

KEY MESSAGES – Confinement Syndrome

The North Simcoe Muskoka Specialized Geriatric Services (NSM SGS) program is encouraging partners in the region to use the **week of October 5th – 9th 2020** to raise awareness of the impact of COVID-19 on older adults, with a particular focus on the concept of Confinement Syndrome. The following is a list of key messages for older adults, caregivers, health care providers and/or the public.

- NSM SGS first used **the term** Confinement Syndrome in response to the experiences of older adults and caregivers during the initial wave of COVID-19.
- **Causes** of Confinement Syndrome include:
 - Disruptions in social networks and support systems;
 - Reduced access to health services and/or social programming;
 - Reduced mobilization and activity (due to physical distancing, fear of contracting the disease, etc.); and/or,
 - A loss or reduction in access to usual or familiar health care providers.
- Confinement Syndrome reflects a constellation of clinical issues that can be linked to the increased confinement older adults and caregivers are experiencing during COVID-19. **Symptoms** will vary based on level of frailty, underlying medical conditions, baseline functional and cognitive status, social networks and the degree of disruption in 'usual' activities and supports. Symptoms can impact/include:
 - Physical health & well-being (i.e. acute illnesses, dehydration, malnutrition, inadequate pain management, pressure ulcers, etc.)
 - Mental health & cognition (i.e. loneliness, anxiety, depression, delirium, responsive behaviours, etc.)
 - Functional status (i.e. reduced mobility, falls, bladder incontinence, etc.)
 - Caregiver health & well-being (i.e. caregiver stress, elder abuse, etc.)
- While there may be more recognition of the **risk** for Confinement Syndrome in congregate settings, the risk is present for older adults and caregivers across settings.
- We need to **find the right balance** between keeping older adults and caregivers safe from COVID-19 and reducing the risk of Confinement Syndrome.
- **Assessment** for clinical issues must become part of routine care because early identification and intervention will lend to better health outcomes.
- The initial wave of COVID-19 resulted in a deterioration in the health and well-being of older adults and caregivers. With wave two now underway, continued restrictions coupled with changing weather (individuals becoming increasingly confined indoors) will further jeopardize their health and well-being. **Raising awareness** of Confinement Syndrome is key to supporting older adults and caregivers during all waves of this pandemic.