

Building Successful Partnerships Together

Newsletter

2008

Director's Message

A lot has been happening in Peel Long Term Care in 2008. This issue focuses on continuous quality improvement initiatives and I am pleased to share our latest news with you.

In August, Peel Long Term Care was awarded a prestigious Level III - Award of Excellence for the Peel Long Term Care Pandemic Influenza Plan. This award recognizes quality improvement initiatives demonstrated by public sector organizations in Ontario. Our Pandemic Plan was assessed against the Canadian Quality Criteria for the Public Sector and received a high score to win the award. Read more about how we tested our Pandemic Plan on page 2.

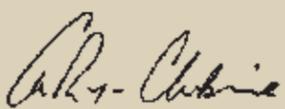
Recently, we have started an exciting Performance Improvement project which has been looking at how to strengthen our Continuous Quality Improvement Program so that we can make better decisions that benefit both our clients and staff.

We have also completed an operational model study to review the design of our division and assess if it meets existing and new program requirements with a focus on effectiveness and efficiency. Based on the findings, work is currently underway to improve key processes and better align our resources to respond to current and future needs.

I want to thank all participants of this year's Community Partners Focus Group - Psychiatric Needs in the LTC Setting - How Can We Meet the Challenge? Your valuable feedback demonstrated yet again that this event offers good networking and learning opportunities for all of us. We shared your comments with LHIN representatives and health sector partners.

We look forward to staying in touch with you.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue.



Carolyn Clubine
Director of Long Term Care

Have You Tested Your Pandemic Influenza Plan?

It is January 10, 2010, and the British National Health Service is reporting that 55 cases of Type A (H5N1) influenza are being treated in London area hospitals. The World Health Organization issues a Phase 6 alert and issues a travel advisory for the United Kingdom. By January 11, a Toronto hospital has quarantined a suspected case of Type A (H5N1) influenza. The media are reporting that suspected cases of Type A (H5N1) influenza are present in Paris, Frankfurt, and New York. By January 12, Toronto area hospitals are treating 15 suspected cases of Type A (H5N1) influenza and by the end of the day, Peel's Medical Officer of Health confirms that Type A (H5N1) influenza is also present in Peel region.

Don't be alarmed. What you have just read is the introduction scenario of the mock pandemic exercise conducted by Peel Long Term Care on March 7, 2008. But if this was a real situation, would your organization be prepared to respond?

Many organizations in the health care sector have been spending time and resources to develop their own pandemic plans. Having the actual plan offers peace of mind for the organization's leaders, clients and staff. But how good is your plan if it has never been tested? While no one knows when the next pandemic will occur and how severe it may be, testing the plan is crucial to the pandemic preparedness process. The mock pandemic exercise is the next logical step to test the plan's effectiveness and train users for their intended roles and activities.

Peel Long Term Care developed its own Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Plan in 2007 to guide staff at Peel's five homes in their response to a pandemic influenza emergency. The Plan was tested through an exercise which was intended to:

- assess the Plan's procedures
- reinforce the participants' knowledge of the Incident Management System* (IMS) including: command, control, communications, co-ordination of resources, co-operation, and chain of supplies
- identify gaps and business continuity issues, and
- assist LTC staff and stakeholders with further understanding their roles and responsibilities.

In addition, the exercise fulfilled the requirement of Accreditation Canada for annual emergency training and exercise initiatives.

*Incident Management System (IMS) is an international emergency management system that identifies the basic structure and functions necessary to manage an emergency situation effectively. The IMS structure is characterized by five sections: Command, Planning, Operations, Logistics, and Finance and Administration.

Continued on pg. 2 and 3.



The Walls Are Alive At Malton Village

Malton Village is going green, in every sense of the word. To increase environmental awareness and add some colour to the halls, Malton Village has created and installed 10 living walls throughout the interior and exterior of the centre.

A living wall is a vertical surface covered with plants. The purpose of these walls is to act like a carbon sponge by filtering the air, producing oxygen and increasing air flow. They also absorb odours and provide insulation. Ben Sutton, the Facility Services Supervisor at Malton Village, is a living wall pioneer at Peel Long Term Care. He has conducted extensive literature research on living walls and says that they will not only improve air quality inside Malton Village but also reduce energy consumption and the home's impact on the environment.

"We wanted to know our carbon footprint and with the help of Corporate Energy at the Region of Peel discovered that Malton Village contributes up to 3,099 carbon tonnes of pollutants per year, which is quite a lot," says Ben. "These contributions come from various sources including the use of fossil fuels, building design and our procurement practices. Our goal is to replace some of the natural habitat that has been displaced by Malton Village and to reduce our carbon footprint."

The living walls alone have reduced our carbon emissions by 24 tonnes per year.

