



Northumberland seniors and healthcare providers test driving new technology to improve transitions of care

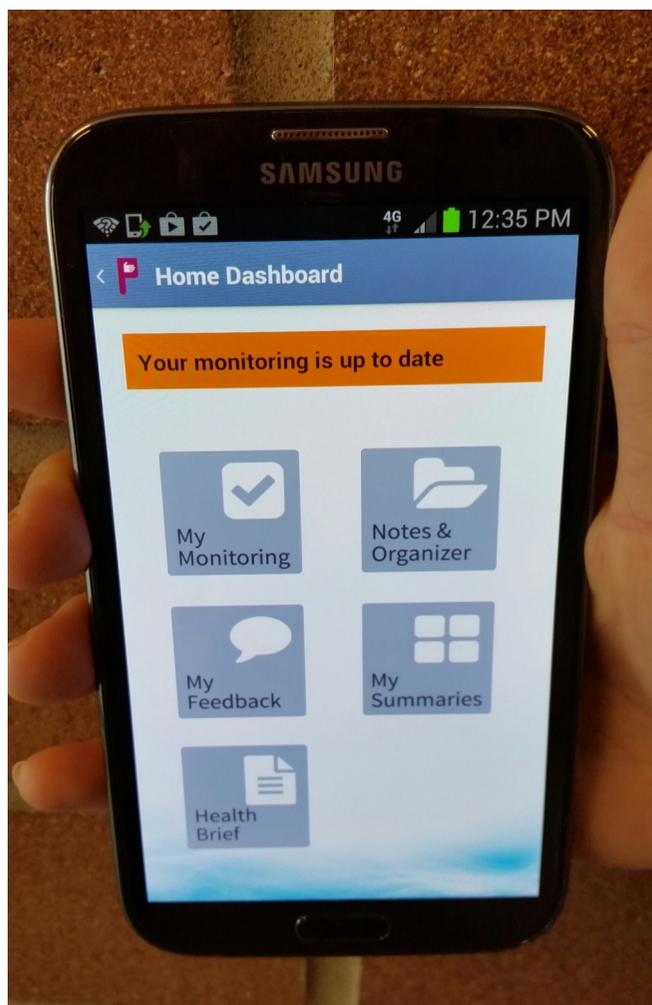
Seventy-five local seniors and almost 100 healthcare providers have been given a unique opportunity to design and test drive innovative mobile technology and an interconnected web-based portal to store and share health information. By mid-November 2014, 200 Northumberland seniors will be on-board and piloting the system developed by local seniors, for local seniors, with funds from The Change Foundation, a healthcare think tank.

More than 100 individuals involved with the PATH project (an acronym which stands for Partners Advancing Transitions in Healthcare) came together September 29th, 2014, at the Cobourg Community Centre (CCC) for live demonstrations of the new technology tools.

The enthusiasm in the room was contagious as seniors talked about their role designing and testing the smartphone technology, healthcare providers discussed how they were incorporating the new information into their day-to-day practice and Volunteer Transition Coaches, recruited to support seniors with the technology and the healthcare system, shared their insights. Among the displays was the new healthcare provider portal—a new information highway linking participating seniors and their healthcare providers—which went live last month.

“We are now at a point in the PATH project where we’re seeing the results of the teams’ hard work. Local seniors involved in

the pilot are now able to store their personal health story, share their self-identified needs, monitor chronic conditions, and communicate directly with their healthcare provider,” explained Wendy Kolodziejczak, PATH Project Manager, “This is a true ‘first’ for Ontario, and it is really an honour to have it happening right here in Northumberland.”



Local seniors are using smartphones like this one to store their personal health story, monitor chronic conditions and communicate with their healthcare providers.

Healthcare providers involved in the project, including 10 family physicians, Northumberland Hills Hospital staff and community care providers such as the Central East Community Care Access Centre, are able to see the relevant health information for participating seniors and use it to improve transitions of care. Said one caregiver who presented at the CCC event: “PATH has made a big difference in our lives. It is really helpful to have all your information at your fingertips. I didn’t even use a computer until a year ago, and now I can.”

“We’ve been invited to speak at more than 55 different organizations, conferences and events around Canada, to share what we’re doing here in Northumberland with local seniors and caregivers,” said Wendy Kolodziejczak.

“This project is generating a lot of interest. Technology is being tested in many areas of the healthcare sector, but most of what is happening is within an organization or a program unit. PATH is unique in that it is a community-wide effort co-designed by seniors, their caregivers and a range of agencies, and we’re focusing on those difficult transition points where we know we can do better. Though it is still early days, our unique combination of smartphone technology with a secure, private online portal and Volunteer Transition Coaches to help when there are questions is already improving care for local patients.”