

INSPIRING
NEW ANNUAL REPORT
2013/2014
THINKING

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

With demand for ABI services continuing to rise year to year, the need for new and innovative thinking is greater than ever before. Over the past five years, the total number of referrals received by the Toronto Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Network has increased by a dramatic 60 per cent. While the highest demand for services continues to be for inpatient rehabilitation, the demand for community/outpatient services continues to grow.

One of the greatest tools we have at our disposal to encourage positive change at a systems level is education. This was a priority area of focus for the Network this year achieved through three major education events that reached close to 400 individuals from health care, community agencies, shelters and the public and private sectors. Not only did we use these events to educate, but also to stimulate dialogue about how we can maximize and integrate resources to better serve the needs of the ABI community.

Throughout the year, the Network also played a leadership role in tracking performance data, leading and supporting collaborative projects with service providers, and supporting individuals with ABI to access services.

Given a consistently high demand for inpatient rehabilitation and community based ABI services, we continued to work with health system and other partners to identify ways and means to support improved access. We also invested significant time working with system partners in the ABI, addiction, mental health and justice sectors with the mutual goal of improving service capacity for clients with complex needs.

Bringing added depth to those conversations was Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences which joined the Network as a member earlier this year. Ontario Shores provides a range of specialized assessment and treatment services to those living with complex and serious mental illness and has been a welcome addition to the Network.

We are grateful for the support of Network members whose collective voice remains an important tool in our efforts to initiate system change. As we look to the year ahead, we will inspire new thinking in our ongoing discussions with Network members, LHINs and other health system partners to address a growing demand for community services and supports. This is our time, and we are poised to make our mark as a networked community to help improve the lives of those living with the effects of ABI.

Hedy Chandler, *Chair*
Charissa Levy, *Executive Director*



CONNECTING PEOPLE TO SERVICES

The Toronto ABI Network provides an important forum for individuals, families, service providers and government to talk about the services and supports needed for those living with the effects of acquired and traumatic brain injuries. This includes connecting people with the services.

Connecting people with the services they need is also an important aspect of the Network's mandate. We manage a centralized wait list for inpatient ABI rehabilitation programs across Toronto and coordinate referrals to a variety of other community based services including outpatient rehabilitation, community based supports, mental health services, and recreational, vocational and supportive housing programs, among others.

54% for community/outpatient services

46% for inpatient rehabilitation

2013 – 1,454 referrals

2012 – 1,357 referrals

2011 – 1,116 referrals

**SINCE
2009:**

The total number of referrals has increased by

60%

There has been a
51%
increase in referrals for community/
outpatient services

There has been a

71%

increase in referrals to
inpatient rehabilitation

Data reflects referrals received by the Toronto ABI Network only and is not an indication of incidence or prevalence data. Referrals received for more than one service are counted for each service type.

Introducing a personal injury lawyer database

Working together with hospital partners – the Hospital for Sick Children, St. Michael's Hospital and Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre – the Toronto ABI Network launched a Personal Injury Lawyer Database to make it easier for individuals who have suffered a personal injury to access legal services. The searchable database features personal injury lawyer profiles so that users can find and compare services to help make an informed decision.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO CARE



Working towards best practices in inpatient ABI rehabilitation

Earlier access to ABI rehabilitation is associated with a shorter length of stay, higher cognitive levels on discharge, better functional outcomes and increased chance of discharge home. With demand for ABI rehabilitation outweighing the current capacity of existing programs, change is needed to align Toronto ABI rehabilitation programs with current standards of care, to increase timely access to services and to make the most efficient and effective use of resources.

The Toronto ABI Network's ABI Systems Analysis Task Group continued to make progress towards developing a comprehensive planning strategy for ABI services that takes all these priorities into consideration. This year, the Task Group completed a system analysis, including an analysis of regional centres in Ontario to help inform recommendations for change.

The Task Group has since evolved into a transitional role and will monitor patient flow at an operational level. Next steps include working together with Toronto's main acute centres and specialized inpatient ABI rehabilitation programs to develop a guideline that acute care clinicians can use to identify the most appropriate program for their patients (i.e. ABI rehabilitation versus Neuro rehabilitation).



Taking a multi-sector approach to address complex needs

Among the referrals received through the Toronto ABI Network are those for individuals living with an acquired brain injury as well as co-existing mental health, addictions and/or justice issues. The challenges these individuals face are complex and require a multi-sector approach to ensure they have access to the services they need to aid in their recovery.

