



NEWS

SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS UNDERWAY IN BELLEVILLE, TRENTON AREA AS NEW LONG-TERM CARE BEDS READY FOR OPENING

July 13, 2009 -- Over the course of the next several weeks, health care partners in the Quinte area are making significant efforts to address the issue of patients remaining in hospital beds because they cannot return home or access a long-term care bed. These patients are known as alternate level of care (ALC) patients and pose a significant challenge for hospitals across Ontario. This has been especially true in the South East LHIN where the number of these patients requiring alternate care hovers around 20 per cent of all patients in our acute care hospitals.

In response, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care approved an additional 192 new long-term care beds for the district which will be opening soon at the Trent Valley Lodge and Crown Ridge in Trenton and Moira Place in Tweed. An innovative approach to have 56 of these beds designated for interim admissions means Quinte Health Care (QHC) will be able to transfer most of the current ALC patients on the second floor wing at Trenton Memorial and the fifth floor at Belleville to these long-term care homes where they will be provided with the most appropriate care to ensure their optimal health.

For the majority of these patients, this will be a transfer to their long-term care home of choice. Even patients who have not selected these homes as a preferred choice will benefit, as they will be temporarily transferred to one of these homes to receive the care that they need until a vacancy becomes available in a long-term facility of their preference. The transfers are expected to take place over the course of the summer. QHC will continue to operate 17 beds at its Trenton Memorial site for ALC patients.

In addition, the South East Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) is working with the South East Community Care Access Centre (CCAC), and with support from QHC, to change our approach to caring for patients who are at risk of becoming ALC. Our approach will help prevent people from remaining in the hospital for extended and unnecessary lengths of stay. This new "home first" approach involves a holistic, compassionate and community-based approach to caring for at-risk patients, most of whom are frail and elderly.

This is a major shift in thinking for everyone in the health sector, including physicians, nurses, therapists, social workers and discharge planners.

QUOTES

“This is about ensuring better care for the residents of our region – and ensuring we are making the most effective use of our resources. The opening of the new long-term care beds at Crown Ridge, Trent Valley Lodge and Moira Place provides an excellent opportunity for us to change our practices and provide better care for our seniors. We owe it to our communities to make this successful,” says Paul Huras, Chief Executive Officer, South East LHIN.

“Using this approach, case managers use their system navigation skills and the range of community programs and services to facilitate patient’s safe return home,” says Jackie Redmond, Acting CEO of the South East Community Care Access Centre. “This shifts the focus from finding a long-term care bed to assessing what support the patient needs to return home and gets it organized quickly. Home is the better environment to plan for a significant change such as moving into long-term care. This approach has been very successful in other Ontario communities in supporting client choice and long term decision-making and reducing ALC pressures on hospitals. As a critical support for success, we need to ensure our service provider agencies are able to respond to these referrals. In preparation for an expected increase in service requests, we are analyzing potential referral volumes, particularly for personal support and homemaking services.”

“The opportunity to transfer Quinte Health Care’s alternate level of care patients into homes designed to meet their health care needs is a ‘win-win’ situation for everyone,” says QHC Supervisor Graham Scott. “Not only will these patients now receive care that maintains optimal health, it allows our hospital to provide the specialized health services it is mandated to do. QHC is committed to working with the CCAC to ensure the LHIN’s new approach will help to prevent the creation of future ALC patients.”

QUICK FACTS

- Support services such as nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, social work, nutritional counseling and personal care to over 11,500 clients on any given day.
- CCACs determine eligibility for and coordinate admission to all Long-Term Care Homes in Ontario.

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