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South East Local Health Integration Network Board Approves Older Adult Strategy

NEWS

The South East Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) Board of Directors approved the Older Adults Strategy (OAS). The OAS, a 10-year strategy, will ensure resources currently available are being used for seniors and their caregivers in the south east region, as appropriately and efficiently as possible, and that any new resources are directed at services and supports to best serve this population.

Plans will be developed in collaboration with partners both within and beyond the health care services sector, in recognition of the resources and strategic implications required. A streamlined project management model will guide and support the implementation.

Health care provider organizations will be encouraged to incorporate this strategy into their organization's strategic thinking. Implementation plans detailing how key themes for action will be operationalized to achieve the vision, will be developed by the LHIN in three-year cycles to align with the LHIN's Integrated Health Service Planning (IHSP4) process.

Five key themes identified for the Older Adult Strategy include:

- Promoting and preserving wellness and functionality of older adults in the community;
- Enhancing caregiver wellbeing;
- Enhancing the care experience;
- Early identification of high-risk older adults with targeted upstream interventions; and
- Supporting older adults affected by dementias, behavioural issues, and addictions and mental health challenges.

Approval of this strategy now initiates implementation planning, which is expected to occur over the fall of 2016.

To learn more about the Older Adult Strategy visit www.southeastlin.on.ca .

QUOTES:

“In order to address the increased need for home and community supports for the population over 65-years-old, the South East LHIN has developed an Older Adult Strategy (OAS). This broader strategy sets the fundamental direction of the LHIN for this population, and ensures enhanced health care services and outcomes for seniors in the South East region.”

- *Chris Salt, South East LHIN Board of Directors member*

“Trying to navigate the system with someone who has a terminal illness gets very overwhelming. I expected there to be far more care for the individual who was going through palliative care support, and for someone to sit with myself and my mom and say ‘OK, this is what we need to do, and this is what the next step is,’ but no one was doing that. Nobody knew what was supposed to occur any more than I knew.”

“People don’t have the support that my mom had, even from myself and my two sisters – and is it fair that even if there is that support that we have to be the care givers as opposed to grieving someone’s end of life? After speaking with the panel I really feel they heard us – they heard the story, they listened to us. I’m very grateful.”

- *Denise Reynolds, Daughter/Caregiver*

“Looking after a frail elderly relative is very challenging and our system is not designed to be particularly helpful. The Older Adult Strategy is designed to be a high-level strategy announcing certain themes that will help the LHIN address this aging population as we move forward through the next 10 or 20 years.”

- *Dr. David Walker- Doctor/Chair, OAS Reference and Expert Panels*

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