



Renal PFAC Chatham Satellite Visit Report

On December 1, 2015 representatives from the Renal PFAC visited the Chatham Satellite Hemodialysis Unit.

Goals

- Promote Renal PFAC
- Meet satellite patients, and rural PD, Home Hemo and CKD patients from the area
- Gather feedback and suggestions from the rural patient population
- Generate interest from satellite patients who might be interested in joining council

Attendees

- Fred McInnis, George Goodlet, Angela Andrews, Don Smith, Robert Barnicoat
- Suzanne Webster, Chatham Program Manager, Sheila Saunders , Charge RN and Chatham dialysis staff
- satellite unit patients

Findings

In general, the patients stated that they were very happy with the care from the satellite unit, and the renal program. They felt because the unit was small, they developed good relationships with the staff, and felt they could tell the staff if they had problems with their care. The patients also described their fellow patients as “dialysis family”.

- Transportation: The patients who require transport to dialysis use CHAPS (a Chatham based transport company). In general patients were happy with this service, however did express some problems with the cost of the service (around \$35 per trip to London, or \$25 per trip in the Chatham area

which can certainly add up by the end of the month). Other patients talked about living on the border between Lambton and Kent County, which caused problems with transportation because although they were close to the border of the counties, the CHAPS only covers Kent county so could no longer pick a patient up who was in Lambton County

- Parking: for patients who drive themselves and park at the hospital, there is no charge for a parking pass. The patients are extremely happy about this.
- Appointment Times: some patients discussed getting to early appointments in London for dialysis catheter changes in radiology (at either VH or UH) could be a problem. They felt that their long drive was not taken into account when booking an appointment, and that it would be beneficial to offer later appointments to out of town patients
- WIFI: the patients have access to free WIFI, as well as free television service. The Chatham dialysis patients do have access to the iPad's for communicating to staff in London, but the WIFI service is not reliable enough to use the service to its full extent at the moment. The Chatham hospital is working on improving this WIFI service
- Transplant Follow up: one patient mentioned that he has been asked about his interest in transplant frequently during nephrologist visits over the last 2 years, but no follow up has been completed on this. He felt that there was lack of follow through on this.
- Vacations: one patient also talked about the cost of dialyzing out of Ontario. When it was mentioned that OHIP will reimburse patients up to a certain limit, but anything above that was the patient's responsibility, the patient stated that it took almost a year to get his reimbursement from the government
- Joining PFAC: several patients were also interested in either joining the Renal PFAC, or starting their own chapter of the PFAC in Chatham
- Drug Coverage: patients expressed concern that funding for certain medications (phosphate binders, replavite) had been stopped. They felt that anyone who was on ODSP should have their dialysis medications covered
- Waiting list: the waiting list for Chatham satellite dialysis unit has 19 patients on it. The Chatham unit falls within 2 LHIN coverage areas (Erie St. Clair and South West), so they have both London area and Windsor area patients waiting to get into the Chatham unit.

Actions

- PFAC brochures, the letter to patients and staff, and PFAC business cards were left with the unit
- The unit Manager requested the help of the PFAC to review a new patient information handbook that is being completed for the dialysis patients in Chatham, the PFAC agreed
- Angela will follow up on the possibility of new members joining or creating a PFAC chapter in Chatham

Common Themes

- The overall impression of the visit was that it went well, and the group feels that council would benefit from visiting Owen Sound and Goderich Satellite Units once the weather improves in the new-year.
- The theme continues to emerge around patient transportation, in that it is either difficult to obtain, or the burden of cost is too high for patients who are on a limited income.
- The long waiting list for the Chatham dialysis unit is disheartening; patients feel they should be able to get treatment in their own community instead of travelling for a life sustaining treatment, which causes significant financial burden and stress to already unwell patients.