

News Release / Pour publication immédiate

Aging at Home Strategy a Proven Success within the South East

Brockville, Ontario (Tuesday, August 31st, 2010) – Georgina Thompson, Board Chair of the South East Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), and Sherry Kennedy, COO of the South East LHIN, along with Ruth Kitson, Executive Director of Community and Primary Health Care, Brockville, today celebrated the success of the provincial Aging at Home Strategy, highlighting the impact it has had on residents of the South East.

The Provincial Aging at Home strategy is applied across the SE LHIN through a variety of initiatives geared towards enabling seniors to maintain a healthy lifestyle outside of the hospital ER and Long Term Care Homes (LTCH).

Seniors Managing Independent Living Easily (SMILE), the largest Aging at Home program in the South East, is managed by the Victorian Order of Nurses and has achieved impressive success over the last three years. SMILE provides personalized, in-home services for seniors who are able to remain in their own home with a little help conducting day to day activities such as housekeeping, meal preparation, transportation, and outdoor chores. Assisting the frail elderly with these tasks greatly reduces the chance that these individuals will end up in the ER or a LTCH as a result of attempting to cope with these day to day tasks on their own.

This program has created a domino effect of success, leading to a 36% reduction in clients waiting for LTCH placement, and 482 SMILE clients voluntarily removing themselves from the LTCH wait list. Additionally, from January 2009 to January 2010, the wait time for those who do require LTCH beds has dropped more than 50%, from 151 days to 71 days, underscoring the success and effectiveness of this program.

The Aging at Home Strategy has significantly impacted the ER and within the SE LHIN, ER visits have dropped by over 5,000 per month. All of these improvements attributed to the SMILE program come at the relatively low base cost of between \$56-\$62 a week per client, significantly less than it would cost the system for these individuals to receive Long Term Care.

The South East LHIN is very proud of the SMILE program and the corresponding positive impact it has had on our system of care. Moving forward, the South East hopes to continue to develop the supporting Aging at Home programs to further increase the success of this strategy and contribute to the province-wide initiative to assist our aging population.

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