

MEDIA ADVISORY

Making Health Care More Accessible For People in the Parry Sound Area

February 15, 2019 -- The North East Local Health Integration Network (North East LHIN) is helping to ensure that quality care is more accessible in the Parry Sound area. A funding investment of more than \$67,000 is supporting a new accessible vehicle that will provide transportation to seniors, people who have special needs related to dementia, and people with a chronic or acute illness or physical disability.

The Board of Management of the District of Parry Sound, which operates West Parry Sound District Community Support Services received this funding to purchase a third wheelchair accessible vehicle.

Kay Wilkinson, a client of West Parry Sound District Community Support Services, is elderly and lives in an area of Parry Sound without public transportation. She often needs to get to medical appointments and to a Healthy Aging Clinic, for education and exercise. When it comes to accessing health care services, reliable, supportive transportation is vital to her.

“I am disabled, 83-years-old and live independently except for a personal support worker, so the van is my salvation when I need to travel with my wheelchair,” said Kay.

“I would be lost without it,” Ethel Baker said. “Bill and I use it to go shopping, doctors' appointments, blood work, as well as other important errands.”

“Transportation is essential for people with mobility or other related challenges,” said North East LHIN Chief Executive Officer, Jeremy Stevenson. “This new accessible van will allow clients to get to and from important programs and social activities and maintain their independence while remaining in the community.”



Volunteers learn about the new van. Client, Harold Gardner in the front wheelchair seat and volunteer driver/visitor, Brydon Richards.

“West Parry Sound District Community Support Services supports individuals who need specialized transportation to Day Away Programs, dialysis, medical/therapeutic appointments, exercise, essential shopping and visiting,” said Marsha Rivers, Chief Executive Officer, Board of Management of the District of Parry Sound. “We are grateful to receive this support. An additional wheelchair accessible vehicle will mean that we can make more trips and help more people attend important activities and appointments that they might otherwise not be able to attend.”

Four hundred clients use transportation provided by West Parry Sound District Community Support Services with 25 volunteer drivers making approximately 9,000 trips per year.

“Our gratitude is also extended to our dedicated volunteer drivers who always ensure everyone travelling is safely through the door at their home or chosen destination,” said Linda Taylor, Program Director, Board of Management of the District of Parry Sound.

FACTS:

- The service provides door-to-door transportation for social activities and medical appointments within the West Parry Sound District – and to and from medical appointments outside the district.
- A Dementia Strategy is underway through the North East LHIN Dementia Steering Committee led by North-East Specialized Geriatrics Centre. In response to the region’s increasing population of seniors and aligned with the LHIN’s priorities to improve access to care and coordination, the committee is working to improve the system of care for people living with dementia, their families and caregivers. Work to develop the strategy will identify issues and gaps for people living with dementia and their caregivers; strengthen collaboration between organizations providing dementia services; and, increase education on where and how people can access dementia services within Northeastern Ontario.

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