

The Stroke Program, Edmonton Zone (SPEZ) quarterly newsletter provides current information and updates to healthcare providers working within stroke care.

Stroke Transitions of Care

Smoothing the Bumpy Road to Recovery

Abruptly and often permanently, stroke affects the lives of patients and their families. "The goal of transition management is to facilitate and support seamless patient, family, and informal caregiver transitions across the continuum of care, and to achieve and maintain optimal outcomes and quality of life for the family system following a stroke. Patients, families and informal caregivers should be provided with tools and information to help them manage recovery after stroke and optimize participation and fulfillment of life roles."¹

Transition planning begins early and involves the patient, family, informal caregivers, primary health care and other community providers.² Providing patients and caregivers with education, training, emotional support and community resources specific to their needs can ease the transition across the continuum of care. **Communication between health care providers at each transition point is critical for smooth patient transitions.** Clear documentation at each transition point will facilitate information sharing and ease stroke survivors into the next phase of recovery.

In a literature review of stroke transitions, Cameron et al.³ demonstrated that patient and caregiver experiences in transitions of care was far from optimal. Three themes emerged that, if addressed, could enhance their experience across transitions of care:

1. A consistent approach to educating and training stroke survivors and caregivers to manage in the community
2. Information about available services and supports
3. Assistance to navigate through the stroke system

A comprehensive stroke program must consider all points along the stroke care continuum and explore and implement measures to fill gaps in care, helping to smooth the bumpy road of care transitions.

Featured Stroke Best Practice Guideline

6.5: Community Reintegration Following Stroke

The Recommendation states

"Patients and families should be provided with information, support and access to services throughout transitions to the community following a stroke to optimize the return to life roles and activities [Evidence Level B]."

Rationale Provided states

"The post-discharge period is consistently reported by stroke survivors and their families to be a stressful and challenging time as they adjust to new roles and potentially altered functional and cognitive abilities of the stroke survivor. Patients and their families often lose the social, emotional, and practical support offered by an inpatient stroke service. The evidence shows that when there is coordination of care beyond the inpatient setting and community support services are provided, patient outcomes and patient and informal caregiver satisfaction improves."

What is the Stroke Program, Edmonton Zone doing?

Several initiatives have been implemented to facilitate and enhance smooth transitions for stroke survivors.

The **Stroke/TIA Information Package** is provided to all patients while in hospital or during their Stroke Prevention Clinic appointment. It includes information on signs & symptoms of stroke, what to expect after a stroke, managing risk factors, and community resources.

The **Peer Support Program** offers hospitalized patients the opportunity to meet with a volunteer stroke survivor. These peer mentors provide support, introduce patients to the Stroke Recovery Association, and provide patients with the **Community Resource Guide for Stroke Survivors and their Caregivers**.

"**Living with Stroke**", a tailored course developed by the Heart and Stroke Foundation and soon to be facilitated in Edmonton by AHS Chronic Disease Management, provides stroke survivors and their caregivers learning opportunities and support to help cope with changes after stroke.

SPEZ also assists stroke survivors and their families to navigate the healthcare system. We promote Stroke Best Practice and standardized stroke care, such as **Post Stroke Depression Screening** which will roll out across the Zone in the fall.

1. Lindsay MP, Gubitz G, Bayley M, Hill MD, Davies-Schinkel C, Singh S, and Phillips S. Canadian Best Practice Recommendations for Stroke Care (Update 2012). On behalf of the Canadian Stroke Strategy Best Practices and Standards Writing Group. 2012; Ottawa, Ontario Canada: Canadian Stroke Network.
2. Winnipeg Regional Health Authority Clinical Practice Guideline: Inpatient Care for Patients Following an Acute Stroke. Lynch et al, 2012.
3. Cameron JI, Tsoi C, Marsella A. Optimizing stroke systems of care by enhancing transitions across care environments. Stroke.2008;39:2637-2643.

SPEZ Launches New Webpage

Check out the new Stroke Program, Edmonton Zone webpage www.albertahealthservices.ca/edmstroke.asp

This webpage is designed to be a 'one-stop shop' for stroke survivors, caregivers, healthcare providers, and the general public. The webpage consists of a public section and a health care professionals section, where relevant information, resources, tools, and links can be found. Add the above link to your 'favorites list' and pass along to your patients/families.

The webpage continues to be a work-in-progress. We would love to hear your ideas, contact: laurel.morrison@albertahealthservices.ca

Primary Stroke Prevention Workshop: 'Strike Out Stroke'

In your practice, do you see clients who have any or several of the following modifiable risk factors:

- Previous TIA
- High cholesterol
- Atrial fibrillation
- Smoker
- Obesity
- Poor diet
- High blood pressure
- Type II Diabetes
- Sleep apnea
- Excessive alcohol
- limited exercise
- High levels of stress

More risk factors = Greater risk for stroke!

Help your clients reduce their risk of stroke by informing them about these **free, two-hour workshops called Strike Out Stroke**. Workshops will be offered on a regular basis, beginning September 9th, through [Chronic Disease Management](#).

Clients can contact HEALTHLink Alberta at 1-866-408-5465 for more information or to register.

2014 Canadian Stroke Congress

Mark your calendar to attend the [5th annual Canadian Stroke Congress](#) taking place **October 4–7, 2014** in Vancouver.

Deadline for online registration is September 30th.

Along with a comprehensive array of workshops by world-renowned stroke specialists and researchers, International expert, Leanne Togher, will present the newest information in Aphasia Best Practices and treatment. View the [Preliminary Program](#) for what is sure to be another exceptional event!

Continuing Education

September 5-7th [Visual Process Impairment II – Evaluation & Intervention for Adult Acquired Brain Injury](#)

September 11th The New Oral Anticoagulants: Bleeding Management Protocol a Provincial Update * Register on the Telehealth Scheduler

September 12-13th [8th Atlantic Canada Stroke Conference](#)

October 1st Speech Language Pathology Services for Adults Community of Practice: Wholistic and Transdisciplinary Treatment Practices * Register on the Telehealth Scheduler

October 11-12th [Vascular Days](#)

October 15th [Spotlight on Research Breakfast](#)

October 16th Stroke Education for Nurses * Register on the Telehealth Scheduler

October 24th Stroke Prevention Clinic Educational Half Day * Register on the Telehealth Scheduler

November 8-9th Neuro-Developmental Treatment (NDT) Course for Assistants & Support Workers contact cherie.henderson@albertahealthservices.ca

November 19-23rd [Neuro-Developmental Treatment \(NDT\) in the Management and Treatment of Adult Hemiplegia](#)

On-Going Education

Acute Stroke Case Rounds (Calgary Stroke Program) First Friday of every month * register on the Telehealth Scheduler

Edmonton Rehabilitation Rounds

2nd Wednesday of every month from 1200 – 1300 * Register on the Telehealth Scheduler

October 8th, 2014

"Constraint Induced Speech Therapy" presented by Kristyn Emmerzael and Caitlin Reid, Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital

November 12th, 2014

A Case Study presented by the Camrose Stroke Early Supported Discharge Team

December 10th, 2014

An update from the Cardiovascular Health and Stroke Strategic Clinical Network presented by Agnes Joyce