

June 1, 2011

COMPASSIONATE END-OF-LIFE CARE AT HOME

Fred, a middle aged man from Chatham with a debilitating chronic disease, had expressed an interest to die at home. However, he lived alone and had minimal family supports. Fred's wish was honoured through the support of the Palliative Care Consultation Team from the Erie St. Clair Community Care Access Centre.

The Palliative Care Consultation Team was established in Chatham in January 2010, through the Erie St. Clair LHIN's Aging at Home Strategy. The Team provides support to clients and health professionals caring for palliative clients, giving them access to palliative care expertise to support individuals through their end-of-life. The team includes a nurse practitioner, social worker, spiritual care provider, a rehabilitation professional (Occupational or Physiotherapist), and other nursing services.

With support of the team, Fred was discharged from the hospital to die at home. Members of the team, along with the CCAC Case Manager and several other health care providers, met at the client's home when he arrived to develop a care plan for his death. As he was quite ill and speaking was difficult for him, he was able to provide his input to all the care providers at one time, so he did not have to repeat himself several times.

Feeling concerned that he might be overwhelmed by the number of people present, he was asked outright if he was feeling overwhelmed. To the contrary, he replied that he felt very loved, very cared for, and was confident that his needs were going to be met.

By the end of the day, a care plan with all the necessary medication, equipment and supports were arranged. The chaplain became involved to offer spiritual support and provided a service in the clients' home before he passed away.

To date, Palliative Care Consultation Teams in Chatham-Kent, Sarnia/Lambton, and Windsor/Essex have supported over 700 clients in their homes with end-of-life care.

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.

(Names have been changed to maintain client confidentiality)