

# Promising Practices for Strengthening Primary Care

## Horizon Health Network – Staying Healthy Clinic



### The challenge

Older adults in New Brunswick’s rural communities have limited access to preventative, team-based primary healthcare services.

### The promising practice

The Staying Healthy Clinic is a nurse-led, team-based primary healthcare service for older adults with chronic conditions and/or at risk of declining health. The clinic provides older adults with health services and information to help improve their skills and confidence to: manage their chronic condition, prevent health decline, falls, and learn how to access community resources to help them age safely at home. For patients at risk for frailty, the primary care team develops a care plan with self-management support interventions and provides ongoing case management for up to six months. The clinic currently operates out of the Central Miramichi Community Health Centre in rural New Brunswick and can be accessed by self-referral and/or referral from a healthcare team member.

### Example impacts

- Older adults have better access to preventative team-based primary care closer to home. “I know if I call the clinic, I will get an appointment.” – Staying Healthy Clinic patient
- Older adults learned about health information and community resources that helped them feel more confident in managing their chronic conditions at home. “I am more aware of what is going on with my health.” – Staying Healthy Clinic patient
- Patient needs and desires were prioritized through care plans created collaboratively between older adults, caregivers and care providers. “The nurse helped me get information on how to make a referral for physiotherapy and access financial assistance.” – Staying Healthy Clinic patient

### Potential future impacts

- Improved team-based healthcare services for people without a primary healthcare provider.
- The clinic is available to all Horizon Health Network community health centres.
- A reduction in avoidable emergency department visits and/or hospitalizations, associated with effective self-management of health and social needs (e.g., reduction in frailty, falls, medication errors/omissions).

“I am more aware of what is going on with my health.”

- Staying Healthy Clinic patient



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## Keys to success

- **Role of the nurse:** Registered nurses are enabled to work to their full scope of practice.
- **Flexibility:** Patients' healthcare plans and interventions are explicitly focused on what matters most to them.
- **Champions:** Leaders mentor staff and resolve process barriers.
- **Meaningful partnerships with communities:** Engagement and collaboration with community members and organizations has fostered a strong sense of ownership and commitment within the community.

## Lessons learned

- Be creative and flexible in making process improvements.
- Seek input from older adults in the community about what they need to improve their health and wellbeing.
- Engage with all community partners and stakeholders and keep them informed.

## How can I learn more?

Contact the organization.

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## Why was this summary created?

Horizon Health Network, participated in Healthcare Excellence Canada's (HEC) Strengthening Primary Care (SPC) program. SPC brought together 20 primary care organizations from across Canada to advance practices to improve access to safe, including culturally safe, team-based primary care.

This promising practice summary was co-produced with Horizon Health Network to help others learn about their work and generate discussion about how similar approaches could be adapted and applied elsewhere.

