

Central East Stroke Network Newsletter



Volume 2, 2020

Stroke Care During a Pandemic

According to the World Stroke Organization “the incidence of serious and potentially life-threatening diseases such as ischemic and hemorrhagic stroke will not diminish and care for these patients still needs to be provided. In fact, COVID -19 may actually increase ischemic stroke risk because of the hypercoagulable state and effects on the cardiovascular system associated with a severe form of the viral infection.” (Source: <https://www.world-stroke.org/news-and-blog/news/the-global-impact-of-covid-19-on-stroke-survey>) In this issue we will explore some of the stroke best practice changes that have been implemented in response to these challenges as well as learn how providers within our network have transitioned to virtual and hybrid models to support patient care.

The Ontario Stroke

Report 2018/19 released in June is a new format to support knowledge exchange and quality improvement at a system & organizational level. For more information [Click Here](#)

To view infographics for NSM LHIN, Central LHIN & CE LHIN - [Click Here](#)

Stroke Best Practices During COVID-19

In recognition that stroke care remains essential, the Heart & Stroke Canadian Stroke Best Practice Recommendations (CSBPR) Advisory Council developed a cross continuum advisory statement for stroke care. *The Stroke Best Practice Guidance During the COVID-19 Pandemic* was published in the Canadian Journal of Neurological Sciences (Can J Neurol Sci. 2020; 47: 474-478). Two guiding principles directed this work: **1. Stroke remains a medical emergency & 2. stroke care is highly effective.** [Click Here](#) for full article.

A number of professional and patient resources can be found at: <https://www.strokebestpractices.ca/coronavirus>

In This Issue

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Public Awareness....

In response to a significant decrease in numbers of stroke patients arriving in ED, Heart & Stroke added messaging to FAST.

The Aphasia Institute developed “Go To Hospital” to support aphasia-friendly public awareness needs.

Links for both resources can be found on the CorHealth website under Public Awareness at: <https://www.corhealthontario.ca/resources-for-healthcare-planners-&-providers/covid19/stroke>

Stroke is a medical emergency. Do not hesitate. Call 9-1-1 even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Learn the signs of stroke

Face is it drooping?
Arms can you raise both?
Speech is it slurred or jumbled?
Time to call 9-1-1 right away.

heartandstroke.ca/FAST



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Hyperacute Workflow processes needed to be reviewed and in some cases changed to support a **Protected Code Stroke Model**. All patients should be screened, staff should don the appropriate PPE and a process should be in place IF a patient requires intubation. Some sites have implemented a Protected Code Blue Team instead of the ED physician intubating. The best practice messaging reminds us that evidence-based stroke care should continue. Hyperacute stroke response teams are available.

For further information refer to the AHA article "*Protected Code Stroke*" (Stroke. 2020;51:1891-1895. DOI: 10.1161/STROKEAHA.120.029838) <https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1161/STROKEAHA.120.029838>

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Inpatient & Stroke Unit Care Key messages included stroke patients should continue to be cared for in specialized stroke units where possible. Multiple resources were created to support staff in basic stroke care. Examples include discipline specific reference guides developed by Champlain and Toronto Stroke Networks. These additional resources can be found on the CorHealth webpage: <https://www.corhealthontario.ca/resources-for-healthcare-planners-&-providers/covid19/stroke> The care guides are helpful for staff that have been redeployed but are also helpful if patients are being cared for in non-traditional care settings. i.e. ICU overcapacity and post-tPA patient being cared for on ISU, stroke patient with COVID being cared for on COVID unit, ISU overcapacity, and patient cared for on a general medical unit.

Heart & Stroke updated TACLS (Taking Action for Optimal Community & Long-Term Stroke Care) to align with the current best practice guidelines and is now in a condensed version for the acute care setting. These resources can be found at: <https://www.strokebestpractices.ca/resources/tacsl-acute>

Peterborough Regional Health Centre was pleased to open its Outpatient Stroke Virtual Rehab clinic in May 2020. COVID-19 allowed the team to discover creative ways to continue to provide therapy services to patients across the Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge (HKPR) District. PRHC utilized a COVID-19 recommendation memo released from CorHealth Ontario & collaborated with the Outpatient Rehab Team at Lakeridge Health to establish a Virtual Rehab program. This program has much larger utility than just a response to COVID-19, Virtual Rehab will continue to bring therapy to a population who may not have had the opportunity to benefit from therapy services before. The Virtual Rehab program has also been expanded into the Cardiac and Pulmonary programs.

What do the patients have to say:

4.4/5 stars – How would you rate your Virtual Rehab Experience?

4.4/5 stars – Did Virtual Rehabilitation Therapy assist you in working toward your rehab goals?

4.7/5 stars – Overall was Virtual Rehabilitation Therapy a positive alternative to no therapy during COVID-19?

Patient Feedback:

“Kudos to the team that made this happen”

“Very grateful for the support”

“The team was great, they made **** feel very comfortable and were very friendly and professional. We thank you for being there for us”

We know Virtual Rehab is not a replacement for face to face therapy, however, it does allow some support to patients recovering from a stroke and reintegrating into their communities. For more information contact Erin McHattie, District Stroke Coordinator emchatti@prhc.on.ca

SPOTLIGHT ON.....CESN would like to shine a light on the great work happening across the region to improve stroke care and the quality of life of persons with stroke. If you have a good initiative to share - let us know about it!

