

COMMUNITY HEALTH WEEK – OCTOBER 1ST TO 5TH

Ontario faces major challenges ensuring the best possible health and well-being for everyone in this province. To meet these challenges, it is essential that we focus on preventing people from getting sick in the first place. This means more services that prevent chronic diseases, more services that support seniors to age at home, more community-wide initiatives that get at the root causes of illness – causes like poverty, lack of education and social isolation. The interprofessional team at Rainbow Valley CHC in Killaloe works with the community to address those issues.

During the week of October 1st to 5th, Rainbow Valley will be celebrating Community Health Week around the theme: *In our Community. With our Community.* It is an opportune time to celebrate some recent changes in the services provided by Rainbow Valley CHC. In November 2011 Rainbow Valley CHC integrated with St. Francis Memorial Hospital and since that time has recruited three physicians and a nurse practitioner to provide services to community residents. Open three days a week, Rainbow Valley also offers the services of a registered nurse, social worker, diabetes educator and a respiratory therapist. To support these services renovations were completed this summer to provide additional clinic space to serve a growing roster of clients. Other services located on the premises include massage therapy, chiropractor and women's assault counselling. It's a diverse group of professionals that work together to support the health and well-being of the community. This fall, Seniors' Fitness Classes will resume in both Wilno and Killaloe.

Rainbow Valley will continue to evolve in response to the needs of the community and in recognition of the increasing focus on the benefits of a community approach to health care. Research supports such a approach in delivering health care services. A series of studies conducted by the Élisabeth Bruyère Research Institute found that Ontario's Community Health Centres responded effectively to the specific needs of communities while providing health promotion and chronic disease and prevention services. A March 2012 study from the Institute of Clinical Evaluative Sciences found that even though Ontario's Community Health Centres serve people with more complex health needs, they are more effective than other models at keeping those people out of hospital emergency departments. A higher level of community engagement as well as comprehensive services that focus on health promotion and social determinants of health were among the reasons cited for the increased effectiveness in easing burdens on the costly acute care system.

The Rainbow Valley interprofessional team encourages dialogue with the community as ongoing planning continues to ensure that services provided are meeting the needs of our community. The community health approach is based on a partnership with community residents and with other health and social service providers. By working together, we can realize greater efficiencies and improved health outcomes for everyone.