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## **GEM NURSES ADVOCATING FOR PATIENT'S RIGHTS AND IMPROVING CARE**

When Helen, an 88 year-old resident of a local long-term care home, was brought to Hôtel-Dieu Grace Hospital (HDHG) she had become agitated, aggressive, was refusing her medications and was expressing thoughts of suicide. Given her medical and mental state, she was admitted to the hospital where she remained in distress and was causing difficulty for the attending nurses.

The root causes of Helen's issues were uncovered through the help of HDGH's Geriatric Emergency Management Nurse, or GEM. Helen told the GEM that staff were not listening and respecting her wishes. Helen was concerned about the large amounts of pills she was taking daily, which included 15 different medications. Through their discussions, Helen and the GEM nurse came to the understanding that quality of life was more important than quantity, and created a care plan that included a review of medications to reduce the number of pills she was taking.

With the care plan created by the GEM, Helen was able to be discharged back to her home with follow up visits arranged to assess her progress. Incredibly, Helen became compliant with taking her medications, no longer expressed suicidal thoughts and was seen as being much happier by the nurses providing daily care at the long-term care home where she resides.

GEM nurses are funded through the ESC LHIN's Aging at Home Strategy and help to improve access to care in Emergency Departments for seniors, especially those who are medically complex, frail, have mental health, stroke or respiratory issues. They perform specialized assessments to identify high-risk seniors so that they can be connected with the care they need in the hospital, community or at home. GEM nurses also create senior friendly hospitals by serving as a resource to other nurses and medical staff on the needs of seniors.

LHINs are the only organizations in Ontario that bring together health care partners from the following sectors – hospitals, community care, community support services, community mental health and addictions, community health centres and long-term care – to develop innovative, collaborative solutions leading to more timely access to high quality services for the residents of Ontario and Erie St. Clair. By supporting these important partnerships, LHINs are ensuring that Ontarians have access to an effective and efficient health care system that delivers improved health care results and a better patient experience.