

Hanover hospital to provide cardiac rehabilitation program

The Owen Sound Sun Times

Fri Mar 1 2013

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Section: News

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Patients in south Grey-Bruce recovering from cardiac illness no longer have to drive as far for rehabilitation, with the launching of Hanover hospital's new cardiac rehab satellite program. The hospital officially opened its new cardiac care program this week. It comes after about a year of planning and is a partnership with Diabetes Grey Bruce, St. Mary's hospital in Kitchener and the Hanover Family Health Team.

"We're really glad to be able to provide the service here. So people in the district can come to our hospital, close to home, close to family, to receive the **health care** that they deserve," said hospital board chair Brad Holman.

But without partnerships, the program wouldn't be possible, he said.

"Partnerships are fundamental because of the way that the **health care** budgets are streamed from the government. Everything is partitioned up, so we have to have partnerships to be able to offer a service like this because we don't have the expertise in a small hospital. St. Mary's does, they're the experts, so we're able to partner with them and be a satellite for them, use their expertise but provide it in our facility, which enables people to have the treatment here without having to travel."

It's modeled after St. Mary's cardiac rehab program.

"We've just basically taken their program with a few tweaks for local issues," said Nancy Schmidt, manager of the Hanover program.

People from southern Grey and Bruce as well as parts of Huron, Perth and Wellington counties can be referred to the program from their doctor or cardiologist, Schmidt said.

Education and exercise are the two biggest components of the program. Participants will start with four, two-hour sessions dealing with physiology and anatomy, nutrition and diet, medication, stress and depression. Each person will be assessed by nurses, dietitians and kinesiologists because everyone has different abilities, health factors and tolerance for exercise, Schmidt said.

A stress test will be given to determine a safe level of exercise. After that, there are 16 weeks of monitored exercise in the form of one-hour sessions twice a week at the hospital.

Schmidt said seven people are starting the program now, although eight per session is the target, with a new session starting every two months. She said there is already a waiting list of six people.

Before now, cardiac patients had to travel to Owen Sound or Kitchener for rehab, Schmidt said.

Hanover hospital president and CEO Katrina Wilson said the program is a good fit for Hanover, because Grey-Bruce has higher rates of cardiac issues, strokes and diabetes than the provincial average.

"It works well within our **health care** hub," Wilson said. "We believe in the continuum and we believe in bringing access to care closer to home. That's a huge part of it, because right now when people have a cardiac issue or a stroke or COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), they tend not to want to have to travel to St. Mary's or surrounding areas to get their cardiac rehab. So for us, being a satellite for St. Mary's, we bring that to them and patients have an increased chance of survival and thriving."

The program "will probably save lives," she added, "because people learn how to take better care of themselves, they'll learn how to eat better, exercise better, rather than going status quo . . . which got them to the cardiac issue in the first place. It will improve the health of our general population."