A frame for each living wall is made of maple and contains several slots for plants. When a variety of plants are placed into the slots, they create a beautiful and luscious multicoloured "carpet" which is hung on the wall. The wall becomes a new provider of oxygen, moisture absorption and filtration for interior and exterior pollutants.

The living walls are easy and inexpensive to make and maintain since all of the components are produced in-house, so to speak. Ben's Facility Services team has built and installed the frames. Residents and their families have helped with planting for the living walls as part of the centre's horticultural program. Staff members water the living walls weekly through a hole at the top of the frame. Water that collects at the bottom of the frames evaporates naturally over time. Ben plans to have a total of 30 living walls throughout the centre.

The living walls are just some of the first steps to minimize the Malton Village's carbon footprint. Ben is already excited about his next project – installing a green roof complete with solar panels and a storm water irrigation system.

A green roof has many of the same benefits as a living wall. It will help save on energy costs by reducing demand on the cooling system in the summer months, insulating the building and purifying the air before it enters the building's filtration system. The solar panels on the roof will supply all the energy needed to monitor devices on the roof and for lighting. The storm water filtration system will capture the storm water and use it for the garden. And of course, the green roof will offer a much more scenic view for the second floor residents. But that's yet to come.

Pandemic Plan *Continued from page 1*

The Exercise

The Region of Peel participants included management teams at five long-term care homes, internal support services, Senior Medical Director, Director of Peel Long Term Care, Infection Control Practitioners and Resource Nurses, Regional Emergency Management Program and other staff. External partners represented Central West Community Care Access Centre, Regional Infection Control Network, Infection Control Practitioners of several local hospitals and several unions (ONA, CUPE, UFCW).

Facilitated by emergency planning experts, the exercise included a briefing, introduction of scenarios, subsequent inputs and lasted approximately 45 minutes.

"The tabletop exercise provided participants with a cushioned environment in which to respond to the fast-paced, disquieting and sometimes overwhelming scenarios that unfolded. A wave of disbelief was followed by an immediate surge in tabletop activity and was evident with each new exercise development," says Darlene Pidzamecky, a Pandemic Planning Team member.



From PSW to RPN

In Long Term Care, continued learning is an important part of the job. Personal Support Workers (PSW) at Regional long-term care homes were recently offered an opportunity to not only enhance their skills but also train for a new occupation. In the spring of 2007, Humber College and Peel Long Term Care (LTC) teamed up to offer a Registered Practical Nursing course to our PSWs. Fifty people have enrolled, and in 2010, they will graduate as Registered Practical Nurses.

“We decided to hold this course to enable people to grow professionally and achieve their own academic goals,” says Rani Calay, Administrator at Peel Manor, one of the Regional homes. “Since the course has started, we’ve noticed that morale has improved and there’s a deeper sense of pride.”

Peel Long Term Care has an existing relationship with Humber, as many nursing students who complete the College’s nursing program have their co-op placement in Regional homes. This established partnership made it possible for the division to approach Humber College about teaming up with the program after its staff expressed an interest in upgrading their skills.

The students continue working in their regular job while attending classes part-time. Some classes are held at Peel Manor, which cuts down on travel time and allows for more time in the classroom. Humber College also helped the PSWs acquire the essential prerequisites for the course.

Paula Groves and Juliette Nelson, who are enrolled in the program, are grateful for the opportunity. “Everyone has been very supportive and willing to adjust their work schedules so we are able to attend class,” says Paula.

“Our residents are also interested in how we are doing and ask us about our marks and what new things we have learned,” adds Juliette.

Balancing work, school and family can be a lot of work but these students will tell you that working at a great place while training to do what you love is definitely worth it.



Each group of participants had at least one evaluator or observer whose role was to evaluate the group’s response to scenarios including the group’s dynamics and discussion. The participants identified issues and actions in response to the delivered scenarios and recorded the activities.

Following the exercise, the consultants had a debriefing with participants to record their immediate feedback. All participants were also asked to complete a written evaluation.

Recommendations

The exercise proved to be a significant evaluation tool for the Pandemic Planning Team. Feedback from participants identified recommendations in several areas: communication, human resources, IMS, community interface, infection prevention and control, and supply chain.

Some of the recommendation highlights included the need for additional training and testing, establishment of effective and efficient communication protocols, addressing personal preparedness and dependent care concerns, development of the crisis staffing plan and measures to address power outages and supply shortages.

What’s Next?

The Pandemic Plan has since been updated based on the recommendations from the exercise. There are many opportunities to continue the work that began with this exercise initiative.

“The exercise provided a starting point for a continued education for long-term care staff,” says Julienne Latham, Long Term Care Pandemic Planning Project Manager. “We may be conducting another test in the foreseeable future to test staff familiarity with the content of the Plan and to further assess their comfort level with the IMS structure.”



