

BRIGHT LIGHTS AWARD


2013

**Integration: Building Beyond the Family Health Team
Award Winner — Prince Edward Family Health Team**

The implementation of the Prince Edward Ambulatory Cardiac Health (PEACH) - Cardiac Rehabilitation (CR) Program



Cardiac care doesn't end with good medical attention. Rehabilitation is essential for rebuilding heart health. But there is no one-size-fits-all approach to rehab; to be effective, it needs to suit patients and work in the context of their lives. Cardiac rehab works best as a blended program of exercise, education and counselling designed to optimize the physical, psychological, social and vocational status of each patient. The Prince Edward Ambulatory Cardiac Health Rehabilitation Program was designed to do that in very practical ways.

The cardiac rehab team at the Prince Edward Family Health Team is made up of a physiotherapist, a registered nurse, a specialist physician, a dietician, a social worker, a pharmacist and a transition planner. The core rehab program involves assessment and recommendations, a 12- to 20-week exercise program and individual interventions (such as support to quit smoking).

But just as important, the program makes planning for transition into the community a priority. Partnerships have been formed with local recreational facilities and activity-based associations (such as field naturalists and local hiking groups) to encourage patients to find long-term activities that will keep them involved and active.

Most Prince Edward County residents go to Kingston for cardiac care, and referrals to the rehab program are now automatic. Previously, there was no rehab program outside of Kingston, and very few residents of Prince Edward County would have considered travelling for it. The PEACH program, however, is serving 60 patients per year.

The relatively new PEACH program is still working with Kingston's Hotel Dieu Hospital to train team members, but the ultimate goal is to share education opportunities with cardiac rehab patients and staff from other family health teams and clinics in the region, with PEACH eventually becoming a mentoring site for other facilities in Ontario. There are also plans to let cardiac patients not registered with the Prince Edward Family Health Team use the exercise space and equipment for their rehabilitation.