

Annual Report 2022/23

A VOICE

for Rehabilitative Care

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A Voice For Rehabilitative Care

As our health care system grapples with the long-term effects of COVID-19, the GTA Rehab Network continues to act as a strong voice for rehabilitative care.

Over the past year, the Network has continued to support member organizations and bring our collective expertise to system planning initiatives. Through this difficult time, the Network has remained a committed champion of rehab as an essential, core component of the continuum of care - and a key part of the solution to some of our system's biggest challenges.

The GTA Rehab Network identifies rehab patient, provider and health system needs, then builds bridges to connect them. Our work powerfully supports patient flow and acts as a catalyst for solutions at the system level, where Network data informs regional planning for improved patient care and experience.



As a clinical leader, I get tremendous value from working with my colleagues at the GTA Rehab Network. The Network provides critical information that helps us understand the bigger picture and facilitates collaborations between key stakeholders to tackle complex operational challenges, improve processes and address system-wide issues at the organizational level.

Jackie Eli

Senior Clinical Program Director

Rehabilitation and Ambulatory Care

Hennick Bridgepoint Hospital, Sinai Health

Supporting System Transformation

The Network's bridging of regional engagement and system planning activities supports true integration by helping break down silos between organizations and throughout the system for a more seamless, consistent and patient-centered approach to rehabilitative care.

Key activities this year included:



Analyzing rehab demand and capacity

In collaboration with Ontario Health - Toronto and in light of current system pressures, in 2022/23 the Network conducted a comprehensive review and analysis of rehab demand and capacity in the GTA. Leveraging a wide range of data sources, the analysis resulted in recommendations that are supporting acute and rehab sector dialogue about access and flow issues.

As part of this work, the Network identified a high number of patients with tracheostomies currently awaiting care and has analyzed these issues in depth to better understand what is required to continue to meet their specialized needs in a timely way.



COLLABORATING FOR A STRONGER SYSTEM

The GTA Rehab Network brings an invaluable lens to our work at Ontario Health. By sharing their unique expertise and providing thoughtful, detailed reports, the Network is a key input into our planning of rehabilitative care services in the Toronto Region.

Andrea Demers

Director

Capacity, Access and Flow

Ontario Health - Toronto



Supporting patient flow through weekly reporting

Following the Network's real-time data collection to support patient transfers through the pandemic, in 2022 the secretariat responded further with twice-weekly bed capacity reporting of nine sites to Ontario Health – Toronto. The increased reporting came in response to ongoing capacity challenges and enabled decision making at the GTA Incident Management System (IMS) table to support patient transfers based on system need. Secretariat staff worked closely with rehab partners to ensure data quality in reporting.

For the first time, the data provided system-wide insight into not just the number of beds available but also the profiles of patients waiting for care. Data distinguished between high- and low-intensity rehab and complex care; it also reflected the fluctuating nature of bed closures due to outbreaks, health human resources issues and other concerns.



Understanding cross-regional utilization

Recognizing that patients often cross regional borders in the GTA, the Network analyzed rehab/CCC utilization data to better understand patient flow between Ontario Health's Central, Toronto and East regions. The Network reviewed patients' residential locations relative to rehab/CCC programs accessed, rehab patient groups, sending hospitals and volumes to discern admission patterns of the past three years. Currently, the Network is working with Ontario Health to interpret these findings and inform future capacity planning considerations.



Updating the inpatient rehab referral guideline

To support patient flow and avoid ALC designation, the Network recently updated its Referral Guideline for Bedded Levels of Rehabilitative Care in collaboration with acute care and rehab/CCC partners. The guideline outlines essential criteria and timelines for both referral senders and receivers to maximize efficiency and improve patient flow.

Stronger Together

Over the past year, the Network collaborated with members to strengthen patient care, contextualize data, share and spread best practices and optimize system flow. Highlights include:

Optimizing in-home rehabilitative care for older adults

In partnership with GTA Home and Community Care Support Services (H&CCSS) and the Regional Geriatric Program of Toronto, the Network has developed a Quick Reference Guide for Optimizing In-Home Rehab Care for Older Adults. Outlining several domains across which older adults can be assessed, the Guide highlights for H&CCSS care coordinators how a holistic, senior-friendly rehabilitative care approach provided by in-home rehab professionals can positively impact the older adult's independence and ability to participate in meaningful activities.

Going forward, the Network continues to work with H&CCSS directors in the GTA. Recently, it has convened an Occupational Therapy (OT) Home Environment Assessment Guide Working Group tasked with developing a care coordinator reference guide for OT home environment assessments. When complete in late 2023, the guide will apply to all GTA H&CCSS organizations and will supplement existing eligibility criteria.



Improving flow, testing change

While much of the Network's focus is on systemic transformation, it also improves system flow by proactively leading smaller-scale tests of change. For example, the Network partnered with Hennick Bridgepoint Hospital, participating acute care sites and transportation provider Voyago to pilot a new non-emergency patient transport model.

The goal was twofold: reduce admission delays to rehab/ complex continuing care (CCC) hospitals due to transportation booking issues, and increase the efficiency and predictability of transportation use. While the pilot is currently ongoing, early findings are positive and illustrate members' ongoing commitment to continuous quality improvement.



Facilitating knowledge transfer

A key focus of Best Practices Day 2023 was Ontario's ongoing health human resources (HHR) challenges through the lens of rehabilitative care. Presenters offered insights into a range of perspectives, including moral distress among rehabilitative care providers, HHR issues in Northern Ontario and the potential to expand scopes of practice to help alleviate HHR challenges.

Following an engaging opening keynote by Dr. Karima Velji, Chief of Nursing & Professional Practice and Assistant Deputy Minister of Health for the Province of Ontario, the day also included topics critical to rehabilitative care professionals: the power of rehab to optimize the health care system, care for long COVID-19 patients, implementation of post-fall pathways in the emergency department, and many other rehab best practices.



Our Members

Member organizations of the GTA Rehab Network include hospital and community-based providers of rehabilitation services, as well as other planning and coordinating organizations in the Greater Toronto Area.

On behalf of the GTA Rehab Network, thank you for participating in this critical work. We remain grateful for your knowledge, collaboration and support.

Chair: Anne-Marie Malek

Vice-Chair: Dr. Mark Bayley

Rehabilitation/Complex Continuing Care Hospitals

Baycrest Health Sciences
Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital
Runnymede Healthcare Centre
Sinai Health System/Hennick Bridgepoint Hospital
Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre/ St. John's Rehab Hospital
Toronto Grace Health Centre
Unity Health Toronto/Providence Healthcare
University Health Network/Toronto Rehab
West Park Healthcare Centre

Acute Teaching Hospitals

Sinai Health System/Mount Sinai Hospital
Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre
Unity Health Toronto/St. Michael's Hospital
University Health Network

Home and Community Care

Home and Community Care Support Services - Central
Home and Community Care Support Services - Central East
Home and Community Care Support Services - Central West
Home and Community Care Support Services - Mississauga Halton
Home and Community Care Support Services - Toronto Central

Community Hospitals

Halton Healthcare
Humber River Hospital
Lakeridge Health
Mackenzie Health
Michael Garron Hospital
North York General Hospital
Oak Valley Health
Scarborough Health Network
Southlake Regional Health Centre
Trillium Health Partners
Unity Health Toronto/St. Joseph's Health Centre
William Osler Health System

Ex-Officio Members

Regional Geriatric Program of Toronto
University of Toronto

GTA Rehab Network Staff

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Karen Allison, Office Manager†
Sue Balogh, Project Manager†
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