

Seniors Health Strategic Clinical Network

Health Link

Dementia Advice Bulletin



Dementia Advice is now available through Health Link! This new service, which launched on September 28, provides telephone-based support for family and friends caring for someone living with dementia, as well as the person living with dementia themselves. The name 'Dementia Advice' has been revised to better reflect this specialized service within Health Link. News of Dementia Advice has been shared with Alberta Health Services, together with media and community partners in North, Central and South Zones. Early results are exciting! The Nurses have been very busy!

Dementia Advice
Available through Health Link



The Process

- Dementia Advice is accessed through Health Link by dialling 811
- The Health Link nurse conducts an assessment and provides recommendations
- Decision-making tools have been developed to help the Health Link nurse provide advice, suggestions and strategies to respond to the immediate needs of the caller
- When appropriate, a Dementia Advice nurse is asked to follow up with the caller
- The Dementia Advice nurses are Registered Nurses with education and experience in dementia care and are able to offer specialized clinical advice
- The Dementia Advice nurse conducts an assessment, provides supportive listening and short term psychosocial support for the caller, and facilitates linkages with resources for the person with dementia and for the caregiver

You → 811 → Health Link Nurse → Dementia Advice Nurse → You

Staffing

- 2 Dementia Advice nurses began in their roles in September
- They are available 12 to 815 pm 7 days per week

Photo right: The Dementia Advice Nurses, Rose and Kathleen, at the Dementia Advice work station in Health Link's call centre



Early Results

- Dementia Advice is receiving 2-3 referrals from Health Link every day
- 42 referrals from Health Link in the first 4 weeks
- Most callers are adult children of someone with dementia
- Calls have been a mix of general questions (about Dementia Advice itself, about dementia, about available services) and questions about specific situations

Stories

- A daughter called looking for suggestions about how she and her sister could help their mother (having very recently received a diagnosis of dementia) stay at home
- A woman called regarding her sister who had been living independently with Down's Syndrome but who now was showing signs of dementia
- A son, himself living with MS, is primary caregiver to his father who has dementia
- An 89 year old brother called with concern for his 87 year old sister, who was showing signs of dementia
- An emergency physician called looking for support for a family who had brought their loved one in with signs of a delirium in addition to dementia



Anticipated Expansions

- Spring 2016
 - Dementia Advice welcomes callers from Edmonton and Calgary Zones
 - Hours of service expand to 10 hours per day, 7 days per week
- Fall 2017
 - Dementia Advice becomes available to clinicians and service providers

More information about Dementia Advice through Health Link and promotional materials can be found on AHS' external website at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/scns/Page12938.aspx>

(Search 'Dementia Advice' from the AHS website)

For more information, or if you have questions, contact Shawna Reid, Practice Lead Dementia Advice

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