

# Chinese seniors get better care with partnership

BY CHRIS TRABER  
Staff Writer

York Region's Chinese-Canadian seniors and caregivers will receive enhanced services through a new partnership announced yesterday.

The plan teams up Community Home Assistance to Seniors (CHATS) with Carefirst Seniors.

Dickson Wu, one of the estimated 500 additional seniors expected to benefit, endorsed the alliance.

"This is very good because we are all one Chinese group and we appreciate Chinese style services," said the 83-year old Richmond Hill artist who receives respite care services for his wife, who has dementia. "Our caregiver speaks Cantonese and communicates well with my wife."

When a certified personal support worker is watching over his wife, Mr. Wu is able to shop for groceries, bank and indulge in art classes.

Funded by an annual \$500,000 grant from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the pair of non-profit agencies will bolster four core community services for seniors, said CHATS executive director Deborah Egan.

Caregiver relief, home housekeeping, transportation, escort and interpretation and group dining and wellness programs will be

expanded with additional staff and an accelerated volunteer recruitment campaign.

"This signifies our joint efforts to care for and nurture Chinese seniors and caregivers," Ms Egan said. "It also symbolizes our commitment to work together in growing culturally sensitive services to York Region's Chinese population, which is growing."

About 37 per cent of Ontario's Chinese population resides in Markham and 28 per cent live in Richmond Hill, Carefirst executive director Helen Leung said.

"The collaboration between CHATS and Carefirst not only makes a big stride in maximizing community resources, but also facilitates access to a range of culturally relevant community support services for Chinese seniors and caregivers," Ms Leung said. "We thank CHATS for their vision. "We always believe that one and one equals more than two. This partnership will let us enhance cultural competencies."

The expanded program will become a social service model other communities can adopt, Ms Leung said.

"Together we're partnering and building bridges with people from different cultures," Ms Egan said.

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