



300 local seniors to test new smartphone technology

Phone gives seniors ability to record personal health information, share it and communicate directly with healthcare providers

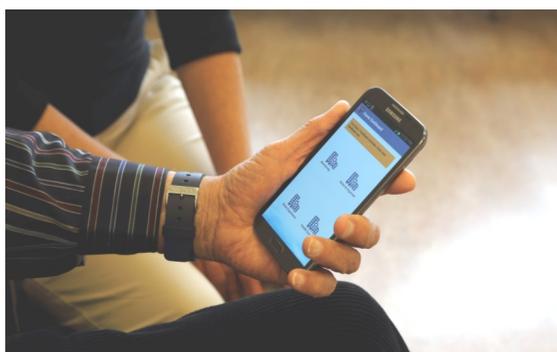
Have you ever been asked to fill out a questionnaire about your health history only to realize... you can't remember all the facts?

You're not alone. Over the course of six, seven or even more decades on this planet, the simple facts of our own health story—the medical conditions, surgeries, treatments and so on—can blur. As each year goes by it gets more difficult to present an accurate summary to a new health provider.

Think of the time wasted across the healthcare system as we each repeat ourselves over and over again, or the errors that occur when we don't get it right. Think of the added complication of trying to summarize multiple complex, chronic health conditions when you're in crisis, in an Emergency Department, having a heart attack!

Fortunately, for 300 seniors right here in Northumberland—and the caregivers and healthcare professionals who support them—the story telling and real time communication is about to get a whole lot easier.

Thanks to a \$3 million grant from The Change Foundation, a project called *Partners Advancing Transitions in Healthcare* or, simply, PATH, is now under way in Northumberland, bringing local seniors, caregivers, healthcare providers and support agencies together as equal partners in an effort to improve experiences for seniors and their caregivers as they move in, out of and across Ontario's healthcare system.



Beginning in April 2014, 300 local seniors selected for the pilot will be assigned a smartphone and training on how to use it.

Step one for the seniors involved will be to record the key facts of their healthcare histories and needs into a secure, private online portal.

Step two is when it gets really interesting! Not only will these seniors be able to accurately record their health stories, they'll be able to share that information and their healthcare needs with the local health professionals they encounter.

Step three will leverage the mobile technology to establish true dialogue between seniors and their healthcare teams. Chronic conditions can be monitored remotely, real-time feedback can be documented after each healthcare encounter and ongoing, two-way communication can occur.

Imagine the difference this could make to a frail 90-year-old with congestive heart failure who struggles to get into her doctor's office for appointments. The smartphone will give her the ability to monitor and report key

information on her condition from home—such as her daily weight and blood pressure—send direct messages to her doctor or nurse practitioner to ask questions, and, possibly, avoid unnecessary trips to her physician's office or Emergency Department.

Likewise, a senior recently released from hospital after major surgery can use their phone to monitor their pain level, rate it on a scale of 1 to 10 and share pictures of their surgical incision site while their physician, in turn, can monitor their condition remotely.

Medication alerts and reminders of appointments can also be programmed into the smartphones and caregivers can be granted access to see the information too, so they're in the communication loop.

Opportunities for the way we deliver and receive healthcare are catching up to the technological tools we have at our fingertips and they're doing so right here in Northumberland.

From this pilot The Change Foundation and the Northumberland partners involved hope to build a new model for a truly senior-friendly communication tool that can be used to improve transitions of care for seniors and their caregivers right across Ontario.

Are you ready for life after 65? Are your parents?

There's a new local website that can help!

www.pathwaytoagingwell.com

Designed by local seniors, caregivers and health providers, the PATHway to Aging Well website is a one-stop shop with tips for seniors and their loved ones. Divided into three areas—information, planning and resources—the site aims to minimize, through planning, the health-related challenges that often come hand-in-hand with our later years. Visit today, download your template for "aging well" and share your feedback.