

Dear Colleague:

We are looking for several family physicians to participate in a unique workshop on the topic of “frailty”.

While “frailty” is not really a new phenomenon, it’s not a diagnosis that we regularly include in our charting, and most of us don’t discuss it directly with our patients. As a result, our frail patients and their families are often unprepared for their inevitable next health crisis.

In contrast, we are often quite adept at discussing other complex health conditions, their investigation and management, and the prognosis, and we can often do this within one or more office visits lasting only a few minutes each. For example, think about the standard “speech” that you give your patients about their new diagnosis of diabetes or congestive heart failure, and what you recommend they do to control their condition. No doubt that speech has changed a little over the years, as you’ve seen how patients receive the information and what questions they ask afterward.

Furthermore, we regularly assimilate “new” diagnoses and management approaches into our daily practice without vast amounts of reading and/or training. For those of you that have been in practice more than a few years, think about how your standard approach has changed for osteoporosis, ischemic heart disease, colon cancer screening, etc. Chances are that your protocols have changed over time, and they continue to evolve based on what you see your colleagues doing, what you hear in CME, what you read, and your knowledge of “how things work” in Nova Scotia.

So, when it comes to frailty, the question is “How do we help you and your colleagues to recognize and stage frailty, discuss it with your patients, and put in place the right management plan, all within the context of one or more office visits?” Out of this question was born the idea for a “Frailty Scripting Workshop” to be held on October 30th from 8 am to 12:30 pm.

The objective of this workshop is to look at ways to introduce frailty into routine primary care practice, from the initial assessment through to care planning. In contrast to most CME activities, this workshop will be interactive and FUN. Recognizing that you are the expert in communicating with your patients in your office, you will be an active participant in developing and applying knowledge, rather than the passive recipient of lectures from

specialists who don't work the way you do. We will use a "game show" format to support rich small group discussions about frailty with an opportunity to share what you and your group have learned. Along the way, you will have access to "subject matter experts", including geriatricians, communications specialists, behavior change specialists and some patients and their caregivers.

The results of this workshop will also be used to further enhance our Frailty Portal, a web based assessment tool to aid in the identification, screening and care planning for frail patients in the family practice setting. The hope is that standard scripting messages can be developed to support primary care providers as they integrate frailty into their practice.

If you are interested in participating in this workshop please RSVP with Stephanie Wood, Coordinator with Primary Health Care at StephanieA.Wood@nshealth.ca by Friday, October 9, 2015.

Thank you, we look forward to hearing from you.



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