



MEDIA RELEASE

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Elder Mediation Making a Difference Through the Champlain CCAC's Respite and Relief Program

Cornwall – There are 12 health care professionals in Canada certified by Elder Mediation Canada – and two of them work with the Champlain Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) to provide support in the Eastern Counties. Through the CCAC's Respite and Relief Program, these professionals are ensuring that elderly clients with dementia, their families and caregivers, receive the support they need – to help them stay in their homes and avoid premature hospitalization or institutionalization.

In the past three years, 216 clients have been helped through the program. The goal is to expand the program as a pilot in the Ottawa area.

Elder mediators bring everyone in a client's circle of care together to talk and create a more viable plan or support system. "My job is to support the caregiver, to bring relief, and to try and reduce the chance of a crisis situation occurring," explains Josée Johnson, Registered Nurse, CCAC Case Manager and Facilitator. Josée is just completing her Elder Mediation certification. "We try to fill in the gaps that the caregiver identifies, which can be anything from transportation needs to something as simple as who will cut the grass."

"We can help start the conversation and engage everyone," adds Teresa Rivera-Mildenhall, Manager of Client Services and Certified Elder Mediator. "Through these conversations, new information and new opportunities arise. The burden of care is shared and everyone is supported and empowered to work together."

For example, in one case, the group decided to set up a family Facebook page to share information. The new technology engaged the grandchildren and those living out-of-town felt more involved.

Shelley Vaillancourt is the Executive Director of the Alzheimer Society of Cornwall and presented the original program concept to the CCAC. She says the program provides an incredible opportunity: "It helps everyone see through the same window to contribute as

best they can. It's clearly about communities and here in the Champlain region, we have one of the best as all of the agencies and organizations work together to provide support and care. January is Alzheimer Awareness Month and our theme is 'Let's Face It' – we need to create a plan and this program helps us to do that.”

“This program is very innovative,” notes Elizabeth Sterritt, a Certified Elder Mediator who provides training in Elder Mediation to the CCAC. “The mediators need to juggle a lot of opinions and ideas around the table and conflicts can arise that they must deal with. They are trained to strategize and help the group make decisions that support the client and the primary caregivers. The result is a self-directed action plan.”

Elder Mediation Canada (EMC) applauds the Champlain CCAC for its very progressive program. “It is creative, innovative, responsive and very timely in terms of what the Alzheimer Society is calling an epidemic of dementia,” sums up EMC President Dr. Patricia Donihee. “There are very few programs that are as sensitive to the client, caregiver and family’s needs. This is not a cookie cutter approach. It is absolutely unique in its approach.”

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About the Champlain CCAC

The Champlain Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) is one of the largest health service providers in the Champlain LHIN with a budget of approximately \$182 million and 679 employees. It serves more than 52,000 clients annually across our region.

The Champlain CCAC provides a single point of access to health and personal support services to help people live independently in their homes or to facilitate their transition into a long-term care home. The CCAC plans, coordinates and ensures the delivery of a full-range of in home and community-based services to support clients and their caregivers. In addition, the CCAC provides clients with information and connects clients to alternate sources of care in the community. Info: www.champlain.ccac.ca.

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Client interviews may be arranged upon request.