

LANDMARK PROVINCIAL AGING AT HOME STRATEGY

LAUNCHES IN SOUTH EAST LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORK

McGuinty Government Improves Access to Community-Based Health Care Services

NEWS

June 21, 2008

Standing in front of two of the seven new Dodge Caravans that will provide area seniors with rides to appointments, John Gerretsen, Minister of Environment, MPP for Kingston and the Islands, today announced a series of local Aging at Home initiatives which are receiving \$2.2 million this year.

More than 250 new programs – funded with \$76 million this year – and a total of 100 vans providing 135,000 rides to appointments across Ontario are part of the province's landmark Aging at Home Strategy, a \$1.1 billion initiative to help seniors live healthy, independent lives in the comfort and dignity of their own homes.

Aging at Home is part of the Ontario government's broader strategy to reduce wait times in emergency rooms. Offering better community supports to our seniors allows them to stay in their homes longer and reduces pressures on Ontario's ERs.

SE LHIN will be implementing the SMILE (*Seniors Managing Independent Living Easily*) program this year with \$347,003 in provincial funding which is designed to provide senior-centered accessible care in the community. SMILE offers culturally appropriate services to meet the needs of diverse clientele. This initiative emphasizes a mix of community-based services, including:

- Caregiver support and education
- Transportation and meals
- Physical activity
- Wellness and preventive care
- Reducing isolation

For example, the SMILE program will make it possible for more seniors who are frail and elderly, most at risk of premature institutionalization, to receive help with these activities and others that are essential to daily living, so they can remain in their homes. Because dignity is a matter of choice, SMILE will offer them options including managing their care, selecting services, choosing who comes into their home and when. The assistance of a care coordinator is also an option. Services include: meals; routine housekeeping; shopping; laundry; running errands; transportation to/from health care appointments; seasonal outdoor chores.



QUOTES

"We have worked diligently with our community partners to develop innovative health care services for seniors," said Georgina Thompson, Chair of the SE LHIN. "A lack of adequate transportation services presents a serious challenge to the delivery of health care for many people. The new van fleet will provide reliable and vital transportation for Ontario seniors and allow our residents to receive the care they need where and when they want it."

"Consulting with seniors first to determine their priorities for the expenditure over four years of almost \$1.1 billion set a new standard for health care planning", said Brian Brophy, President, Frontenac-Kingston Council on Aging. "The process was respectful of seniors' opinions."

"By making it easier for seniors to access vital health and wellness services in our community, we are helping to ease pressures on our hospitals, particularly emergency rooms," said John Gerretsen, MPP, Kingston and the Islands. "I am delighted that these new vans will help seniors in our community age at home with the dignity and independence they so deserve."

QUICK FACTS

- The SMILE program is a consumer-driven initiative, resulting from consultations with seniors and a collaborative approach to program design by health service providers.
- SMILE will be managed regionally by VON Canada - Ontario. At its maturity in 2010/11, \$9.7 million will be made available for SMILE,
- The new van fleet will provide 135,000 rides for seniors across Ontario to and from medical appointments this year.
- Ontario's Aging at Home Strategy is a four-year \$1.1 Billion initiative launched in 2007.

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Read more about [Ontario's Aging at Home Strategy](#).