

Celebrating Success

Integrated Program Improves Quality of Life for Seniors on Dialysis



RPN Annette Bernier, RN Anna Liza DeMocorro and RN Diane Pentel demonstrate the use of the PD equipment at Stirling Heights Long-Term Care.

For those diagnosed with end-stage renal disease, having treatment options that support patient independence and mobility can make all the difference in quality of life. While local residents have the option to receive hemodialysis in the hospital or peritoneal dialysis (PD) at home, residents in long-term care homes were only able to receive hospital care. This meant travelling to the hospital three times per week, for four-hour treatments.

Fortunately, as the result of a new partnership, supported by the Waterloo Wellington LHIN and developed between the Grand River Hospital Regional Renal Program and two local long-term care homes, residents can receive peritoneal dialysis in these long-term care facilities, eliminating the need for travel, and greatly improving their quality of life.

Hemodialysis requires a patient to be hooked up to a machine that performs the function of the Kidneys by filtering toxins out of the bloodstream. PD is a more mobile form of treatment, using a special solution and the abdomen as a filter to remove toxins from the body.

Stirling Heights Long-Term Care in Cambridge welcomed their first resident receiving PD in March 2010. The home has space for two residents needing PD, while Royal Terrace in Palmerston has space for one. The feedback from families and residents has been extremely positive.

“We had one resident who said that being able to receive PD at Stirling Heights meant that he could finally move out of the hospital into a real home. He had been living in the hospital for more than a year because there wasn’t a home available that could meet his complex needs. He was thrilled to move here, to have all of his personal things with him in a comfortable place, and to be able to receive the treatment he needs,” shared Cheryl Lawrence-Holmes, Executive Director of Stirling Heights Long-Term Care.

“PD promotes greater independence for the patient. Not only are they able to receive treatment at home but they are also better candidates for organ transplant because PD still allows their kidneys to function at a residual level,” said Peter Varga, Program Director, Renal Dialysis, Grand River Hospital. “We actually had a record number of patients receive transplants last year and a significant number of them were patients receiving PD.”

Through the partnership Grand River Hospital provides the facility with full training for staff, an environmental assessment, equipment set-up, funding for supplies and a daily per diem to recognize the staff time needed to provide the treatment. “We most appreciate having the direct relationship with the staff at the renal clinic,” shared Cheryl. “Many residents have developed a relationship with the Grand River Hospital Team over years of receiving treatment and feel comforted knowing we are working together. Anytime we need anything, we just call the team.”

“For us, the real benefit is knowing that we are helping residents achieve the highest level of independence,” said Peter. “We really appreciate the LHIN’s support that has allowed us to partner and provide this service for patients. Our goal is to continue to build partnerships with local long-term care homes to offer this service to more residents.”

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