

## WWLHINnews

### **WWLHIN Provides More Community Health Supports For Seniors**

*Aging at Home Initiative Helps More Seniors Get Health Care At Home*

KITCHENER, ON - The Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network (WWLHIN) is expanding its successful Aging at Home strategy. Ontario is providing the WWLHIN with \$18,718,537 in Year 3 to ensure more seniors get health care at home or in the community. This is part of the \$37 million announced overall for the WWLHIN.

As part of the successful Aging at Home strategy, the WWLHIN will use the funding for local programs that provide health services to seniors in the comfort and dignity of their own home. The programs support Waterloo Wellington seniors to lead healthy and independent lives, while avoiding unnecessary visits to hospitals, which can ultimately reduce Emergency Department (ED) wait times.

The Aging at Home strategy allows the WWLHIN to create health care solutions that are tailor-made to meet local seniors' needs. This year, the program is expanding to include additional funding for the transitional care program. The funding will also allow the community-based services initiated in Years 1 and 2 to continue. These programs include:

- Close to Home, Township of Mapleton
- Linking Survivors with Survivors, Waterloo Region
- Palliative Care Teams, Waterloo Region and Wellington County, including the City of Guelph.

Investing in better local community supports will help improve Waterloo Wellington's Alternate Level of Care (ALC) rate. ALC patients are individuals in hospital beds who would be better cared for in an alternate setting, such as long-term care, rehab or home. By giving seniors the support they need to avoid hospitalization in the first place and helping those who do get admitted return to a proper care setting or to home faster, access to health care will be improved for all.

### **QUOTES**

"In Waterloo Wellington, we have witnessed numerous success stories with our local Aging at Home initiatives and I want to take this opportunity to recognize the local health service providers who are instrumental in making these programs so successful," said Kathy Durst, Chair, WWLHIN Board. "The programs can be found across the WWLHIN – border to border. We saw numerous partnerships among the providers as they worked together to develop and implement these important services to our senior residents. The transition program which we are highlighting today is one such service."

"Today's announcement is evidence of the Ontario government's commitment to providing first rate health care to our community of Kitchener-Conestoga," said Leeanna Pendergast, MPP, Kitchener-Conestoga. "The creation of these additional beds for the transitional care program means that we will have more services to offer patients and the benefits of this investment will open up more space to treat patients quicker."

"The Ontario government is committed to helping seniors continue to live as independently as possible. The Aging at Home program is expanding traditional services, helping seniors in our community to stay healthy and live at home longer," said John Milloy, MPP, Kitchener Centre.

"Our partnership with Grand River Hospital supports the WWLHIN vision to have an integrated local health system that ensures people are receiving the care in the right place by the right provider at the right time," said Caroline Verleyen, President & CEO, Lutheran Homes Kitchener-Waterloo, owners and operators of Trinity Village. "Through the implementation of the transition program, our staff provide high quality care in a long-term setting that ensures local residents are getting the support they deserve and need to live happy lives."

"Work to place people who've recovered from a hospital stay in the right community location for their health needs is important in easing acute care pressures. Initiatives such as Aging At Home combined with the on-going work of Grand River Hospital staff members and physicians will help the hospital respond more effectively to patients with the most urgent health care needs," said Susan Robertson, Vice President, Clinical Programs and Chief Nursing Officer, Grand River Hospital.

## **QUICK FACTS**

- The WWLHIN invested \$4.8 million in 17 initiatives in Aging at Home, Year One (2008 - 2009).
- In Year Two (2009 - 2010), \$12.9 million was invested in 7 new initiatives and 13 initiatives approved in Year 1 that continued through Year Two, for a total of 20 initiatives.
- In 2010 - 2011, the WWLHIN is investing \$18.7 million in Aging at Home initiatives. This includes 19 ongoing initiatives from Years One and Two, and two new initiatives for Year Three.
- Ontario is investing \$382.4 million for Aging at Home programs this year.
- Ontario's senior population will double within 20 years.
- Assisting seniors to live independently at home helps to shorten wait times at hospitals and improve patient flow in emergency rooms.

The Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network is responsible for planning, integrating, coordinating and providing funding to 79 health service providers including hospitals, long-term care homes, community support services, community health centres, the Community Care Access Centre and community mental health and addictions agencies in Waterloo Region, Wellington County and South Grey. The WWLHIN operates an annual health care budget in excess of \$858 million.

## LEARN MORE

Visit the WWLHIN website at [www.wwlhin.on.ca](http://www.wwlhin.on.ca)

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Attachment: Backgrounder – WWLHIN Aging at Home Programs  
Backgrounder – WWLHIN Aging at Home Stories

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