

## Ontario Self Management Network Launches to Give Patients Control

Toronto, March 7, 2006 -- A consortium of healthcare institutions and patient associations have taken the initiative to bring patient self management to the people of Ontario. Patient self management is a revolutionary approach to healthcare—empowering patients to manage chronic and complex conditions—for better health results.

Already popular in the UK, the US, and western Canada, “Leading Patient Self Management Courses” – the newest best practice in health care is now advancing in Toronto due to the commitment of a number of Toronto hospitals and associations to come together to change the world for their patients.

“We’ve seen first-hand the benefits of this program,” says Durhane Wong-Rieger, chair of the newly formed Ontario Patient Self Management Network and president of the Institute for Optimizing Health Outcomes. “Even with the best of care, more than 95% of the time patients with chronic conditions are managing on their own. Patient self management gives them and their caregivers the skills and tools to do it more effectively, so they’re more confident and motivated to use medications appropriately, follow treatment plans, eat well, exercise and manage stress. It’s a win-win.”

Launched on March 6 with Baycrest, the Network is hosting three public forums in the north, east and south of Toronto where Dr. Patrick McGowan, the Canadian expert of patient self management and head of the program in British Columbia, will present the key elements of the program and other leaders will be on hand to discuss how it works and how the public can get involved. With a focus is on patient empowerment, control and independence, self management techniques enables patients with chronic illness to join their health care team as dynamic participants and full partners in their own care.

The second forum will be in the evening on March 7 at Bridgepoint Hospital, and the third is in the evening on March 8 at the Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care.

Mary Kim, a lay leader with The Arthritis Society, is a testament to the power of the program. “Patient self-management has given me the confidence and skills to do as much as I want. And I love leading the program because people come in feeling limited by their arthritis or other disease and by the end they feel able not only to take charge of their condition but to take on the world.”

This morning over 100 health care leaders attended the professional workshop of the Ontario Patient Self Management Network, at Bridgepoint Hospital. Highlighting the workshop were two keynote speakers: Dr. McGowan and Dr. Wendy Graham, lead physician in the Blue Sky Family Health Network in North Bay.

“By managing patients more effectively, the Family Health Teams can significantly reduce the burden on emergency services and specialists. Similarly, we as family physicians need to support patients to manage their own health condition as well as possible.”

The Ontario Patient Self Management Network is comprised of Baycrest, Bridgepoint Health, The Arthritis Society, Optimizing Life, North York General Hospital and Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care. For more information about the network and patient self management programs in Ontario visit [www.ontpsm.net](http://www.ontpsm.net)

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