

## Specialized Geriatric Services will support frail NSM seniors

June 21, 2017 – (Orillia) An integrated program for Specialized Geriatric Services is one step closer for residents of North Simcoe Muskoka, as the program launches during Senior's Month.

Inside the Senior's Care Clinic in Orillia, residents heard from caregivers about the challenges they faced navigating a challenging health care system. Don Johnston of Barrie recalls the years his father was shuffled from long-term care home to hospitals and back again because of his father's vascular dementia.

"Within nine months it became apparent the retirement home was not safe because of wandering dangers," he said. "They weren't able to manage him. We entered this maze, this huge obstacle course."

According to 2015 data, North Simcoe Muskoka has a total population of 479,471 and of that 85,610 or roughly 18% are seniors (over the age of 65). Many seniors lead healthy, active lives – yet others aren't so lucky and can experience a variety of conditions that often lead them to be frailer than the rest. Associated with these frail conditions can be isolation, difficulty in getting to or accessing services, and complexity in transitioning through a complicated system of care.

That's where Specialized Geriatric Services come in. Supported through Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care and the NSM LHIN, SGS is all about supporting frail seniors and their caregivers, through the provision of coordinated care throughout North Simcoe Muskoka.

Dr. Kevin Young an Orillia geriatrician, is the program's physician lead who noted that early SGS program work has focused on redesigning the Behaviour Support System to better support older adults with cognitive impairment and behaviours, but as a whole, the program will help all frail seniors.

"We're very excited about it because we finally have a plan in place to build integrated services for people so that no matter where in the region you live, you will receive the same type of service."

As the new North Simcoe Muskoka Specialized Geriatric Service develops, the goal over time, is that frail seniors will be able to call one phone number, be cared for by an inter-professional team of specialized health care professionals, only have to tell their story once and know services are close to them that will help reduce the need for travel.

As part of the launch, the SGS website was announced, providing more information. Visit [www.nsmsgs.ca](http://www.nsmsgs.ca).

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