

North East LHIN invests more than \$300,000 in Espanola senior care

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The Espanola Regional Hospital and Health Centre (ERHHC) is looking to provide more support for the aging population in the community, and doing so with the help of the North East Local Health Integration Network (LHIN).

A funding announcement was made during a media conference at the Espanola Seniors' Centre on Jan. 22 with Ray Hunt, CEO of the ERHHC and LHIN members ready to share the news with Espanola.

"We know we have an aging population in the northeast with 19% over the age of 65," said Sherry Frizzell, senior officer with North East LHIN. "And this number is climbing."

The funding is to go towards better care for seniors with new assisted living services as well as strengthening coordination and transitions of care between hospitals and community providers.

Frizzell announced the North East LHIN was investing \$200,000 in assisted living, which is to help support high-risk seniors to live at home with the support of VON as well as an additional \$120,000 in funding towards the transition program.

Stephen Brushett, community support service manager with the VON, said he was pleased with the announcement.

"This new assisted living funding represents a great opportunity to provide a high level of care for some of our most at-risk seniors and empower them to continue to live at home and engage in their community."

Brushett also said the program helps the seniors maintain independence while living at home with assistance in areas of housekeeping and meal preparation, if needed.

Hunt said the funding announcement was like winning the lottery.

"It's almost like the lottery when you receive money from any level of government," he exclaimed. "It's always like 'wow, we got selected' or 'we got picked.' I have to say the LHIN has been effective in spreading that wealth across the area."

He added that many seniors will benefit by the investment.

"Many of our frail seniors, who are most vulnerable and at risk of encountering an adverse event, will benefit by safely remaining in their home longer."

One of the initiatives was announced was regarding the referral matching system.

Another announcement was a technological one that would allow patients to get test results faster.

"Many of the services we provide transmit electronically," Hunt said, "through enhancements. Through LHIN funding we will be able to be more efficiently and effectively transmit data and get results quicker, in turn improve patient care."