

INTEGRATED CARE IN KENORA – HOW THE SUNSET COUNTRY FHT AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS HAVE BANDED TOGETHER TO PROVIDE A PULMONARY REHABILITATION PROGRAM FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH COPD

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Kenora, Ontario is located 2.5 hours east of Winnipeg on the spectacular Lake of the Woods (LOTW) and 6 hours west of Thunder Bay, ON. LOTW has become known as Winnipeg's cabin country and many travel year round to their 'camps' on the lake and surrounding areas. Kenora is also known for its pristine wilderness, clean waters and outstanding fishing, boating and camping.

The Kenora service area is large and a widely dispersed geographical area with a catchment population estimated at 28,000. Census Canada shows that there are 15,348 people living in the City of Kenora, of which 2800 are identified as First Nation. The Sunset Country Family Health Team (SCFHT) also services Unorganized Territories (East & West), Minaki, Redditt, Sioux Narrows/Nestor Falls and 11 surrounding First Nation communities with a population of approximately 8000.

In 2019, All Nations Health Partners (ANHP) became one of the first Ontario Health Teams, as well as the first from the North, the smallest, and the only team with full Indigenous and community partners. ANHP started as the Kenora Area Health Care Working Group, which formed in 2015 to address a critical doctor shortage and cross-border issues. The ANHP include Indigenous, municipal and health care leaders who signed a Resolution in ceremony in 2017, to work towards the development of a seamless, patient-centred health care system. The ANHP aim to provide the right service, at the right time, in the right setting, for everyone in the Kenora region. Cultural safety will allow the blending of traditional and mainstream medicines for holistic healing. SCFHT is one of many ANHP partners working to integrate care for those living with lung disease.

The SCFHT Lung Health Program consists of spirometry screening of patients suspected of having asthma or COPD, comprehensive assessment, self-management education, smoking cessation, individualized care plans that are completed in collaboration with the patient's primary care provider and regular follow-up. Though the team offered disease management, there was an identified need to support our patients in exercise and activity.

Over the past year, the SCFHT Certified Respiratory Educators (CREs) and the outpatient rehabilitation department at Lake of the Woods District hospital (LWDH) have been meeting to design a new outpatient pulmonary rehab exercise program to replace the now defunct Fitness for Breath (FFB) program that was running in conjunction with the Kenora Recreation center. The one part-time physiotherapist at LWDH had previously worked in Dryden, ON and provided the FFB format at their local hospital.

She has developed a 6-week pulmonary Rehab program that will consist of:

- Subjective assessment
- Objective measurement of baseline HR, O2 saturation; BP, 6 minute walk test while monitoring O2 saturation
- Review of a Home Exercise Program including exercise execution / follow up and handouts
- 6-week course of twice weekly appointments for the monitored cardiovascular component

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Breathing Control and Exercises
- Breathing techniques - Active cycles of breathing, Pursed-lip breathing and Diaphragmatic breathing exercises
- Energy Conservation
- Stress/Anxiety Management
- Yoga, Meditation and COPD

The SCFHT CREs and primary care providers can refer eligible and willing patients to the program through one referral form with consent from the patient. The LWDH physiotherapy department contacts the patient to set up the initial intake appointment and to review the program components.

We will be meeting again shortly to review the current objective measures, client satisfaction surveys, successes, ongoing issues/challenges and working collaboratively to find successful solutions to allow the program to move forward and grow.