
For more information, contact:

Kelly Kay
Executive Director
Seniors Care Network
E: kkay@nhh.ca

Cheryl Troicuk, Administrative Assistant
Seniors Care Network
P: 905-372-6811 x7798
E: ctroicuk@nhh.ca

NEWS RELEASE**Monday, June 15, 2020****Seniors Care Network Launches a Co-Designed COVID-19 Information Guide for Older Adults**

COBOURG, ON - Seniors Care Network is pleased to announce the creation of a new co-designed resource guide for older adults and family/friend caregivers during COVID-19.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been significant impacts on the health and wellbeing of older adults living with complex health concerns, sometimes called frailty. “When we interviewed older adults and community service providers, we were told that older adults and their caregivers were not sure who to call and where to access credible and up-to-date information,” says Kelly Kay, Executive Director of Seniors Care Network. “Many older adults and caregivers told us they had experienced changes to existing services and supports as a result of the pandemic, and that they needed quick and easy access to information about the services that were still available in their community.”

In response to this need, *COVID-19: A Guide to Information and Services for Older Adults and Family/Friend Caregivers in the Central East Region of Ontario* was co-designed with older adults, patient and family advisors, and community service providers. Whitby Resident and Healthcare Advocate, Anne-Marie Yaraskavitch says, “I was so pleased as an older adult and family/friend caregiver to have been approached and given the opportunity to provide input and help co-design this guide for the Region”.

The guide includes curated chapters covering ten topics that were identified by older adults and caregivers. Each section includes clear and reliable information, useful tools, and descriptions of local services/agencies that older adults can contact for more information. Centralized telephone numbers and contact information is included when possible, so that seniors can easily access and navigate different services and supports using a single point of contact. “The intent was to provide enough information to help people connect quickly to topics that matter to them, without replicating existing service directories,” says Kay.



For those who do not have access to the internet, a printable contact list of all central telephone numbers and services is included at the end of each chapter. “The complete guide is very impressive and I am proud to have played a part in its development,” says Joyce Perrin, Patient advocate. “This guide is a comprehensive, easy to navigate, one-stop shop for an older adult or family/friend caregiver to find services in their community. With ongoing amendments, I see this guide as being also quite useful post-pandemic and will be very useful for the community in the long-term” says Anne-Marie Yaraskavitch.

This guide is designed specifically for older adults and caregivers, and provides information that they felt were relevant to their needs during this pandemic. “Providing increased opportunity for community members to access services that can support older adults in the community may prevent health decline, isolation, and crises,” says Sarah Dolsen, Knowledge Translation Specialist for Seniors Care Network who led the development of this guide. “For these reasons, please share this guide widely,” says Dolsen.

To access the guide, please visit the Seniors Care Network website:

www.seniorscarenetwork.ca/resources/seniors

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About Seniors Care Network:

Seniors Care Network is a partnership of specialized geriatric health service providers created by the Central East LHIN in 2011. Seniors Care Network is focused on enhancing the healthcare experience for frail older adults and their caregivers in the Central East Region of Ontario. The specialized geriatric programs and related services of Seniors Care Network are intended to help older adults with complex health concerns that threaten their independence and function. For more information, please visit: www.seniorscarenetwork.ca