

New doctors gain experience, long-term care home residents gain increased physician access

October 16, 2008 (KINGSTON) - A partnership between Queen's University and Providence Care is giving newly graduated doctors a unique opportunity to provide regular medical care to high-need patients – elderly residents of a local long-term care home.

The program, launched this summer, allows doctors who are studying to become family physicians to do a four-month rotation of their required two-year residency at Providence Manor, a 243-bed long-term care home in downtown Kingston. While at Providence Manor, they assume the medical care of an assigned group of the Home's residents in cooperation with the residents' attending physicians, who continue to oversee all medical care provided.

"This is a great opportunity to introduce new doctors to a long-term care environment," said Dr. David Barber, Assistant Professor, Queen's Department of Family Medicine, and physician lead of Queen's Family Medicine Department Care of the Elderly program. "By working at Providence Manor they are experiencing geriatric medicine, family practice and a wide range of acute and non-acute care."

Dr. Kirstin Theman, a recent graduate of Queen's medical school, says she has not decided on her career plans yet, and for that reason is appreciative of the chance to work at Providence Manor.

"I am getting a new perspective on what 'health' means and I am learning about the importance of relationship-building with my patients and their families," Dr. Theman said. "I will probably stay in Ontario to work – this experience is making me think about the benefits of a varied practice, and spending at least some of my time working in the long-term care setting."

"Bringing new doctors into the long-term care setting is a way planning for the future," says Dr. Ivan Stewart, medical director at Providence Manor. "These young physicians are gaining experience that will be more valuable as our population ages, and as more older people require care."

Providence Manor site administrator Shelagh Nowlan says the partnership with Queen's also benefits the Manor's residents.

"They appreciate the added time the new doctors are able to spend with them," Nowlan said. "Our nurses in the Home are benefiting from the increased access to the physicians as well – this partnership is great for the doctors, residents, families and our staff."

The first group of 14 new doctors began their residency rotation at Providence Manor in July. Fourteen new graduates will start their rotations at the end of October.

Providence Care is southeastern Ontario's leading provider of rehabilitation, specialized geriatric care, complex continuing care, specialized mental health care, palliative care and long-term care. One of Kingston's university hospitals, Providence Care has three main sites in Kingston: Mental Health Services, St. Mary's of the Lake Hospital and Providence Manor, as well as 18 community locations. Affiliated with Queen's University, Providence Care is a major centre for teaching and research.

Media wishing to interview Dr. Glen Barber, Dr. Kirstin Theman, Dr. Ivan Stewart or Shelagh Nowlan are invited to Providence Manor Tuesday, October 16th, 9:30 AM – 10:00 AM.

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