

## **For Immediate Release**

March 31, 2016

## **OTMH Launching Hospital Elder Life Program as an Innovative Approach to Care for Older Adults**

**(Oakville, ON) March 31, 2016** – The Hospital Elder Life Program (HELP) will be launching at the new Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital (OTMH) in April 2016 and will offer an innovative approach to providing care for older adults with the goal of preventing delirium and functional decline.

On March 30, 2016, the Oakville Hospital Volunteer Association (OHVA) proudly presented \$2,000 to OTMH in support of HELP.

Hospitalized older patients may experience a decline in their physical and mental abilities which makes it difficult for them to fully recover from their illness and return to their previous ability to function. The Hospital Elder Life Program was created by a geriatrician, Dr. Sharon Inouye from Yale University to prevent these problems.

### **Goals of HELP**

- To maintain the cognitive and physical functioning of patients throughout hospitalization
- To allow patients to be discharged from the hospital as independently as possible
- To assist with the transition from the hospital to the community
- To prevent unplanned readmissions

Two Elder Life Specialists at OTMH, Gaye Morgan and Shirley Coughlin, serve as coordinators of the program and design patient-specific activities that are carried out up to three times a day by highly trained HELP volunteers.

## **Elements of the program:**

- Daily visits to promote orientation and socialization
- Therapeutic activities to keep patients mentally stimulated during their hospital stay
- Early mobilization to provide daily walking assistance and exercises
- Feeding assistance at mealtime to offer companionship and help as needed
- The use of a natural approach to sleep enhancement
- Reminder to use hearing and vision aids if necessary

## **Quotes:**

We are thrilled to be introducing the Hospital Elder Life Program at OTMH. As our population ages and the needs of our older patients increases, programs such as this will help to enhance the well-being and safety of our patients. We are pleased to include HELP as an integral part of our Safer Elder Care initiatives.

**Kim Kohlberger**

**Director, Rehabilitation and Geriatrics, Halton Healthcare**

The Oakville Hospital Volunteer Association and our volunteers exist to serve our hospital and its patients in many meaningful ways. We are so very pleased to support the Hospital Elder Care Program in this way.

**Patte Seaton, OHVA President**

Volunteers play a crucial, central role in this program by carrying out program interventions directly at the bedside. The volunteers are not the frosting on the cake, but rather they are the cake.

**Dr. Sharon Inouye, Yale University (creator of HELP)**

## **Quick facts:**

- The aging population continues to be a major theme in the Mississauga Halton LHIN. Over the next 10 years, the percentage of people aged 75 and older will grow by approximately 55 per cent. This growth creates increasing demands on our health care system and we are challenged to find sustainable solutions to maintain and improve health care for patients and seniors

(source: Mississauga Halton LHIN website)

- To ensure the success of HELP, the OHVA is generously funding the purchase of equipment which the volunteers will use to engage patients mentally, physically and socially.
- OHVA's mission is to support Halton Healthcare and OTMH by providing quality care and fundraising for new hospital equipment. To learn more about the OHVA, please visit [www.haltonhealthcare.com/OHVA](http://www.haltonhealthcare.com/OHVA)

### **About Halton Healthcare:**

Halton Healthcare is a regional healthcare organization comprised of three community hospitals - Georgetown Hospital, Milton District Hospital and Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital. Together these hospitals provide healthcare services to more than 325,000 residents in the communities of Halton Hills, Milton, and Oakville. Halton Healthcare hospitals have been recognized for their best practices in a number of patient safety and patient care initiatives. For more information, please visit [www.haltonhealthcare.com](http://www.haltonhealthcare.com) Follow us on Twitter @HaltonHlthcare

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