March of Dimes Canada's After Stroke Peers Fostering Hope Goes Virtual

March of Dimes Canada's Peers Fostering Hope (PFH) program is a first step in ensuring everyone impacted by a stroke feels accepted and supported. This program runs with volunteers who are stroke survivors themselves. PFH provides new stroke survivors the opportunity to speak with a peer, with the volunteer offering emotional support and provide hope that there is life after stroke. The current landscape with COVID-19 has prevented this program from running since March, resulting in many stroke survivors losing this opportunity. With the support of our hospital partners we adapted the PFH program virtually to the current environment.

One adaptation allows our volunteers to connect with stroke survivors and caregivers after discharge through virtual meetings or phone calls. These are arranged through MODC staff to allow for navigation or tech support participants may need before or after the meeting. Virtual connections allow participants to safely and easily meet, which is crucial at a time when so many services have been suspended.

MODC believes that stroke survivors should have the option of receiving this support in any circumstance making this virtual option important. It is also what led to us working with hospitals to create virtual bedside visiting again for PFH. Currently in the final planning stages of this program, we hope to see it launch in the hospitals in the CESN region in the coming weeks. The addition of virtual bedside visits will allow volunteers with lived experience to connect directly with patients early in their journey to provide emotional support from someone with lived experience.

If you know a stroke survivor or caregiver that could benefit from speaking to a peer volunteer, please let us know. Our staff can arrange for a virtual visit to support them. Please contact afterstroke@marchofdimes.ca or 1-888-540-6666. Submitted by Devon Evershed | Manager, Stroke Services, Ontario, Community Programs & After Stroke

Community Are you wondering how community services have shifted their delivery models in order to support persons with stroke during COVID-19? CESN has created a webinar series titled "What's available in...." to showcase the adaptations and innovations of local community programs in response to COVID-19.

Agencies highlighted included:

- * March of Dimes - After Stroke Program & Aphasia and Communication Disabilities Program
- * North Simcoe Muskoka Home & Community Care program – Stroke Pathway
- * Central East Regional Cardiovascular Rehabilitation Program
- * Powerful Tools for Caregivers Program
- * VON SMART program
- * Brain Injury Services Muskoka Simcoe
- * Central LHIN Self-Management Program

Webinars and session handouts can be viewed at: <https://cesnstroke.ca/professional/cesn-webcasts/>

Send your suggestions of community programs to highlight in this webinar series to cesn@rvh.on.ca

"Virtual & Online Resource Corner"

Check out the Self-management video series developed in partnership with Heart & Stroke and Alberta Health Services. Topics include:

- * Upper Extremity Management
- * Fatigue & Energy Conservation
- * Stress after Stroke

<http://canadianstroke.ca/en/tools-resources/videos>

Additional resources in the community <https://cesnstroke.ca/professional/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/06/Virtual-Supports-for-Survivors-Caregivers-June-2-2020.pdf>

Stroke & COVID-19: What's the latest and where can we find resources? Presented by Dr. Catanese & Jean Morrow

[Aug 5th, 2020 Provincial Stroke Rounds](#)

Just as the strain of COVID-19 began in early April, MAHC welcomed Aira Darzin-Chapman, as new full time District Stroke Coordinator.



- * At MAHC (like everywhere else) we put ED screening and protective practices in place that include Code Stroke.
- * We saw a large decrease in numbers of patients admitted with stroke in April & May, 2020.
- * In June, we laminated and posted the updated FAST posters (with the message “Stroke is a medical emergency. Do not hesitate. Call 9-1-1 even during the COVID-19 pandemic) in public places such as grocery store bulletin boards. We also included this message on our MAHC Facebook site.
- * Our District Stroke Centre area on the MAHC Website <https://www.mahc.ca/en/services/DistrictStrokeCentre.aspx#> includes a link to COVID-19 information.

Submitted by Donna Crump, MAHC District Stroke Nurse

CONGRATULATIONS Mackenzie Health’s Improving Stroke Outcomes Utilizing Data and Technology project is the recipient of the 3M Health Care Quality Team Award (Across a Health System).

The Stroke Team used a multidisciplinary approach by incorporating EMR technology and data-driven process improvements to achieve better functional outcomes for stroke patients. A customized electronic orders set improved clinical workflow for all team members in the hyperacute stroke process. The door-to-needle (DTN) time to tPA was drastically reduced by 50% (53.5 minutes to 27 minutes) in an 18-month period. Likewise, the time between patient arrival and departure to an Endovascular Thrombectomy centre (Door-in-Door-out, DIDO time) significantly decreased from 97.5 minutes to 71 minutes, resulting in a 27% improvement. By reducing the DTN and DIDO times, one third more patients experienced good functional outcomes, less severe strokes and a 52 per cent increase in patients who return home without the need for additional supports.

The development, customization, and optimization of the Stroke Program not only standardized how care was delivered to stroke patients but allowed for comprehensive structured documentation, improved reporting, and data-driven process improvement initiatives, all of which are transferrable and can be adopted by other health care organizations across the health system. For more information contact: Yasmin Visram, District Stroke Coordinator Yasmin.Visram@MackenzieHealth.ca,

Resources & Upcoming Events

Remember to check the CESN Webpage www.cesnstroke.ca for updates & details.

Provincial Stroke Rounds: (08:00-09:00)

Oct 7th Building a Sustainable Integrated Stroke System of Care: A population-based approach to bundled care

Nov 4th & Dec 2nd - Topics to be confirmed

Are you looking for an opportunity to enhance your stroke knowledge & expertise?

Hemispheres is an interactive e-learning program available at **NO COST** to healthcare providers caring for stroke patients in CESN. Learn at your own pace. Quizzes & certificates are included in the program. For more information on the program contact:

Dorothy Burrige, Regional Education Coordinator at: burriged@rvh.on.ca