

Men like Louis Wanted!

North East LHIN encourages fellow Northerners to take part in LHIN-funded exercise classes that help to prevent falls and stay healthy

July 28, 2016 – Louis Demers is doing his very best to avoid becoming one of the approximately 1,200 older adults hospitalized every year in Northeastern Ontario as a result of a fall.

He's participating in close to 300 free exercise programs funded by the North East Local Health Integration (NE LHIN) and offered in communities across the North. You can find locations near you on the LHIN's website [here](#).

Louis has joined in exercise classes at two North Bay locations. As he has limited mobility and walks with a cane, instructors have adapted the classes to accommodate him.

"I feel good when I come out of there," says Louis, 65. "People with limited mobility, like me, likely think they can't be in it, but they can do a lot sitting down."

Across the North East LHIN region, Louis is one of more than 2,000 seniors who took classes in the past year. He's noticed that he's one of the few men taking these free classes, and he encourages others to join – both men and women.

Exercise was never a need for Louis during his years as a high steel construction worker – working up 51 stories at times. Following a series of small strokes in recent years, he's found the classes have helped improve his hand-eye coordination, balance, and even his ability to put thoughts together to communicate. He also likes the opportunity to meet new people.

Compared to the province, the NE LHIN region has higher rates of emergency department visits and hospitalizations due to falls among people aged 65-plus. That's why a fall prevention strategy known as Stay on Your Feet (SOYF) was launched across the NE LHIN last year. It's a large-scale effort delivered in a partnership between the NE LHIN and the region's five Public Health Units, along with other health service providers and older adults.

"This prevention strategy is a great partnership effort that is helping older northerners stay active and living independently," says Terry Tilleczek, Senior Director, NE LHIN.



Louis Demers of North Bay looks forward to free exercise classes offered across our region through the support of the North East Local Health Integration Network (NE LHIN). Classes are open to anyone aged 65 and better.

FACTS:

- For the most part, falls are predictable and preventable. Stay on Your Feet (SOYF) offers these **Nine Steps to Prevent a Fall:**
 - Be active
 - Manage your medicines
 - Manage your health
 - Improve your balance
 - Walk tall
 - Foot care and safe footwear
 - Regularly check your eyesight and hearing
 - Eat well for life
 - Identify, remove, and report hazards.

- In 2016, the NE LHIN has the second highest proportion of older adults in the province at 20% (115,000). SOYF is aligned with the NE LHIN's strategic plan to create a sustainable health care system – one that is focused on health and not just health care, and supports keeping people healthy, well positioned to address the growing needs of this aging population.

- The location of LHIN-funded exercise classes can be found on the NE LHIN website [here](#).

- The NE LHIN has signed agreements with our region's five Public Health Units and is funding them to support implementation of the Stay on Your Feet strategy.

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For more information: Please contact: Lara Bradley, Communications Officer, NE LHIN, lara.bradley@lhins.on.ca, 705-674-1492.