



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Home First initiative aims to let elderly make long-term care decisions from comfort of home

BROCKVILLE – Following a successful implementation in other parts of the province including the Quinte area locally, a new initiative – known as Home First – is being expanded to the Brockville area. Through this new initiative, health-care partners in the Brockville area are coordinating efforts so that elderly patients can go home from hospital with support once their treatment has ended, instead of waiting in a hospital bed for long-term care.

Presently, approximately 20 per cent of hospital patients at Brockville General Hospital and at other acute-care hospitals in Southeastern Ontario have completed their treatment and are waiting for a bed in a long-term care facility.

These patients are known as alternate level of care (ALC) patients and pose a significant challenge for hospitals across Ontario. Acute-care hospitals are not the ideal location for these patients because hospitals do not have the social programming, common dining rooms and activities of a retirement or long-term care home, and patients' conditions sometimes deteriorate over long periods in an acute-care hospital due to lack of activity.

Partners in the Home First initiative aim to provide the support services needed so these elderly patients can go home and make life-changing decisions with their families from the comfort of home. The ALC patients no longer require hospital care but until now had no other alternative.

"This is about ensuring better care for the residents of our region – and ensuring we are making the most effective use of our resources." says Paul Huras, Chief Executive Officer, South East LHIN.

With the support of the local physicians, the South East LHIN, Brockville General Hospital (BGH), the South East Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) and local community support service agencies (CSS) are working together to change our approach to caring for patients who are at risk of becoming ALC. The approach will help prevent people from remaining in the hospital for extended and unnecessary lengths of stay.

"The opportunity to reduce Brockville General Hospital's Alternate Level of Care patients by meeting their health-care needs in their own homes is a win-win situation for everyone," says BGH President and CEO Ray Marshall. "Not only will these patients now receive care that

maintains optimal health, it allows our hospital to better provide the specialized health services it is mandated to do.”

This new Home First approach involves a holistic, compassionate and community-based approach to caring for ALC patients, most of whom are frail and elderly. Patients who once had no option than to wait in a hospital bed for their next care destination will now be able to be safely supported at home through enhanced health and support services provided by the CCAC and CSS agencies. People will now be able to make important decisions about their health needs and living arrangements in the comfort of their own home with appropriate supports.

“Using this approach, case managers use their system navigation skills and the range of community programs and services to facilitate hospital patients’ safe return home where people can take the time to make important and life-changing decisions,” says David Marshall, CEO of the South East Community Care Access Centre. “Home is the better environment to plan for a significant change such as moving into long-term care.”

“The Home First initiative is a fantastic mechanism for identifying frail seniors who need help with the every-day instrumental tasks that typically in the aftermath of a health crisis push the elderly and their family caregivers over the edge and out of their home. The Community Support Services (CSS) agencies work in partnership with the family to provide the much-needed practical help with meals and home upkeep that enable people to keep living at home longer,” says Cate Taylor, Community Support Services Consultant, 4CSS.

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