

# Central Okanagan Seniors Health and Wellness Centre



Their goal is to help older adults maintain independence and work toward their health and wellness goals, developing strategies to assist them in meeting these goals.

For example one patient reported “I would like to walk to the kitchen to make breakfast and not fear falling, so my physiotherapist developed a plan with a strengthening strategy that included an exercise program at the local recreation centre.”

Research has shown that an interdisciplinary care team is the best approach to address the complex health needs of older adults, and helping clients achieve and maintain independence and wellness.

The Central Okanagan Seniors Health and Wellness Centre, located within Cottonwoods Care Centre in Kelowna, features a multidisciplinary care team designed specifically to help seniors.

Family doctors and nurse practitioners refer their medically complex and frail older adult patients to the Centre from Lake Country, Kelowna, West Kelowna and Peachland.

The Centre’s mission statement is ‘We believe in the dignity and worth of every senior. Our specialized care team supports older adults in achieving independence and wellness.’

They offer a one-stop–shop to see many health-care providers. Depending on the client’s needs, he or she might see one or several of the health professionals who work at the centre. These include: general practitioners; geriatricians; occupational therapist; pharmacist; physiotherapist; registered dietitian; registered nurse; respiratory therapist; social worker; and a speech language pathologist.

This team provides education, support, assessments and short term interventions. Family doctors are regularly updated with assessment findings. The Centre’s staff can also make referrals to other appropriate Interior Health programs and community programs as required.

An occupational therapist might make a house call to conduct a home safety assessment to remove risk for falling, or add equipment in the home to ensure safety. As well, the client is likely seeing the geriatrician general practitioner or another clinician at the Centre for other medical concerns and strategies to improve their health.

The original referral might be for physiotherapy strengthening in response to multiple falls at home, but on a closer look, the cause of the fall might be related to a medical condition that requires intervention, such as medication changes.

Once the initial geriatric assessment is completed and a care plan is started, most clients see several health professionals at various appointments. Most clients prefer one-hour appointments, as each clinician’s assessment is quite in-depth.

One client described the staff as “very kind and knowledgeable.” He said he has multiple health issues and every person he has seen has kept his comfort level, both physically and medically, top of mind. “This really is an outstanding service,” he said.

If you or someone you know is an older adult struggling with: falling; memory changes; nutrition; pain; caregiver support; medication; speech; swallowing; or bowel and bladder concerns, ask your doctor or NP about a referral to the Seniors Health and Wellness Centre.