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Advancing Quality of Life for Seniors in Long-Term Care Homes and Reducing Emergency Room Visits

Emergency Mobile Nursing Service (EMNS) is an innovative program coordinated by the Regional Geriatric Program of Toronto that is designed to provide medical care to seniors in long-term care homes (LTCH) at risk of hospitalization. In this Aging at Home program, nurse teams travel to LTCHs to provide urgent care to residents on-site, allowing them to avoid unnecessary trips to the emergency room (ER).

These mobile teams of advanced practice and registered nurses provide services such as intravenous therapy, antibiotic management and oxygen treatment. The program currently employs two teams of nurses located within the Toronto Western Hospital and Toronto East General Hospital emergency departments.

“I think what was best about the program that really interested us was the residents, the quality of life for them. Whenever they went to the hospital it’s always fear for them. When this program was introduced we thought that they are thinking of the residents’ best interest.”

– Director of Care from LTCH

The program improves the safety and quality of life of residents in LTCHs by preventing unnecessary ER visits for conditions that can be treated in the community. It also enables seniors who have been admitted to hospital safely return to LTCHs and alternate level of care patients in hospital transition to LTCHs faster with the supports provided by the teams of nurses. **Between October 2008 and March 2010, the nurse teams provided 2063 emergency consultations and 1537 ER visits were avoided – a 75% success rate or 85 residents per month.**

LTCH stakeholder surveys and focus groups have found a high level of satisfaction with the program.

