

**First-of-its-Kind Province-Wide Collaboration
Launches Website & Online Toolkit to
Build Better Outcomes for Frail Seniors in Ontario**

TORONTO (April 30, 2009) - Funded by Health Force Ontario, the GiiC (Geriatrics, Inter-professional Practice and Inter-organizational Collaboration) initiative is helping to build better outcomes for frail seniors across the province.

"The GiiC initiative, is a province-wide knowledge exchange, bringing together health professionals working within the Regional Geriatric Programs of Ontario, Family Health Teams, and Community Health Centres to improve the care of frail seniors across the province," says Dr. David Ryan, Director of Education for the Regional Geriatric Program at Sunnybrook and the GiiC lead investigator and project director. "Up until now health professionals in hospitals, community health centres and family health teams worked in isolation and independently of one another."

The GiiC Toolkit was launched today online at <http://giiic.rgps.on.ca> and also on a USB stick that is available to all participating health professionals. Areas of care addressed in the toolkit include: capacity assessment, care giver support, delirium, dementia screening and assessment, depression, driving capacity, end of life care, falls risk, frailty, incontinence, inter-organizational collaboration, inter-professional practice, oral health, osteoporosis, pain, periodic health exam and polypharmacy.

Frail seniors are those who, for various reasons, are not able to maintain 'zoomer' status. Frail seniors represent that 15% of seniors whose quality of life, dignity and independence are at risk because of the convergence of complex medical, social, psychological and functional challenges. Though only 15% of the ageing population they consume 30% of the health care budget.

"Seasoned health professionals involved in the project have come to us and said things like "in thirty years of learning and practice I have never been involved with something as useful and important," adds Dr. Ryan. "Caring for frail seniors is not something that is taught in our medical schools. It is a unique specialty that requires an interprofessional team, a special knowledge base, and the capacity to collaborate across organizational boundaries"

Dr. Joshua Tepper, Assistant Deputy Minister of Health responsible for Health Human Resource Strategies and 150 people from the Regional Geriatric Programs of Ontario (Toronto, Hamilton, Kingston, Ottawa and London), the North Eastern Ontario Geriatrics Interest Group (Sudbury) and the Center for Education and Research in Ageing and Health (Thunder Bay) together with individuals from the 150 Family Health Teams and Community Health Centers from all parts of the province gathered today at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Toronto, to review and celebrate the success of the GiiC initiative which Dr. Tepper views as an important element in Health Force Ontario's Blueprint for Interprofessional Care .

With a second grant from Health Force Ontario, the GiiC initiative will continue to engage the RGP's specialized geriatric services providers, family health teams and community health centres across the province with GiiCPlus: Patients, Families and Health Care Teams.