



GRAND ROUNDS

Evelyn Dagg sits comfortably in the lounge at Groves Park Lodge, and it is clear she feels settled and at home as a resident there.

Thanks to a partnership between Renfrew Victoria Hospital and the lodge, Mrs. Dagg, as well as Donna Eady and Dorothy Fleming, were able to make the move from the hospital's third floor to Groves Park within days of each other.

Like many others, each of them had spent several months in hospital care, waiting for a bed to come available in a long-term care facility.

"They were very good to me," Mrs. Dagg says of her care at the hospital.

"Now it's more homey," she adds as she looks around the lodge.

"This is a really good news story, because Groves Park Lodge was their first choice for placement," explains Nancy Kelly-Moore, vice-president of patient services at RVH.

"They're settled now. It's their new home."

The partnership was created last August as part of Renfrew County's alternate level

of care strategy. Led by the Champlain Local Health Integration Network, caregivers representing hospitals, long-term care facilities, community support services and the Community Care Access Centre developed approaches to ease the pressure on the hospital setting.

"Providing long-term care is not what we're mandated to do," says Kelly-Moore. "It takes up hospital beds that are needed by others who require higher levels of medical care."

Opening up those three beds at RVH by establishing the new placements at Groves Park Lodge, for example, means that the hospital is able to admit 100 more patients per year.

The working relationship has also led to a new community of practice for health care providers in Renfrew.

"It supports the continuum of care," Kelly-Moore says.

She expects the links will lead to further partnerships, such as joint continuing education opportunities and other professional collaborations.

Hospitals throughout Ontario have been struggling with the demands of providing long-term care (called alternate level of care) in acute care settings. Most often, it involves older patients who are hospitalized for an acute problem (recuperating from a fall or a stroke), and are then not able to return to their former residence.

The vast majority of people request basic level accommodation in long-term care settings, while a large percentage of the space available is higher-cost private rooms.

"People end up waiting for a long time for a placement they can afford," says

Kelly-Moore. "It's frustrating for them and their families, and it's costly for the health care system."

At RVH, there are currently 14 alternate level of care patients. Seven of them are on the CCAC waiting list for long-term care placements. Others are in the midst of being registered, and some will be able to go home after convalescence.

"This partnership is a very positive development," Kelly-Moore concludes. "The ALC Committee of Renfrew County is taking a proactive approach, and finding different solutions that work in each community."



From left, Groves Park Lodge residents Dorothy Fleming, Evelyn Dagg and Donna Eady.