As a member of the Human Services and Justice Coordinating Committee (HSJCC), the Network is working with representatives from the ABI, dual diagnosis, developmental disabilities, mental health and addiction and justice sectors to better support individuals with complex ABI and mental health or other issues. The committee was jointly chaired by the Toronto ABI Network and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health this year. The group is currently looking at innovative ways to work more collaboratively to improve the services available to vulnerable individuals with complex needs and has received funding to conduct a review in 2014-15 and identify the need for a Service Resolution Process in Toronto that would address the needs and system gaps for complex clients who face system barriers and access issues.

NEW



Identifying new models of care for people with complex needs

To help inform our work in improving access to services for people with complex needs, The Toronto ABI Network conducted a Complex ABI Needs Survey in early 2014 with members of the Toronto ABI Network Advisory Committee to capture member experiences working with clients in the community who have complex needs.

While survey results indicated that mental health was a particularly strong client focus, other needs identified included vocational and academic support, ongoing treatment, and more mild traumatic brain injury (TBI) and concussion clinics. The results identified the need for more seamless service delivery, the integration and sharing of resources, and improved collaboration between system partners. The Network will continue to work closely with members and system partners to implement alternate care models that support those with complex needs.

PIPING

PARTNERING TO DRIVE CHANGE THROUGH EDUCATION



Dialoguing about people with complex needs

More than 80 service providers gathered at a one-day educational forum in May 2013 to learn more about brain injury, homelessness, substance abuse and mental health court programs. Hosted by the Toronto ABI Network and the Toronto Human Services and Justice Coordinating Committee, *Bridging the Gap* attracted attendees from shelters, hospitals, inner city health teams, mental health teams and other community agencies. It opened up an important dialogue about system gaps faced by individuals with multiple and complex needs and created networking opportunities to discuss models of shared care.



Addressing care following TBI

The Toronto ABI Network partnered with Thomson, Rogers to host the Back to School 2013 Conference, *Hospital to Home: Working Collaboratively* in September 2013. The conference attracted 250 health providers, case managers and lawyers from the public and private sectors and addressed a wide range of topics affecting the care of individuals and their families following a traumatic brain injury (TBI).



Preparing patients for inpatient ABI rehabilitation

More than 60 health care providers from across the province participated in a half day education session, *ABI: Navigating from Acute Care to Rehab*, in February 2014 where they learned more about inpatient ABI rehabilitation programs, how to prepare patients for inpatient ABI rehabilitation, and what to expect during the referral process. Funded by the Toronto ABI Network, the session featured presenters from St. Michael's Hospital, Toronto Rehab/University Health Network, and West Park Healthcare Centre and looked at how we can ensure consistent practice in the care of patients with ABI who are waiting to access inpatient rehabilitation.



Planning for premier ABI conference underway

Much of the planning behind the Network's popular and highly regarded bi-annual ABI conference began in the fall of 2013, as we worked to confirm keynote speakers for the two-day event which will take place November 20-21, 2014. This premier event often draws attendees from across the country and around the world for its notable speakers and thought-provoking topics. Keynote speakers at this year's event will be Marc Berman, PhD., Robin Green, PhD., James Malec, PhD., and Ian McCallum, father of a brain injury survivor.

SUPPORTING SYSTEM PLANNING & ADVOCACY

The Toronto ABI Network plays a pivotal role as a collective voice for people living with acquired brain injuries, advocating on their behalf for accessible, high quality, publicly-funded services. We work to identify opportunities aligned with the priorities of the Local Health Integration Networks (LHIN) so that we can strengthen advocacy efforts and build a sustained profile for ABI among policy-makers.

One of the ways we do that is through our participation as a member of the Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation (ONF) Governing Committee where we are working to inform development and implementation of a clinical practice guideline for the rehabilitation of adults with a moderate to severe traumatic brain injuries (TBI).

We have also been invited by the Toronto Central LHIN to help facilitate and inform a provincial review of hospital-based ABI services that were transferred from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to regional offices from 2003-2007.

IMPROVING OUTCOMES THROUGH COLLABORATION

Members of the Toronto ABI Network

Acute Care

Mackenzie Health
St. Michaels
Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre
Trillium Health Partners
University Health Network

Community Service and Support

Central Community Care Access Centre
Community Head Injury Resource Services
Cota
Peel Halton Dufferin Acquired Brain Injury Services
Toronto Central Community Care Access Centre

Inpatient and Outpatient Rehab Programs

Baycrest
Bridgepoint Active Healthcare
Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital
Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences
St. John's Rehab/Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre
Toronto Rehab/University Health Network
West Park Healthcare Centre

Advocacy/Other (ex officio)

Brain Injury Association of Durham Region
Brain Injury Society of Toronto
Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation
University of Toronto

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