

TELEHEALTH PROGRAM

EVALUATION REPORT ON TELEHEALTH SESSION

Arthritis

September 18, 2007

Kelly Howarth, M. Ed., Dpl. Ad. Ed., Program Evaluator
Jo Ann Jones, R.N., M. Ed., Community Support Coordinator

The Fall 2007 to Spring 2008 Telehealth Schedule began with a session on *Arthritis* with Myra Siminovitch, Physiotherapist. Held Tuesday, September 18, 2007, from the Montreal Children's Hospital, the session was hosted by MCDC of Thetford Mines and was moderated by Jo Ann Jones. The session followed an interactive format, with regular question periods throughout and an optional 30-minute question period at the end.

The following are highlights of results:

- Communities: 7 communities, including 9 sites: CAMI, CASA, MCDC, Neighbours, Townshippers' Association (Estrie and Montérégie), and Vision Gaspé Percé Now.
- Number of participants: 97 people
- Number of completed evaluations: 66%
- Positive comments: having access to the printed materials from the Arthritis Society, the information presented, that all questions were answered.
- Level of satisfaction: People agreed (on a scale of 4/5) that the presentation was helpful, interesting, met their expectations and that the resources were useful.
- New Partnerships: MCDC renewed its partnership with CLSC occupational therapist, CASA forged new partnership with 50+ Club and Galgoasiel Natural Resource Center, Townshippers' Association forged new partnership with the Arthritis Society, as well as with the CLC in Bury.

It must also be noted that due to some problems resulting from lack of site certification, an additional site in the Estrie region (Townshippers' Association), Bury, with 20 participants, was not connected to the conference. Plans were then made to show the DVD to this community and facilitate a session with 15 participants.

A new approach for this session was to use selected resources from the Arthritis Society (www.arthritis.ca), and these were sent to the communities well in advance of the presentation. The presentation spoke to these resources, highlighting two major types of arthritis: rheumatoid and osteo arthritis. The focus was on diet, exercise and medications. Two invited guests from the Arthritis Society, Andy Chabot, Executive Director, and Michelle Brisebois, spoke about the various resources, services and programs they offer to the communities. Five sites stayed on until 3:30 p.m. with additional questions for our presenter.

When asked, “*What did you learn that is worth remembering for a lifetime?*” participants cited the following memorable quotes:

- “The pamphlets are going to be very useful.”
- “The difference between OA and RA.”
- “That the Arthritis Society is there for us all.”
- “A lot.”
- “There is hope and help for people.”
- “Exercise is very important.”
- “Cortisone is not damaging to the bones.”
- “That women are more affected by arthritis than men.”
- “Exercise, exercise even if it is painful.”
- “What we can do for pain.”

Constructive feedback centered on the technical glitches: one site could not get into the conference and another site’s mute button failed, which was distracting and caused a delayed start.

The question and answer format went smoothly, with each community asking questions such as:

- Does arthritis affect different people differently?
- Does knuckle-cracking cause arthritis?
- What is osteoarthritis? How does it differ from rheumatoid arthritis?
- What treatments are available?

Future topics requested by participants include: heart disease, celiac disease, mental illness, hypertension and fibromyalgia.

Asked what more could be done in their communities around the issue of Arthritis, participants cited the following:

- Present to local groups
- Tell people what we learned
- Share resources
- Hold an arthritis forum

The next Telehealth Session, *Cancer Awareness*, with Pivot Nurse, Dail Jacob, is scheduled for October 9, 2007.