



Executive Summary



→ New Neighbourhoods

Introduction

The North Bay Regional Health Centre (NBRHC) plays a central role in providing care for older adults facing advanced neurocognitive disorders such as dementia. Through a multidisciplinary team we contribute to overall well-being and preserve the dignity of our patients. We are currently working to reimagine our approach, setting NBRHC apart as a leader in providing compassionate and forward-thinking care.

Current Challenges

The units in which our older adult populations are cared for feature beige hallways encircling nursing stations with uniform brown doors, creating a lack of environmental cues as well as poor visual and tactile stimulations. The uniformity leads patients to freely enter other rooms, including those of other patients. This disorienting environment generates boredom, frustration and anxiety, resulting in increased pacing and responsive behaviours between patients and staff. This environment, combined with the knowledge that the population in this demographic is expected to skyrocket over the next twenty years, urges us to act now.

The Solution

Addressing these challenges requires transforming the environments our patients are in. When identifying the urgent need for our project, New Neighbourhoods: Innovative Dementia Care, Dr. Rhea Galbraith, the project champion, shared, “The most significant contributor for wellness for patients is the environmental flow. The major need across this environment for patients is creating a space with meaning that orientates people to purposeful activities and roles.” This project will move us ahead in our work to provide exceptional healthcare, close to home.

The Project

New Neighbourhoods: Innovative Dementia Care, will transform four NBRHC units from clinical spaces, to engaging and welcoming neighbourhoods. The estimated cost for the renovation is \$118,082. This includes customized adhesive graphics for each patient's door, interactive murals, areas dedicated to familiar places and exit concealing graphics. This way, when redirecting patients, healthcare workers or family members can give simple directions like, 'let's look for the blue door, that is where your home is.' This project protects older adults living with dementia and increases feelings of comfort.



“The major need across this environment for all patients is creating a space with meaning that orientates people to purposeful activities and roles.”

Dr. Rhea Galbraith, CCFP, Care of the Elderly

The Impact

This project will create an environment that fosters a sense of familiarity, reduce anxiety, and enhance overall well-being. In support of the project, Dr. Cara Collins and Dr. Dokun Matin Salako shared, “Design of a dementia care setting with a more homelike character, results in higher intellectual functioning, increased social interaction, autonomy and community participation and less exit-seeking and agitation. Reduced verbal and overall aggressions and anxiety, fewer pacing episodes, and reduced use of psychotropic medications to manage behaviours have also been documented.” The impact is clear - this project allows us to advance care of older adults through a lens of understanding and dignity.

Conclusion

This project showcases our focus on excellence in healthcare, making the transformative step to address the cause of patient behaviours, rather than merely treating the symptoms. With these changes, we can not only better care for our current patients, but be better-prepared to address an imminent surge in demand for dementia care. With support, NBRHC can become pioneers of dementia-care, setting the standard for the sector and ensuring the provision of exceptional care, delivered with compassion.