

Bridge to Home: Patient program helps us better understand our healthcare system

Transitioning back home after an extended hospital stay can be difficult for any patient, but this is especially true for our elderly patients who may be frail, may have multiple chronic conditions, and

taking multiple medications. Imagine if there was a comprehensive interprofessional team of clinicians to follow your patients and support your discharge recommendations after returning home? Imagine having access to ongoing information and updates about your patients once they have returned to the community?



The Bridge to Home (B2H) program seeks to ease the transition from hospital to home by engaging with patient and families prior to leaving the hospital and then following-up with them once they have returned home. The primary function of the team is to provide ongoing support with navigating the healthcare system. They also acts as a liaison among hospital staff, patients and their families, community care providers, social service agencies, and family physicians.

This demonstration project, supported by funding from the Ontario Medical Association and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, features an interprofessional team that is trying to understand the myriad challenges – both medical and social – that patients and families encounter when they are discharged from the hospital.

Patients with complex needs often require a range of different services, which typically necessitates the involvement of a number of different agencies, providers, and organizations (each of which has its own policies and procedures, best practices, catchment areas, and electronic charting system). This hard reality adds an extra layer of “system complexity” that can be extremely difficult to navigate... and not only for patients and their families, but also for those who work in the system. Through the program, system-level gaps and challenges are being identified and new approaches are being implemented and evaluated. In the end, everyone – patients, families, and healthcare professionals – benefits from a better integrated, more efficient and seamless system.