



OUR TEAM, OUR STRENGTH

Spotlight on New NHH Expertise in Geriatric Care

Geriatric Specialist Maryanne Brown and Clinical Nurse Specialist Beverly Ryan-James



Delirium is a subtle, but all-too-common problem that can strike elderly adults when they are ill and hospitalized.

Different than the long-term confusion caused by dementia or Alzheimer's disease, delirium can nevertheless have serious consequences for a patient's recovery if it is left untreated.

In recent years, research into the specific impact of hospitalization on older adults has led to new knowledge about delirium and other physical side effects such as loss of muscle mass. Maryanne Brown and Beverly Ryan-James are two new additions to the NHH team who are bringing this knowledge to our community hospital and, in turn, improving outcomes for a distinctively large segment of our local patient population.

With a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Ryerson University and Master of Science (Nursing) from the University of Toronto, Maryanne joined the NHH team in December 2010 in the new role of Geriatric Specialist.

Specialized in the care of the senior patient, Maryanne's experience includes specialist roles in the areas of cognitive impairment, palliative care, medically complex geriatric assessment and treatment, and dementia management. Actively involved in research, Maryanne has been a clinical teacher, consultant and advisor at the university level, all within the field of gerontology.

RN Beverly Ryan-James, NHH's first Clinical Nurse Specialist, took on her new role in January. Previously a member of the NHH Emergency Department team, Beverly will complete Geriatric Assessments of inpatients, and work with the health care team in the development of customized care plans that meet the needs of older patients. Moving forward, she will work to integrate and expand geriatric best practices throughout all clinical programs and services.

An early focus for Maryanne and Beverly is the establishment of NHH's new **Hospital Elder Life Program (HELP)**. Developed by a team of experts at the Yale School of Medicine, HELP is a program for hospitals, designed to prevent delirium and minimize the adverse effects of hospitalization.

Maryanne summarizes the rationale for HELP as follows: "We have the clinical knowledge to improve the way we care for older patients. Our next step is to put that knowledge into practice. Traditionally, western medicine has focused on the illness, rather than the individual. We are learning that when we take the time to get to know the person—their patterns before they came to hospital, the triggers that can upset them, the daily practices in which they find comfort—we can, in fact, provide better care, with better patient outcomes."

"HELP is a framework," adds Beverly, "which will guide our teams through the latest tools and techniques to evaluate and intervene in older hospitalized patients to prevent delirium and functional decline. For every one day an older patient spends inactive in acute care, we can see five to seven days of recovery. We can do better than this and, using HELP as our guide, we will."

Launching initially on medical unit 2B, the intent is to expand HELP throughout the Hospital.

As Geriatric Specialist, Maryanne Brown will work with the hospital's clinical teams to develop the vision, strategic direction, leadership, operational management and clinical practices that will position NHH as a Centre of Excellence in the provision of acute care that is sensitive to the specialized care needs of the senior patient population.

Helen Brenner, Vice President, Patient Services and Chief Nursing Executive at NHH, points to a timely coincidence of NHH's own strategic focus on senior-friendly care and new provincial investments in the same. "NHH's new Geriatric and Clinical Nurse Specialist positions and, by extension, the Hospital Elder Life Program, would not be possible without the new funds received from the Central East Local Health Integration Network. We look forward to demonstrating the value this support brings for patients and our Hospital."

NEW LOCAL SPEAKERS SERIES LAUNCHED

Message from Board Chair John Hudson

It's my pleasure to announce that NHH has teamed up with the volunteers in the NHH Foundation's Caring for Generations Society to offer a new forum aimed at encouraging discussion around issues pertinent to local health care.

Titled ***Conversations – Exploring health care issues that affect our community***, the first cycle of speakers in the series will focus on the theme of health system sustainability, addressing such issues as provincial health policy, our ageing population and hospital governance.

Launching on Thursday, February 24th at Cobourg's Victoria Hall, the inaugural session will feature a talk and Q&A session with **Dr. Carolyn Hughes Tuohy**, one of Canada's leading experts on health care policy. A Professor Emeritus of Political Science and Senior Fellow in the School of Public Policy and Governance at the University of Toronto, Dr. Tuohy contributed to the May 2010 TD Economics report *Charting a Path to Sustainable Health Care in Ontario*, one of the most significant reports issued in Ontario in recent years on possible options to sustain the system.

Sharing her own perspective gleaned from her research and teaching interests in comparative public policy, Dr. Tuohy will speak to the TD Report's 10 recommendations, outlining the points on which she agrees, where her views differ and other issues she recommends Ontario consider as we move forward.

Occurring monthly from February through May, the series will be held at locations in Cobourg and Port Hope. For tickets (\$10 in advance, \$15 at the door) and details on future speakers, please visit the Hospital website at www.nhh.ca or drop in to the Foundation office inside the Hospital's main entrance from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, week days, 1000 DePalma Drive, Cobourg

Upcoming NHH Foundation Events

**NHH All-Stars VS Cobourg Police Lawmen
Charity Hockey Game & Free Public Skate**

Cobourg Memorial Arena
Monday, February 21, 2011, 11:00 AM
(Family Day Holiday)

Donations to NHH accepted at the door.

*For more information please visit the Foundation section at www.nhh.ca
or call the Foundation office at 905-372-6811, ext. 3065.*

Upcoming NHH Auxiliary Events

Fourth Annual Polar Dip
Saturday, February 19, 2011, 1:00 PM
Cobourg Pier

*For more information, please visit the Volunteers section at www.nhh.ca
or call the Auxiliary office at 905-372-6811, ext. 4630.*

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