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Carelink manager of client satisfaction Kevin Buckland, left, and Cochrane district EMS operations supervisor Luc Hurtubise show off the new Link to Life Medical Information File, available in the Timmins and district to help better inform paramedics and physicians about a patient's medical history.

File under 'L' for lifesaving; Papers assist medics to help diagnose unresponsive victims

Posted By Chelsey Romain

It's great to have a service such as 911 or a medical alert system, but what if you're unconscious when help arrives?

A private company called Carelink is ensuring that people in the North have a means of communicating with paramedics or physicians even if they are unresponsive through the Link to Life Medical Information Files.

Representatives of Carelink, as well as from Timmins and District Hospital, Cochrane District Emergency Medical Services and the Porcupine Health Unit, were on hand Monday to announce the distribution of these vital pieces of paper.

"The original concept for the design of the Link to Life Medical Information File was essentially to design a product to help our clients," said Carelink manager of client satisfaction Kevin Buckland.

"As the design process progressed, we thought it was a great product that will be valuable not only to our clients, but the general public."

The packages require people to fill out their medical history, allergies and any medication they may be taking at the time. The package has a magnet on the back so it can be placed on a refrigerator and stickers to be placed on the front door, so paramedics know the information can be found within the home.

The company approached several key players within the communities where it has offices, such as Timmins, Sudbury and North Bay, to offer the packages free of charge to the residents.

"Time saves lives in our business," said Cochrane District Social Services Administration Board manager Steve Trinier. "The more rapidly that our crew can get in and identify the problem, the quicker care can be administered."

The information may be used by the paramedics when they arrive at a residence, or in emergency situations can be grabbed and taken with them to the hospital for the physician and nurses to use.

"There are numerous times a patient will arrive and we won't know the name of the medication they are taking or the dosage and that information is lost, and you have to wait for it to be obtained," said TDH emergency department medical director Dr. Chris Loreto. "It's great that something this simple will make our jobs that much easier."

TDH, the Porcupine Health Unit and the Cochrane District EMS each have 600 packages available to communities ranging from Hearst to Black-River Matheson.

To bring Link to Life to Timmins, Carelink has spent \$35,000 on the packages and will have to reassess the situation once the organizations run out. Buckland said they may look at offering a smaller subsidy on the packages compared to covering 100 per cent of the costs as they are now.

Those wishing to get their Link to Life Medical Information File can drop by the Timmins and District Hospital or their local Porcupine Health Unit or EMS office.