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MEDIA RELEASE

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Middlesex Hospital Alliance Physicians, Staff & Patients Contribute to National Research Project: Understanding how information flow makes a difference to patients with hip fracture

Strathroy, ON - Every year, about 145,000 Canadians are hospitalized because of hip fracture injury. The Middlesex Hospital Alliance recently participated in a 5-year research project called InfoRehab, funded by the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR). This study looks at how a patients need for information changes as they receive care for their hip fracture from different health providers throughout their recovery.

“In this research, we’re not looking at the actual care these folks receive, rather we want to learn more about how they use information,” explained Dr. Bert Chesworth of the University of Western Ontario at a recent open house presentation at Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital.

Data has been collected from five hospitals across Canada including Vancouver, Kitchener, Waterloo, and the two hospital sites managed by the Middlesex Hospital Alliance: Four Counties Health Services in Newbury and Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital.

“Previous research projects show that information transfer and communication is a major issue for patients and their families. Hip fracture patients are interesting to study for two reasons. They usually receive care from numerous health care providers including surgeons, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and nurses. Their care journey often takes them to several settings such as acute care, rehabilitation, home care and long-term care. This means we can learn about information flow between health care providers within and between settings, as well as communication between providers, patients and their family members,” said Dr. Chesworth.

The results showed that family involvement is essential during times when the patient is moved home, to a long-term care facility, retirement home or short-term placement.

They also noted that establishing trust and respect is essential between patients and health care providers.

Finally, “Best Practices” for sharing of patient information was developed within a hospital setting. However, this may not necessarily apply to rural patients with hip fractures who move from hospital to home or other facilities as research has not yet been completed for this type of transfer yet.

“We’re excited about being part of this project and providing the rural perspective. At our hospital sites we are faced with unique challenges related to information flow, distance, availability of services and expectation about personalized care,” said Loretta Bourke, Manager Rehabilitation, Middlesex Hospital Alliance.

On May 25th, results were shared with the community by Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital (SMGH) staff, and partners from the University of Western Ontario including Dr. Bert Chesworth. The SMGH physio gym was filled with displays about the research project to facilitate a two-way exchange of information with activities designed to gather further opinions and ideas.

“The turnout was amazing – 75 people came by to learn about the project,” said Bourke. The research has also been shared at a number of national conferences.

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