

## MEDIA RELEASE

### All Ages Aim to Live Healthy and Well in Northeastern Ontario



**December 30, 2011** -- Lots of grandmothers in Northeastern Ontario, like Jackie, are wanting to live healthy and well by safeguarding against falls. Using a theme of *Stay up, Keep Up*, the North East Local Health Integration Network (NE LHIN) is collaborating with regional Public Health Units to help reduce the rates of falls in the elderly.

The program is working well in the Parry Sound area, through the work of the *Stay on Your Feet Coalition*. Data shows that, on average, EMS in Parry Sound has 22 calls per month related to falls, according to Marliese Gause, Executive Director of The Friends, an organization providing accessible housing, support services and seniors' programs.

A significant portion of the falls are experienced by women. With annual funding by the North East LHIN over the past four years, the Stay on Your Feet Coalition has created significant action at the community level. "As a pan-community group, the importance of an integrated approach to falls prevention was one of the things that became clear to all sitting around the table, says Gause. There was awareness that all sectors of the community share some responsibility for ensuring safer practices with a higher degree of sensitivity to issues surrounding aging."

Community members across the spectrum of programs and services – including municipal representatives, long-term care homes, Community Living, West Parry Sound Health Centre, Nursing Stations, Emergency Services, First Nations, family physicians, and many more – created a network to better educate themselves and the communities they serve in order to reduce falls, especially among older populations. Distributed tips and equipment, such as ice pick grips, tub and safety tape, reachers, etc. as part of the education initiative.

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