Our Challenge

Stroke is common.
Stroke is the number one cause of acquired long-term disability in adults in BC. In 2010/2011, there were 5,758 patients in the province who experienced a stroke that was severe enough to require hospitalization; 17% of these patients died within a month following their stroke, making stroke the third leading cause of death in the province.

Stroke is treatable.
Time is brain. That is why we need your help. Along with coordination of emergency medical services and emergency departments, we need you to call 9-1-1 right away if you or a family member is showing signs of stroke.

Stroke is preventable.
80% of all strokes can be prevented through modification of five factors: quitting smoking, controlling hypertension, maintaining a healthy diet and weight, and regular physical exercise. For those patients who experience a transient ischemic attack (TIA, or reversible stroke), we know that 80% of strokes can be prevented after TIA with early treatment.

Stroke can get better.
Care processes across the continuum, from emergency medical services, to the emergency departments, to inpatient stroke units, and to rehabilitation and community reintegration, require sustained improvement efforts to achieve optimal care. As care providers, we are working hard to provide the best care across the Province.
Our Partnership
In partnership with Stroke Services B.C. (Provincial Health Services Authority), we have made significant progress in the care of stroke and TIA patients across B.C. The CCM stroke initiative seeks to provide best care for ischemic stroke, hemorrhagic stroke and TIA patients through the proper use of evidence-based guidelines, protocols and pathways. Please join us in this endeavor!

Our Successes
In 2011/2012, we coordinated a provincial learning collaborative, which brought together health care providers and leaders from emergency departments throughout B.C. The Stroke/TIA Emergency Department Collaborative was extremely successful and was able to increase rates of thrombolysis (clot-busting drugs) to stroke patients across the Province\(^4\).

In 2013, our focus changed to inpatient stroke care. The Stroke Unit Collaborative, led by Stroke Services B.C., was successful in building a network of inpatient stroke care providers, from across all regions in B.C., and from numerous clinical disciplines. This Collaborative was successful in increasing the number of stroke unit beds in B.C. – which will have a major impact on reducing stroke mortality and disability.

Our Future
Despite these major successes, there is much to be done. Our focus for 2014 is on Rehabilitation and Community Reintegration.

Guidelines
Canada is a world leader in the development of guidelines and best practices for stroke patients. The Canadian Best Practices Recommendations for Stroke Care provide the basis for most of the guidelines implemented in B.C., and have numerous resources for care providers, family members, and stroke survivors\(^5\). Many B.C. clinicians have shown leadership in contributing to the development of these guidelines.
Measures

Multiple indicators exist to measure the care of stroke and TIA patients\(^6\). The key reportable indicators in this CCM improvement initiative are the following:

1. Percent of patients who die within 30 days in hospital who have a diagnosis of ischemic stroke.
2. Final discharge disposition for ischemic stroke patients following acute inpatient admission: percentage discharge to their original place of residence; percentage discharged to long-term care facility or nursing home.
3. Percent of ischemic stroke patients who receive acute thrombolytic therapy.

Indicators are being developed to measure the number of patients treated on stroke units, and to measure inpatient hospital length of stay. Indicators to measure process of care and outcomes for rehabilitation are in development.

References

5. Canadian Best Practice Recommendations for Stroke Care 2014. www.strokebestpractices.ca

Resources

Stroke Services B.C., PHSA www.phsa.ca/AgenciesAndServices/Services/stroke-services-bc.htm
Canadian Best Practice Recommendations for Stroke Care 2014. www.strokebestpractices.ca
Accreditation Canada Stroke Services Distinction Program www.accreditation.ca/stroke-distinction
Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada www.heartandstroke.ca
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