

Seniors need more rehab programs in the community

BY DRS. CAROL AND BARRY BRUCE, OTTAWA CITIZEN JUNE 27, 2011

Re: Hospitals failing seniors: report, June 24.

In this front-page article, the Champlain LHIN and the regional geriatric program point out that insufficient in-hospital physical therapy is an important cause of seniors having to go to nursing homes rather than going home. We agree with that wholeheartedly.

However, we would like to point out that many seniors who are becoming frail, or who have had an injury, simply cannot afford physiotherapy in the community. An investment in physiotherapy in the community could go a long way toward preventing an expensive hospitalization in the first place. Physiotherapists, like any health professional, are highly trained and there is a limited supply.

Before the hospital sector makes its "investment" and lures all of the physiotherapists out of the community, it should think about putting some of that money into subsidized or free community physiotherapy, and other preventive programs. The Heart Institute provides an excellent precedent - it provides significant programming related to cardiovascular disease prevention.

We should have more preventive and rehabilitation programs, aimed at keeping seniors out of the hospital in the first place, and functioning in the community.

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