age 65 and over, living in the community (house, apartment or retirement residence)
- Acute medical/surgical issues now addressed
- Sitting tolerance of at least two hours and ongoing help required with some or all of the following:
 - transfers, ambulation, and stairs
 - daily self-care (washing, dressing, toileting)
- Identified role for comprehensive geriatric assessment and rehabilitation in supporting discharge and preventing re-admission.
- Willing and cognitively able to participate, follow directions and tolerate daily therapy
- Realistic goals with anticipated ability to make progress within their allotted length of stay

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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