



FOR RELEASE  
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## **Early results of medication reduction project a reason to celebrate**

DAWSON—Six months into an innovative project funded through Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement (CFHI), Copper Ridge Place residents and staff are experiencing positive results. Minister of Health and Social Services Mike Nixon announced in Dawson today the work of the facility's special care team to reduce the use of antipsychotic medication in residents with dementia is proving very successful.

"Of the residents on the special care unit who are prescribed antipsychotic medications, more than half have had their prescriptions for antipsychotics reduced since the pilot project began in August," Nixon said. "Staff report that some residents are enjoying an improved quality of life – this is a huge benefit and a clear sign of success."

Yukon is one of 15 health care bodies across Canada to be accepted into the Reducing Antipsychotic Medication Use in Long Term Care pilot project. Yukon receives funding and support from CFHI.

At the national level, Choosing Wisely Canada – a coalition of physician groups – is also promoting the reduced reliance on antipsychotics for dementia patients. CFHI is also supporting their efforts.

"We are delighted to see the impressive results achieved by Yukon Continuing Care, one of the leaders in this Canada-wide effort," CFHI president Maureen O'Neil said. "Through collaboration, we are helping to spread innovative ways of working that are improving care for patients and their families."

Over the past six months, staff at the Copper Ridge Place special care unit have worked on person-centred strategies to manage difficult behaviours that resulted in the use of antipsychotics. The unit has now reduced the number these prescriptions by more than half, and discontinued use completely for some residents.

"One of the benefits of a small jurisdiction participating in pilots such as this is our ability to see immediate results. This is a tremendous success to be celebrated," Nixon said, adding the initiative will now move into Yukon's other continuing care facilities.

One individual whose antipsychotics were discontinued is now participating in activities and engaging with others around him. His son said today: "The results of this program for my father have been very positive. He now has a notably increased ability to interact with family, visitors and his caregivers. To see my father now, he is clearly well-adjusted and comfortable in his environment and is quite obviously at home. I would not have hoped for such a positive outcome from his admission just over one year ago. My deep appreciation goes to the very caring staff of Copper Ridge. We are very pleased and comforted by the quality of our father's care."

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