

Hiroc News

Toronto Western Hospital, CCAC target better hospital-to-home transition for patients

Project second phase of Change Foundation-Ontario CCAC study to reveal best practices

Thursday October 16, 2008 -- Natalie Miller

The transition from hospital to home for patients of a Toronto hospital could soon be a better, timelier experience.

That's one of the goals of a project involving Toronto Western Hospital and the Toronto Central Community Care Access Centre.

This is the second phase of a project funded by The Change Foundation, an independent healthcare policy think-tank, and the Ontario Association of Community Care Access Centres aimed at making the transition from hospital to home smoother and more efficient for patients.

Transition is a province-wide issue that impacts patient quality of life and satisfaction. It also puts pressure on the system as these patients occupy acute-care beds which could be used by people who actually require acute care.

Called 'Having Their Say and Choosing Their Way: helping patients & caregivers move from hospital to home,' the first phase of the project yielded interesting results and helped identify areas for improvement.

Findings from phase one involving the South East Community Care Access Centre and Quinte Health Care's (QHC's) Trenton Memorial hospital ultimately showed patients wanted a more seamless and prompt transition from hospital to home.

In response, QHC was able to mobilize a number of initiatives including a daily recreation program for patients in acute-care units to help them maintain their agility during their hospital stay.

As well, the hospital also enhanced its discharge plans for patients through the addition of a social worker. Establishing a discharge plan early on allows care providers to begin working with the patient, family and other community providers on the transition promptly, QHC explained.

The report from phase one and the related best practices were recently shared with local CCAC senior directors.

Cathy Fooks, CEO of The Change Foundation, earlier said the findings from phase one of the project extend beyond the boundaries of the Trenton area.

"We know that some of the communication and co-ordination problems raised here are not necessarily unique, and we will continue to learn more and compare. This work will point to systemic ways to improve patient experience, decrease unnecessary hospital stays, reduce community-based adverse events and eliminate confusion about health care roles and responsibilities."

Many patients in Ontario spend too much time hospitalized while waiting for the supports necessary to return home or to another residential setting.

In Ontario in 2005-2006, there were 600,000 days patients spent in hospitals when it was medically unnecessary for them to be there, according to research by The Change Foundation.

To read the report from phase one of the project, click [here](#).

The Change Foundation expects to release the results of the second phase of this project by the year's end.

If you have feedback on this article, e-mail Natalie@axiomnews.ca or call the newsroom at 800-294-0051.