Cirrhosis Care Alberta Program (CCAP) - PRIHS 4

The digest: spring 2019 edition

High-needs, high-cost (HNHC) populations include those living with organ failure such as advanced heart, lung and liver disease. Suboptimal care for these patients often leaves them with little alternative to accessing acute care for support in times of disease exacerbations or inability to cope at home. This contributes to the capacity issues and back log in emergency departments in acute care sites throughout Alberta.



Pictured (Left to Right): Michelle Carbonneau, Puneeta Tandon, Derek Drager

The Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Health System (PRIHS) is an Alberta Innovates and Alberta Health Services partnered funding opportunity, focused on research and innovation that will improve quality of patient care, while reducing costs in the healthcare system.

We are excited to announce that out of 100 applicants, the "Cirrhosis Care Alberta Program" (CCAP) – which is supported by the Digestive Health Strategic Clinical Network (DH SCN) - was one of six projects selected for PRIHS funding over the next three years. "This project is an amazing opportunity to bring patients, providers, and health administrators from across the province together to implement quality focused changes in our health system. This will no doubt lead to improved efficiencies and a shift from reactive hospitalbased, to proactive community-delivered care" said Michelle Carbonneau, Project Manager. Results from January 8, 2019 can be viewed at 2018-2019 Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Health System (PRIHS), Enhancing Care in the Community.

The CCAP, includes Dr. Puneeta Tandon (Project Lead), Michelle Carbonneau (project manager), Derek Drager (patient lead), and more than 100 other team members from across the province. "The



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time has come to shine a spotlight on cirrhosis. Termed a 'crisis in the making', it is estimated that rates of advanced liver disease will rise by more than 150% within the next 10 years! In the current state, four out of 10 Albertans with cirrhosis who are admitted to hospital are re-admitted within 90 days, the highest of any chronic disease. To explain why this may be, we've identified multiple gaps which our interdisciplinary team of experts will systematically address over the next 3 years. It is our vision to improve the patient/family and provider experience, ensure that patients receive quality care and ensure that they receive the support they need to remain

safe at home within their communities, requiring less time in hospital," said Dr. Puneeta Tandon, Project Lead. The program will strive to deliver integrated, best practice services for medical and broader health needs to patients with advanced liver disease (cirrhosis). In addition to best practice support, care will include strategies to improve home-hospital-home transitions, all of which have been associated with improving care and reducing hospital readmissions.

Patients will be identified at the time of admission in eight participating hospitals throughout Alberta over the next three years. Overall, the project will aim to improve outcomes for patients, families, providers and the heath system by supporting appropriate care in the community in an integrated, collaborative, and systematic way. "I suffered from advanced liver disease – and many of its painful symptoms – for a prolonged and stressful time. If I'd had online resources I could access, and a

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knowledgeable person I could talk to about my pain and fear, it would have made my journey to survival so much easier," said Derek Drager, Patient Lead. "My goal as patient advisor is to make that journey more bearable for others. Knowledge, empathy and coping strategies – these are three key ingredients I hope we can provide for all Albertans suffering the awful effects of liver disease."

This is an exciting opportunity for acute, community and primary care teams to work collaboratively. Stay tuned over the next three years, as we look forward to providing updates on the project as it progresses, and sharing our findings. For information related to the project, please contact Michelle.Carbonneau@ahs.ca or contact the digestivehealth.scn@ahs.ca.