



MEDIA RELEASE

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WRAPPING CARE AROUND OUR MOST VULNERABLE PATIENTS

Every day in the Emergency Department, there are seniors with complex needs who require complex care. Identifying and putting that care in place right away can have a big impact. Doing so ensures better care and helps reduce future hospital visits and readmissions.

Carleton Place & District Memorial Hospital (CPDMH) is pleased to part of a unique program to do just that - the first of its kind in rural Ontario. It's called 'Rural Assess and Restore' and involves a 20-member regional and local team including Almonte General Hospital (AGH), the Mills Corporation, the Champlain Community Care Access Centre, the Lanark Community Health Centre, Carefor and the Regional Geriatric Program of Eastern Ontario.

Mark Gormley has worked in the CPDMH's Emergency Department (ED) for 19 years and says his new combined role as the Geriatric Emergency Management (GEM) Nurse and Geriatric Outreach Assessor makes a lot of sense. "It's incredibly rewarding. I look at the big picture and help to determine what services might benefit each particular patient," he explains. "Everything we do is a recommendation that the client can choose to take."

Mark has specialized geriatric training working in the ED providing screening, assessment and follow-up of high risk seniors being discharged home. He has a multitude of options to offer, from in-home support such as meals on wheels to more intensive rehabilitation support at the AGH Day Hospital. He can visit the patient's home to assess their living arrangements or refer them to a geriatric clinic led by Dr. Salima Shamji.

Carol Kwissa has seen the results for herself. After breaking her leg and ankle. Carol met with Mark to ensure the right supports were in place. "Carol has excellent family support, but there were services she was unaware of such as meal on wheels and how to access a wheelchair. She told me that she feels this is a much-needed service for seniors, particularly those who live on their own. She felt truly cared for," explains Mark.

Patients accessing the physiotherapy program also say the specialized service makes a big difference. "Because of the company in the program, you feel inspired to do the exercises and you get better," noted one participant.

"There are many services in our local communities that patients don't know about and it's my job to help link them to the care they need as quickly as possible," adds Mark. "It could be anything from a free exercise program to a community program to help seniors with their yard work."

As co-lead of the project, the Regional Geriatric Program of Eastern Ontario (RGPEO) plays a key role and believes that the Assess & Restore approach will have a significant impact. “The complexity of providing care for high-risk seniors in the unique environment of the ED is increasingly more challenging. This program ensures that high risk seniors are provided access to the right service, at the right time, in the right place and delivered by the right person,” notes AnnMarie DiMillo, Program Manager, RGPEO.

“We are grateful to the Champlain LHIN for their support of this new model of care,” sums up Toni Surko, CPDMH CEO. “This new program brings together a team of health and community partners who work together to ensure the best possible care. It puts our patients at the centre of their care.”

Demand has been greater than expected with about 30 assessments each month. The pilot project runs for six months.

-30-



Cutline: Stewart Miller, an Assess & Restore client, works with Jocely Monaghan, a physiotherapy/occupational therapy aide at the AGH Day Hospital.

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