

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Geriatric Clinic Opens in Timmins *North East LHIN funds Specialized Geriatric Clinic*

February 3, 2017 – As a caregiver, Anna Loreto, 77, has seen first-hand how specialized geriatric care has made a difference in her husband Mario's journey with Alzheimer's disease, calling it her "lifeline."

"I knew, if I was having a problem, someone would help me. The geriatric program introduced me to what was available in the community," she said. "For me, it stalled the admission into a long-term care facility and kept him home longer, by about two years."

Seniors with complex medical issues in the Timmins area, will now have access to the resources of an interdisciplinary clinical team from the North East Specialized Geriatric Centre of Health Sciences North.

A NE LHIN annual investment of \$335,000 is supporting the integration of the team as well as salaries of some of the members. Altogether the team will have a primary care geriatric nurse clinician, primary care geriatric social worker, geriatric occupational therapist, and geriatric social worker supported by two care of the elderly physicians.

The clinic will benefit geriatric patients in the area by providing specialized geriatric assessments, and short-term treatment and rehabilitation services for frail older adults.

"Through the NE LHIN's investment, this new program is providing specialized treatment to care for people in the Timmins area who are struggling with the challenges of aging such as higher complex care needs," says Christine Leclair, NE LHIN Senior Hub Officer. "This clinic builds on strong relationships with community agencies, and is all about working together so older adults can enjoy as much independence as they need with a good quality of life."



Anna Loreto (right), is pictured with family members of Dr. Edson Smith, a long-time champion of geriatric care for the Timmins area and the need for a Specialized Geriatric Clinic, at today's official opening of the clinic with Dr. Smith's sister-in-law Marilyn Dufresne (left), his son Bradley Smith, wife Helen Smith, and Dr. Julie Auger, Clinical Lead at the new clinic.

Components of this model have been in place at the Timmins Family Health Team for a number of years and have proven to be effective in improving geriatric patient care. For Anna, it was often Lisa Russell, a geriatric nurse with the Team who was on the other end of that phone call for help. She even made home visits to the Loretos in times of crisis.

“The added resources funded by the North East LHIN allow for this collaborative model to be implemented in a central clinic, significantly enhancing specialized services for patients across the district,” said Jennifer McLeod, Timmins Family Health Team Executive Director.

Mario Loreto, was initially diagnosed by Dr. Edson Smith, who championed geriatric care in the Timmins area and the need for a Specialized Geriatric Clinic. Dr Julie Auger, a Care of the Elderly Physician who worked with Dr. Smith for many years, will take on the role of Clinical Lead at the new clinic.

“Due to the dedication and pioneering work of Dr. Edson Smith, Timmins developed enhanced geriatric services in acute and long-term care,” Dr. Auger said. “The funding of the clinic allows us to consolidate his work and provide specialized geriatric services across the continuum of care to people across the district.”

Geriatrician Dr. Jo-Anne Clarke, with the North East Specialized Geriatric Centre, noted, “Although we have had a presence in the area since our opening in 2009, it has been primarily through outreach clinics and telemedicine support. This represents the essential next step to deliver comprehensive geriatric care, with local implementation of specialized treatment plans and follow-up.”

FACTS:

- In 2009, with funding from the NE LHIN and in concert with Northern partners, the City of Greater Sudbury opened a specialized geriatric program for Northeastern Ontario seniors. While the team has a permanent location in Greater Sudbury, outreach clinics are held across the region as a result of LHIN funding. These clinics serve residents from the Algoma, Nipissing, Cochrane, Timiskaming, Manitoulin/Sudbury and Parry Sound areas.
- Every year, the NE LHIN provides \$205 million to 37 health service providers who deliver programs and services to 80,300 people living in the Cochrane sub-region.
- Currently, 17% of the Cochrane sub-region’s population is aged 65 and older. Based on NE LHIN population projections, a 32% growth in this population group to approximately 23% of the population is expected in the next 10 years.
- The North East Specialized Geriatric Centre is an interdisciplinary team of health care providers who deliver care for older adults with complex health needs, and provide expert resources for health care professionals and caregivers. The Centre is a program of Health Sciences North. For referral information, contact 1-866-551-6501.

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