

COMPLETED:

STart Program: STroke Assessment, Rehabilitation & Transitions

BC Stroke Strategy Rehab & Community Reintegration Prototype Project

The STart Program (Stroke Assessment, Rehab, & Transitions) has been a successful pilot program funded by the BC Heart and Stroke Foundation that helped establish a unique partnership between Fraser Health Authority, Stroke Recovery Association of BC (SRABC), and the Abbotsford Recreation Centre to provide enhanced transitions into the community for stroke survivors. The STart program provided care coordination, outpatient services, enhanced SRABC branch services, and a community based adapted exercise program. The STart team consisted of allied health from Abbotsford Regional Hospital, the care coordinator, and the SRABC branch coordinator. Since its beginning on July 11, 2011 the coordinator has processed 195 referrals from Abbotsford, Mission and Chilliwack.

SRABC has utilized their new location within the recreation centre to promote reintegration for their survivors and their families. The TIME adapted exercise program has enjoyed continued success as a self-sustainable community based program and is currently running its 4th and 5th cohort in Abbotsford and Mission respectively. This expansion to the neighbouring community of Mission illustrates not only the need for this type of program but the ease of spreading this program.

As a result of the pilot funding, FH has been able to enhance the stroke outpatient rehab program at Abbotsford Hospital including the addition of a care coordinator who ensured all stroke patients being discharged from the hospital were referred to the program. Patients were given access to a multidisciplinary team in the outpatient setting including physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech language therapy, and social work. Transitional needs were addressed and referrals to the Stroke Recovery Branch and community exercise program were facilitated. The allied health team from the outpatient rehab component of the STart program helped close the gap between outpatient and community based programs by developing their role in the SRABC branch sessions held twice weekly at the community recreation centre. The SRABC branch in Abbotsford was able to expand operations to two days per week and enhance its offerings to include allied health staff from the STart Program on a regular basis. This allowed more diverse programs, greater continuity of care between the outpatient rehab and community programs, and improved the integration of survivors into the activities of the recreation centre.

By partnering with the Abbotsford Parks, Recreation, and Culture the STart program was able to initiate a new community exercise program designed for the neurological population. With oversight by the STart physiotherapist, a group of certified fitness instructors were trained and booked into 10 week offerings for up to 8 survivors at a time. This program continues to thrive with expansion to neighbouring Mission complete and further expansion plans to other communities being made.

In summary the following accomplishments have been made in the STart Project:

- Developed case management model based on the role of a care coordinator

- Improved access to allied health professionals for stroke survivors within the community setting
- Improved continuity of care with the ability of the allied health team to follow the stroke survivor from an outpatient to a community setting
- Established a service delivery model shared between an NGO and health authority
- Skilled knowledge transfer as allied health team gained experienced in stroke service delivery in a community model
- Initiated a sustainable community based exercise program for stroke survivors through partnership with the recreation centre
- Developed a set of process and patient related outcomes for continuous evaluation