

COVID-19 Rehab Stakeholder Forum #1

MEETING SUMMARY NOTES

DATE: APRIL 9, 2020, 3:00-4:00 PM

GROUPS REPRESENTED: Approximately 45 participants joined the call with representation from CorHealth Ontario, Medical Directors and Program Administrators of Rehabilitation programs and services, allied health care professionals, Regional Stroke Networks, Rehab Care Alliance, Heart and Stroke Foundation, and Ministry of Health (Provincial Programs Branch)

DISCLAIMER: The information in this document represents a high-level summary to capture the discussion at the point of time of the meeting and is NOT general guidance.

HIGHLIGHTS/ KEY THEMES

Key Themes

- Providers and patients are facing many challenges related to the provision and receipt of rehabilitation in community/home-based settings.
- There is a need to ensure stroke patients are getting essential rehab for critical recovery while trying to support flow to community.
- There may be a need to plan for an expansion of cardiovascular rehabilitation services post pandemic due to COVID-19 related cardiac disease.
- Sharing of expertise, strategies and insights through a community of practice would be desired.
- Many organizations, colleges, and associations have posted links and resources related to the delivery of rehab during COVID-19.

Key Challenges for the provision of rehabilitation during COVID-19

- The group discussed a number of system, provider, and patient-related challenges affecting the provision of rehabilitation during COVID-19.
- Members highlighted particular challenges with:
 - Redeployment of staffing resources as a result of the provincial emergency order
 - Technology access and availability
 - Management of patient anxiety, depression, and loneliness due to COVID
 - Ensuring staff wellness

- Increased challenges providing programming to patients with special needs (hearing impaired, dementia, language barriers)
- Keeping up with volumes (due to 1:1 home-based programming vs. group)
- Mitigating loss of staff due to compensation models for home-based rehab
- Mitigating increasing number of patients who are declining rehab due to risk of COVID-19 exposure.

Opportunities

- Several opportunities were identified that could be applied to cardiac, stroke and vascular patients. These included:
 - Examining models (e.g. hub and spoke) to share resources, triage rehab patients and mitigate capacity issues during COVID-19
 - Leveraging/expanding upon existing innovations/collaborations to mitigate redeployment issues (e.g. Waterloo tech platforms to connect providers with patients)
 - Creating a community of practice to share ideas and expertise

Stroke-specific opportunities

- The group identified several opportunities for further discussion and guidance development. The guidance would help address the following questions:
 - a. What kind of care can be provided virtually at home versus which should be provided in an in-person model in the community?
 - b. When can a patient be safely discharged from inpatient rehabilitation to the community for ongoing care. (e.g. what is essential inpatient rehab care?; how can we ensure smooth transitions?)

Cardiac-specific opportunities

- The group noted several opportunities including:
 - sharing information on how to staff 1:1 intensive programs
 - sharing information/ guidance on how to manage new referrals
- It was noted given the data on COVID related heart disease, there may be a need to plan ahead for an increase in the number of patients requiring cardiac rehab as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as a general need for rehabilitation or programming for people recovering from infections.

Resources to Support Community and Home-Based Rehabilitation

- Information was presented on COVID-19-specific rehabilitation resources and links available through other websites and associations. CorHealth can provide links to these resources on its COVID-19 Resource page if valuable to the group.
 - Action for All: If forum members are aware of other rehab specific resources/tools, please share with Michelle Klein at CorHealth (michelle.klein@corhealthontario.ca)

- A document developed by CorHealth and available on CorHealth's COVID-19 Resource Page specific to virtual and remote monitoring tools, resources and major websites was also shared.

NEXT STEPS

CorHealth to:

- Send out/post a summary of discussion
- Set up working meetings/discussions to further explore opportunities identified for provincial guidance development within each clinical domain
- Follow-up with meeting members to gather specific documents or links to resources that may be shared on CorHealth's COVID-19 Resource Centre