Using the Internet to Communicate Better and Faster

The Internet, no longer a novelty for many people, is proving to be an effective communication tool for Peel Long Term Care.

In 2007, we implemented an online outbreak notification feature. While it does not replace the traditional notification method by phone, it is an alternate and faster way of informing families and visitors about outbreaks and their locations. Staff at each home are able to post the details of outbreaks on the website in a matter of minutes. The outbreak notification page also informs users about required infection control practices and symptoms of respiratory and gastrointestinal illness.

Residents are also beginning to embrace the Internet. Several residents at Regional homes already have their own computers and Internet access. Those who don't have their own devices can access computers located in central areas at most of our homes.

Annette Weeks, who is a resident at Tall Pines, uses her desktop computer daily. She does searches and reads on topics of interest.

Annette says that she uses e-mail more than the phone to stay in touch with her daughter, son and siblings. "My doctor is pleased that I am on the computer as it keeps my mind active and keeps me busy," she adds.

The Internet is becoming a popular source of information about long-term care services, so the importance of having a user-friendly and attractive website is now almost a necessity for health and long-term care providers. Peel Long Term Care has launched a redesign project, complete with client and stakeholder consultations, to determine if our users are able to find the information they need, and if it is written in language they understand. A sample of our community partners were surveyed as part of this process.

The evaluation phase is now complete and recommendations for improvement have been identified. The new site, scheduled for launch in 2009, will be a better and simpler communication tool for everyone. Stay tuned and visit our site at www.ltcpeel.ca.



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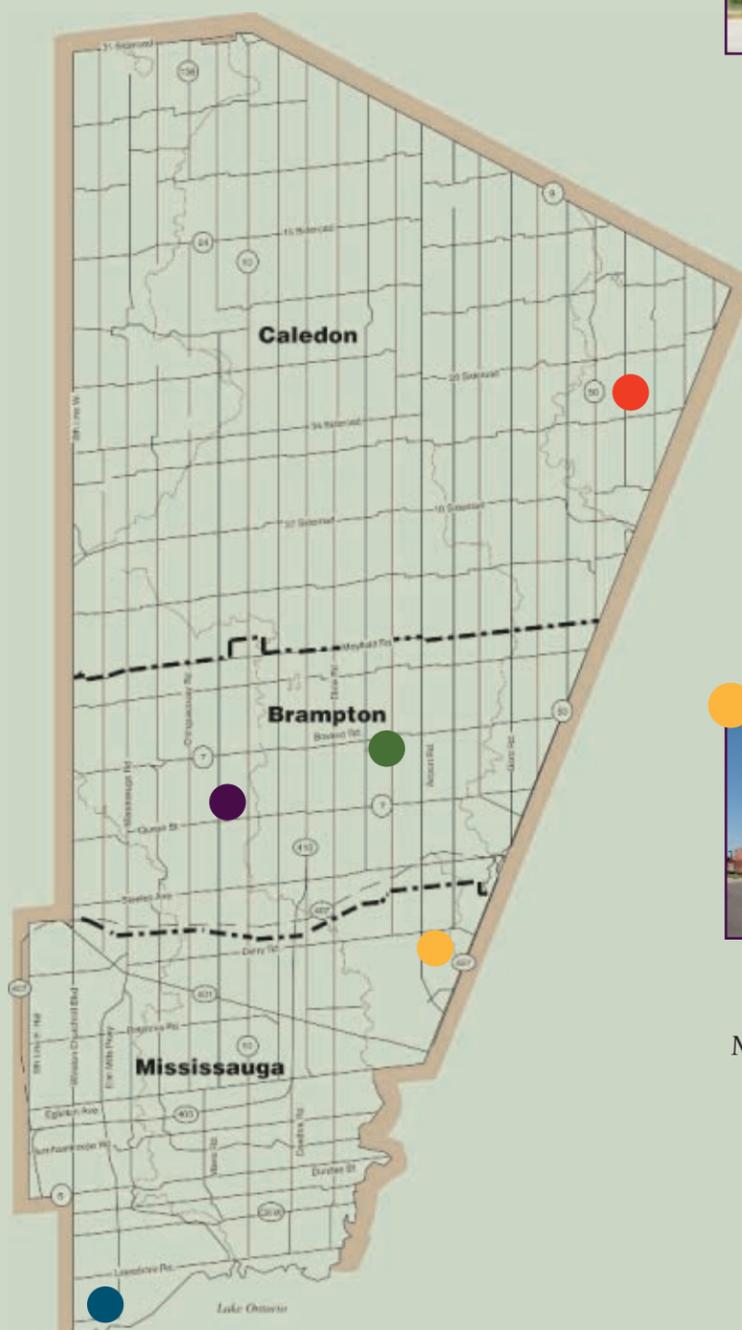
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or visit www.ltcpeel.ca