

Seniors will benefit from exercise and falls-prevention classes

Seniors in the Central West Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) will continue to have access to publicly-funded exercise and falls-prevention classes, beginning this month, when the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care implements improvements to physiotherapy funding.

Recognizing that access to physiotherapy varies across the province, the Ministry announced April 18 the government would expand access to physiotherapy services as part of Ontario's commitment to help more seniors stay healthy and active.

LHINs have been given the responsibility to lead the replacement and expansion of the exercise and falls-prevention component of this physiotherapy reform. The Central West LHIN has chosen the Central West Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) to provide group exercise and falls prevention classes. Through a blended model of care, seniors will have access to both exercise and falls-prevention classes at locations in Caledon, Brampton, Dufferin County, Malton, Rexdale and Woodbridge.

As of Aug. 1, exercise and falls-prevention classes will continue in multiple locations throughout the LHIN. No fees will be charged and there will be no limit to the number of classes a senior may attend.

Classes will be held at Avalon Care Centre, Orangeville; CANES Community Care, Rexdale; Greenway Village Retirement, Brampton; Holland Christian Homes, Brampton; Lord Dufferin Retirement Residence, Orangeville; Peel Senior Link, Brampton; Richview Residence for Seniors, Rexdale; Shelburne Residence Retirement, Shelburne; Southbrook Lodge Retirement, Brampton; and Woodhall Park Retirement Village, Brampton.

In addition to ensuring existing falls and exercise programs continue, the LHIN has been working to identify opportunities to add additional community-based falls prevention and exercise programs in late summer and fall.

"We are taking direct action to ensure that over 68,000 additional seniors, about 130,000 in total, will have access to high-quality exercise and falls-prevention classes," commented Health and Long-Term Care minister Deb Matthews. "That more than doubles the current number receiving this care in the community. Just as important, this care will be expanded to a number of small and rural communities that are currently underserved."

"Consistent with the direction in our third Integrated Health Services Plan, we continue to invest and expand programs and services that improve access to care and value for money," observed LHIN Chair Maria Britto. "This new approach to funding physiotherapy is a more accountable process and patient-centered. The exercise and falls-prevention program is a sound, focused investment that can help seniors in the Central West LHIN stay healthy and active in their community."

"The Central West LHIN and the Central West CCAC worked together to develop a blended model of care to ensure that seniors would have access to more classes in the same location where they have always received services," Central West CCAC CEO Cathy Hecimovich added.

Falls-prevention classes and regular exercise help seniors stay active, healthy and independent. Ontario is investing \$10 million for exercise and falls-prevention classes for approximately 130,000 seniors throughout the province.