**Important News about Bed Rails**

The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) has directed all long term care homes to review their use of bed rails and to only use them when needed.

**Why is this an issue?**

Residents in long term care homes are experiencing injuries after becoming entrapped by rails on their beds, or falling in an effort to get over or around them. Potential risks can include skin bruising, cuts and scrapes, more serious falls when residents climb over the rails and even death from strangulation or suffocation. Also, many residents see the rails as restraints that can cause an increased level of agitated behaviour or feelings of isolation.

Many health organizations and government agencies, such as Health Canada, have been studying the use of rails on hospital-style beds and there are now “best practices” related to their use. This research tells us that there is a desire to remove rails on all residents’ beds unless there is a good medical reason for them. This could be in cases where the rails act as a personal assistive device for a resident.

**What we’re doing at Parkview Home?**

Most residents can be in bed safely without bed rails by using the following strategies that are available here at Parkview:

* Beds that can be raised and lowered close to the floor to promote resident safety.
* Mats placed next to the bed when a resident is at risk of falling out of bed.
* Use of bed alarms, transfer and mobility aids
* Use of specialized mattresses with wedged sides to prevent residents from rolling out of bed.

To implement this change:

* Residents will be assessed by our interdisciplinary team to determine the need for bed rails.
* For residents who do not need rails, a plan for removal of the rails and the use of safety measures such as floor mats or bed alarms will be discussed with residents and families. These residents will be monitored to see how the transition has gone and whether continued use of safety devices is required.
* Residents, who need rails as a personal assistive device, will be advised and their families will be advised. An alternative to rails will be implemented if possible or an assist rail will be installed.
* When a rail is in place, staff will be required to monitor and reassess as needed.
* This transition will begin in October 2018.

**What if you have a question?**

Residents, family members and staff will need time to adjust to this change and we welcome your ideas and support.

Please feel free to speak to us if you have questions or concerns. Our goal is to create the safest environment possible for our residents.