



Health information centre aims to promote health

By Franco Cignelli

Bridgepoint Health recently opened the new LiveWell! Health Information Centre as one way to help address health literacy and to enable patients to be more active partners in their care.

Health literacy is about more than just having knowledge. It means being able to find, comprehend, and use health information to make sound health-care decisions. Improving health literacy is imperative in tackling health inequities, and results in patients becoming more informed and active participants in their health care.

"The majority of people who come into the Centre are patients and family members," says LiveWell! librarian Bozena Karczewska. "Patients are motivated to learn more about their health, to find more solutions and

to empower themselves. The Centre is helping patients tap into the resources they have within themselves and within the broader community to help manage their conditions."

Studies show that engaged and informed patients often achieve better health outcomes and quality of life. They have more skills and confidence to manage their conditions, and are often better prepared to work with health professionals toward achieving their health goals.

As people with multiple complex conditions return from hospital to the community, they often find managing their health and daily living a daunting task. In addition to clinical education and services, they also need the support of caregivers, appropriate housing and access to a variety of community resources to cope with and self-manage their chronic conditions.

Bridgepoint's health information service is one important part of a larger organizational initiative called LiveWell! Through LiveWell!, the hospital will empower patients and families to improve the prevention and management of their complex chronic illness. LiveWell! promotes better quality of life for staff, patients and families - with a special focus on preparation for patients' return to the community.

Bridgepoint Health is taking a variety of steps to provide clients with the tools and skills they need to ensure effective support for self-management and health promotion. The LiveWell! philosophy is based on the notion that health care is a process in which patients should be engaged as partners in their care, not as passive recipients. The ultimate goal is to demonstrate how Canadians can live well and have improved health outcomes

while living with complex chronic disease.

Bridgepoint Health is a leader in the World Health Organization's Health Promoting Hospitals and Health Services (HPH) movement; an important initiative that supports its mission to be Canada's leader in the prevention and management of Complex Chronic Disease.

"LiveWell! embodies the principles of the Health Promoting Hospital movement," explains LiveWell! Strategy Lead, Susan Himmel. "One of the central HPH themes is for hospitals to become a health promoting setting that can better support the goals of patient and families and help them access services in the community. At Bridgepoint, we acknowledge and are very mindful of the difficulties most people with disabilities and complex conditions face if they are returning to the community after an illness and lengthy hospitalization," she adds.

In partnership with the Ontario Hospital Association and other HPH hospitals worldwide, Bridgepoint is working to demonstrate ways to improve the health-care system, assist staff and patients to implement the evidence and tools that work, and advocate for appropriate care and support in the community.

This innovative approach

is attracting private and public sector partnership, to realize LiveWell! Susan explains, "As the concepts, values, and standards of health promotion are integrated into the organizational structures and culture of the hospital, Bridgepoint is leading the way in the prevention and management of complex chronic disease in the province of Ontario." This approach is already having an impact at Bridgepoint, as a LiveWell! culture for staff is a catalyst for a LiveWell! culture for patients.

By building a culture of wellness and strong partnerships in the community, Bridgepoint is supporting patients and families to improve their quality of life. "LiveWell! is working to support patients to become co-producers of their health, and take active steps to empower them to be more actively engaged. Our overall objective is to embrace and inspire healthy living and work with our patients, families and community partners to address the underlying barriers that currently prevent people from living well with complex disease," says Susan.

To learn more about LiveWell! please e-mail livewell@bridgepointhealth.ca or visit www.bridgepointhealth.ca

Franco Cignelli is the Communications Specialist at Bridgepoint Health.



Colon Cancer Check

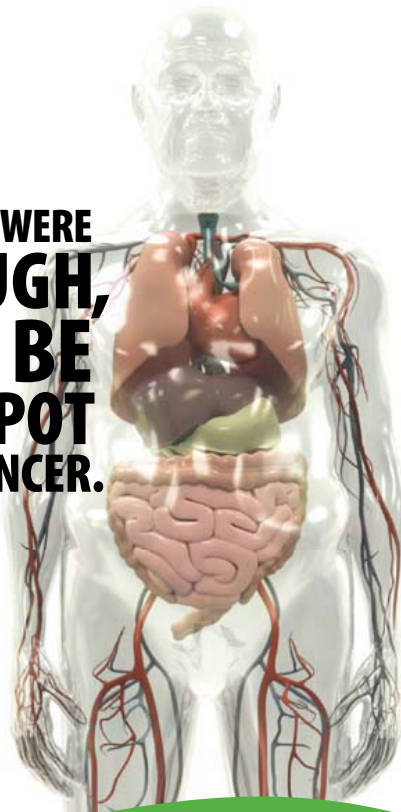
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