

# BRIGHT LIGHTS AWARDS



2020

## **Award: Demonstrating a Community Response to COVID-19**

Couchiching Family Health Team

### **Achievement: Well-being program for area seniors**



Orillia and the Couchiching sub-region are known for their large aging population. Couchiching FHT, in partnership with Orillia Soldiers Memorial Hospital (OSMH), reached out to Specialized Geriatric Services (SGS) at Waypoint Centre for Mental Health to ensure that this vulnerable population was not at even greater risk due to the pandemic. These groups worked together to create and implement a program to ensure that their seniors' health was addressed during COVID-19.

The process they created ensured that all seniors attending the area's COVID-19 Assessment Centre received follow-up wellness calls from CFHT or SGS clinicians at days 4 and 10 post-COVID test. A comprehensive wellness check form was created by SGS to check on the following risks: isolation, lack of resources, caregiver stress, and acute medical concerns.

Seniors in need were connected to local resources. When clinicians making these calls encountered more complex medical questions or concerns, they connected with the individual's primary care provider (PCP). For those seniors without a PCP, CFHT arranged with the Couchiching Family Health Organization (CFHO) for a physician consultation. In addition, a physician from the Orillia Family Health Organization (OFHO) agreed to roster unattached seniors involved with this program.

From April 1, 2020 to June 30, 2020, 63 local seniors were referred to this service. Clinicians completed a total of 149 wellness checks in this time. Clinicians were able to contact 56 of the 63 referred and address their needs.

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Almost one-third of those served by wellness checks noted feeling anxious or low in mood as a result of the pandemic; many indicated they were pleased to be able to speak with a clinician during the shutdown.

In implementing this program, Couchiching FHT and its partners have demonstrated that through a simple identification and referral process, vulnerable populations can be identified and served.

**Key Facts:**

- Through the collaborative efforts of local partners, a vulnerable population was monitored and assisted during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Both rostered and non-rostered patients were served.
- In the first three months of the program, they received 63 referrals and 56 seniors were located and served.
- Almost one-third of the seniors served reported feeling sad or anxious, so outreach was important.
- This process is applicable to other vulnerable populations.

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