

## Navigator Program Study Shows Stroke Patient Benefits



May 2016 - Positive research results were shared May 5 in Timmins about a LHIN-funded program designed to help people adjust to everyday life after a stroke. Shown at the event at Timmins and District Hospital (TADH) from left to right are: Debbie Beauchamp, Stroke Community Navigator, March of Dimes; Phyllis Montgomery, Co-Principal Investigator, Professor, School of Nursing, Laurentian University; Darren Jermyn, Study Co-Principal Investigator, Regional Director, NE Ontario Stroke Network; Carla Dolanjski, District Stroke Coordinator, TADH; Glen Fizzell, Client, Post Stroke Transitional Care Program; Christine Leclair, Senior Hub Officer - Cochrane, North East LHIN; Rebecca Bowes, Regional Coordinator, Post-Stroke Transitional Care Program; Melanie McLean, Stroke Community Navigator, Temiskaming Shores.

The Northeastern Ontario Stroke Network studied post-stroke community navigation services. A community navigator works with people who've had a stroke and their caregivers to help them adjust to life back in the community. A navigator helps clients access community resources, develops personalized recovery plans and evaluates a client's progress.

According to the study, stroke patients who opted for navigation recorded a significant improvement in their Return to Normal Living Index (RNLI) scores six to twelve weeks after their discharge from hospital. People using a navigator also reported the service benefited their overall sense of well-being.

"As a LHIN we have been investing in ways to improve the transitions of care for Northerners, as well as helping people better navigate the health care system," says Louise Paquette, CEO of the North East LHIN. "Northerners have told us that they need these 'warm hand-offs' to move from services delivered in hospital to services delivered in home. This study confirms that our stroke navigators are making a difference in people's lives."

In Timmins, 700 stroke navigator visits have been made since April 2014, helping 39 individuals.

Across the NE LHIN region in 2015/16, navigators helped 380 Northerners get connected to the right care. Altogether, these navigators made almost 5,000 visits with stroke patients, both in person and over the phone.

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