

Transfers to hospitals reduced from Davis Centre in Bolton

By Bill Rea

The Davis Centre in Bolton has been recognized for having the lowest number of transfers to Brampton Civic Hospital than any other long-term care (LTC) facility in its catchment area.

That was mentioned in the annual reports to Peel Regional council recently from the medical directors of the five LTC facilities in the region.

Dr. Joseph Niedoba, medical director at the Davis Centre, commented in his report that there's a growing awareness that frail, elderly people don't do well when they are transferred to a hospital emergency room. He pointed out they can return to LTC with infections they picked up at the hospital, or pressure ulcers (bedsores).

In the past, all the medical directors have been on hand to address their reports before council. This year, however, Dr. Harry Earle of Tall Pines in Brampton, represented his colleagues.

He also acknowledged that the number of transfers had been reduced at the Davis Centre, especially unnecessary transfers. He too stressed the benefits of keeping residents at their facilities.

Earle commented on the provincial averages for various situations, including falls, worsening bladder control, pressure ulcers and cases of residents who needed to be restrained. He said the Region's facilities hold their own in these areas and try to improve their number. He added all five are below the provincial average when it comes to restraining residents, and he credited that to the training of nurses and personal support workers (PSW).

The report to council from Commissioner of Health Services Janette Smith indicated the staff vaccination rate at these facilities could be better. She said there were six outbreaks in 2012. Most of them were relatively short, but the report stated things could have been more favourable with a stronger staff vaccination rate. It stated that 35.13 per cent of staffers did not get vaccinated. As well, staff sent a report to council in 2011 discussing making such vaccinations mandatory and the limitations imposed by individual rights and freedoms.

Mississauga Councillor Pat Mullin raised that issue.

Earle told her people training at colleges to be PSWs or Registered Nurses are required to be vaccinated. "If they can do it at that level, I really don't see it as an ethical issue," he remarked.

Smith added the Province is looking at what's going on in British Columbia, where vaccinations have been made mandatory. "It's been a huge uproar," she said, adding it will likely end up in the courts.

Medical Officer of Health Dr. David Mowat said this issue is subject to "active discussion" among his counterparts in other jurisdictions.

He added the controversy only involves being vaccinated against flu. There have been no complaints about being vaccinated against other diseases.

Earle added immunization is not perfect, and that's where the challenge is. He added, however, if 95 per cent of people got immunized, the disease can't spread.

At the Davis Centre, Niedoba reported the vaccination rate for flu was 95 per cent among residents, and 77 per cent among staff. "The staff is to be congratulated on their continued high vaccination rate," he wrote.

Also in his report, Niedoba said there were 98 falls, up from 90 the previous year, and four of those falls required transfer to hospital for further assessment.

He also reported a reduction in the number of resident response behaviours. That drop has been consistent over the last couple of years, and Niedoba attributed that in part to on-going staff training.