

Health Links in Action

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To help understand how a Health Link can help a patient, here's a real life example.

Bernice's story before Health Links:

Bernice is a senior who lives at home independently. A personal support worker from the local Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) visits once a week and her kids are regular visitors. One day, she falls and gashes her arm. She calls 9-1-1 and is taken to hospital in an ambulance. Bernice is treated in hospital and sent back home. Her family doctor isn't notified, and Bernice receives no follow up care. When the personal support worker next comes, they're surprised to find out that she's been injured.

A year later, Bernice falls again, and breaks her hip. She is once again sent to hospital by ambulance. She waits three days in the emergency room, and is then transferred to another hospital where she has surgery. She spends six months recovering in the hospital, and contracts Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), an infection common in hospitals. She then sells her house and moves to a long-term care home.

To care for Bernice in her long-term care home over the next five years will cost the health care system close to half a million dollars.

Bernice's potential story with Health Links:

Bernice lives at home. A personal support worker from the CCAC comes once a week and her kids are regular visitors. One day, she falls and gashes her arm. EMS comes, fixes her up right on the spot and notifies her primary care provider. Her primary care provider makes a geriatric assessment referral on the spot. Her children go with her to the appointment, and learn how they can improve Bernice's functional ability. Bernice is then enrolled in a falls prevention program, where she makes new friends and starts going to Bingo.

One day, leaving Bingo, she slips and falls on the ice and breaks her leg. She is taken to her local community hospital. Staff members at the community hospital call the designated referral hospital and have Bernice transferred right away for surgery. Following her surgery, Bernice is transferred back to the community hospital where she recovers. A week later, she is discharged to a transitional care program for a month. She is then sent back home, with ongoing support to help maintain her functional ability.

Caring for Bernice in her home, with access to health care in the community, will cost the health care system about \$100,000 over the next five years.