

Bernice's Story – "You have to have goals!"

An 82-year old Hamilton woman is living a brand new reality after having been completely bed bound. Bernice spent a number of weeks confined to her bed but is now able to walk up and down flights of stairs.

Last fall, Bernice ended up in hospital after becoming ill at home. She was on a path to long-term care but became unconscious for two weeks during her hospital stay. Her family gathered by her bedside, believing Bernice was close to death.

Thanks to determination, Bernice woke up and fooled all of them. Not quite ready for either death or long-term care, she spent three months in a retirement home as part of a transitional care program. Through the assistance of a physiotherapist, Bernice was able to visualize her goals and managed to follow through with suggested exercises until she was able to walk a few steps at a time.



"I would lay in my bed, look into the bathroom and I think to myself: *I'm going to walk to the bathroom* because lying in bed all the time is very humiliating," said Bernice. "I would picture myself walking up the stairs."

"It took a lot of willpower and, the last time the therapist asked if I could manage the stairs, I actually did it," Bernice said. "I went up the stairs and back down again and I'm so proud of myself!"

From a hospital bed to independence, Bernice is a true success story and now lives on her own in apartment in Hamilton's east end. To help ensure Bernice remains safe and able to care for herself, HNHB CCAC has a care plan in place that provides Bernice with visits from an occupational therapist and a social worker.

Care Coordinator Siobhan Thompson says Bernice's story is remarkable.

"Bernice called me to say she has had the best sleep in months now that she's in her own home," Siobhan said. "This is a story to celebrate!"

According to Bernice, "at the retirement home, they called me a miracle!"

After visiting the store one day, Bernice arrived back home and realized she'd forgotten her cane in the store. "It occurred to me that I walked home without my cane. That's when I knew I had reached my point of independence." Bernice's niece Michele Pincaro is helping decorate and furnish the new apartment. "She's so happy!"