

August 3, 2012

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MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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MHA Rehab Reaches for Excellence

The Middlesex Hospital Alliance (MHA) rehabilitation departments in Strathroy and Newbury are doing more than just getting people back on their feet.

For more than two decades, staff at Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital and Four Counties Health Services have partnered with UWO on countless research projects.

According to Loretta Bourke, the MHA rehabilitation manager, this is a real feather in their cap.

“It is very unusual for a 12-bed hospital to be involved in research projects,” said Bourke. “But our hospital is convenient, accessible and has a wide patient base.”

The rural hospital model for rehabilitation is often ignored in terms of subtle differences for smaller hospitals when it comes to rehab like access and availability of services.

Currently, Bourke and her team are involved with a national study regarding transitional care. Hospitals in Vancouver and Kitchener/Waterloo are also involved.

The study encompasses a broad spectrum of medical and hospital staff, along with patients.

At a recent transitional care knowledge exchange day, over 50 people shared insights and experiences gained during care transitions.

Dr. Bert Chesworth, co-investigator for the InfoRehab Rural Site, led a session that explored patient and family perspectives.

Discussion focused around the “ideal state” for patients and their family members while transitioning between health care providers and navigating the health care system.

From that exchange day, the rehab staff at MHA immediately started working on a guide called “My guide to hip fracture recovery”.

“We realized from patient feedback that they weren’t getting enough information regarding the procedure,” said Bourke. “Now each patient is given a guide that hopefully helps them understand and answers some of their questions.”

Bev Padfield, a retired rehab physiotherapist, was the forward-thinking person behind the partnership between Four Counties Health Services and UWO.

It was with encouragement of Padfield that Dr. Chesworth and other researchers pursue various research projects.

“Bev participated whole heartedly as well,” said Dr. Chesworth, who is now an Associate Professor, School of Physical Therapy, at UWO. “Our partnership was made possible through Bev’s hard work.”

Researchers need patients to study, and Padfield opened the door to that realization over 20 years ago.

“Bev was certainly before her time when it came to incorporating research, evidence and clinical judgment into assessment and treatment approaches,” said Dr. Chesworth. “Getting the two groups together, researchers and clinicians, provided for an ideal situation.”

For her part, Padfield gives most the credit to the hospital administration.

“It was the support of the hospital administration that made this partnership possible,” said Padfield. “And that support has continued right through today.”

Although Padfield has retired her legacy continues as research is now being done at both MHA sites.

“There is always more we can learn,” said Dr. Chesworth. “And having the opportunity to work with the great rehab staff at MHA is truly remarkable.”