

SFMH News Release

SFMH space helps meet community's growing physiotherapy needs

Construction will soon be completed at St. Francis Memorial Hospital to create space for a private physiotherapy clinic. The clinic, which will be located in the lower level of the St. Francis Health Centre, answers a growing need in the area, says Bruce Harris, Chief of Staff at SFMH.

“Although physiotherapy is offered at SMFH, there is a great need within the community for private physiotherapy service,” Harris says. “Recognizing that need, the hospital administration, the board and physicians made a strategic decision to create more clinical rental space within the hospital setting.”

SFMH put out a Request for Proposals (RFP) for physiotherapists in the area who might be interested in setting up a private practice in the space, and received three responses. The winning proposal came from Randy Peplinskie, who already provides physiotherapy services at SFMH. Peplinskie, who will continue working his regular hours at SFMH, will operate the private clinic on a part-time basis.

“I am looking forward to providing physiotherapy services beyond what the physiotherapy department at St. Francis Memorial Hospital can offer,” says Peplinskie. “This will be a nice addition to our community. Right now, people have to travel great distances to obtain these services.”

“We are excited to see this new clinic opening in Barry’s Bay,” Harris agrees. “Patients who can’t be accommodated within the hospital have to drive to private clinics in Pembroke, Renfrew or Bancroft. Not only are they already paying for the service, but they have the high cost of fuel, probably a meal and the increased amount of time for the round trip. Some out-patients in the past have chosen not to go at all and this is not what we want for our patients.”

SFMH CEO Randy Penney comments that the private physiotherapy clinic will provide a reasonable alternative for SFMH out-patients. “We will continue to offer the same level of service at the hospital as before,” Penney says. “However, this new clinic will give out-patients another option to being put on a waiting list or leaving the community for care.”

Penney points out that SFMH physiotherapy services are geared to the hospital’s needs. “The direction from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is that hospitals should be focusing on providing in-patient physiotherapy and urgent post-operative rehabilitation,” Penney says. “Hospitals are not allowed to bill for out-patient physiotherapy, whereas private clinics can. The benefits for patients and their families will be significant. Over the years we have tried to provide services closer to home and this is another example of an innovative partnership that will be able to do this.”

Jeremy Stevenson, SFMH’s Chief Operating Officer, adds that SFMH’s provision of space for a private physiotherapy clinic was an excellent example of community partnership. “This new partnership builds again on a history of our integration successes and our vision of the last few

years to develop a substantial health-care hub that sees unity and co-location and partnerships of all local health-care providers,” Stevenson says.