

Background

It is estimated that over 1 million Ontarians are living with a neurological condition today. These are conditions that span every age and stage of life. They are often progressive and at present, not curable. Their cause is often unknown, yet, as they take hold of people's lives, they result in a significant degree of increasing disability for those with the condition, and negative impacts on their caregivers and families. For individuals, families, communities and our province overall, the health, social, and economic costs of neurological conditions are enormous. Historically, neurological conditions have been considered on a condition-specific basis, not as a category of illness with commonalities. Health charities have advocated individually to government with limited success.

Over the past year, the NHCC has been working with the Health System Strategy Division (HSSD) of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to identify common issues facing Ontarians with neurological conditions. Both parties have agreed to work together to explore strategies and develop options aimed at developing an Ontario Neurological Strategy. The HSSD has committed funding and human resources to support the development of the strategy. The NHCC has committed to overall project leadership and coordination, including the provision of direct stakeholder feedback. The relationship between the HSSD and NHCC is a partnership – one that will be managed by a joint working committee and documented for learning and reflection.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to develop a set of recommendations that would form the basis of an integrated Ontario Neurological Strategy. These recommendations will support the achievement of government priorities (health, social and economic) by identifying opportunities to leverage existing resources and new investments to improve services and supports for Ontarians with neurological conditions. This project will support the creation of a comprehensive multi ministry neurological strategy for Ontario.

Methodology

The project will primarily utilize long-range scenario planning (LRSP) to explore long-range strategic options and potential policy options to address the complex challenges of individuals with neurological conditions in Ontario. Long-range scenario planning is a mixed discipline approach to identifying long-range robust strategic themes through collaborative analysis of plausible future scenarios with diverse partners within and outside the health system. The focus will be on identifying options that will result in high quality, robust and sustainable programs and services. The project will build upon and leverage existing strategies and platforms, where possible, and will identify and consider key strategies and priorities that need to be considered for alignment. Key ministries include: Ministry of Health Promotion, Ministry of Children and Youth Services, Ministry of Community and Social Services, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Ministry of Labour in addition to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Project Benefits

- Identification of gaps in services and supports
- Creation of evidence based cross-ministry proposed solutions to bridge these gaps for Ontarians with neurological disease, disorders and injuries
- Key stakeholder input in the development of the strategy is anticipated to help create buy in at implementation and to allow implementation to begin with an interested, knowledgeable and supportive field of stakeholders
- Documentation of the model and process for co-development of a strategy between MOHLTC and organizations representing neurological conditions including an analysis of its effectiveness and recommendations for the future use of such an approach

If the strategy is implemented, the hopeful benefits will be:

- *To Ontarians living with neurological conditions*
 - Reduction in the impact of disability enabling individuals to participate more fully in life
 - improved access to services and supports
 - greater equity in services and support provision
- *To the Government of Ontario-*
 - Improved services and supports for individuals with neurological conditions and their care partners through strategic investments that build on existing programs and services and leverage linkages with identified government priority activities.
 - Identified short and longer term targets to assist in the evaluation of the impact of the strategy
 - Optimized health care resource utilization
 - Improved coordination of care

Governance

This initiative is led by the NHCC, with support from the MOHLTC. The project will receive executive leadership from Joyce Gordon, Chief Executive Officer, Parkinson Society Canada, Chair Neurological Health Charities Canada and Adalsteinn Brown, Assistant Deputy Minister, Health System Strategy Division, MOHLTC and as co-executive sponsors.

The Joint Working Group (JWG) is chaired by Kent Bassett-Spiers, CEO, Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation (as a member of the NHCC) and the JWG membership consists of representation from NHCC as well as the MOHLTC.

Update Ontario Neurological Strategy
14 September, 2009

Timelines

It is anticipated that project will be implemented according to the following timelines

| Activity | End Date |
|--|-----------------------|
| <i>Trends Analysis</i> with 30 or so health system leaders in one-on-one interviews | End of September 2009 |
| <i>Implications Consultations</i> with up to 300 health leaders, experts, key informant, stakeholders in focus groups | End of October 2009 |
| <i>Scenario Consultations</i> with up to 300 health leaders, experts, key informants, stakeholders in focus groups | End of November 2009 |
| <i>Review of Themes</i> key stakeholders, advisors and informants review robust themes and preliminary recommendations emerging from the scenarios discussion | End of December 2009 |
| <i>Documents</i> outlining the result of the LRSP including recommendations and implications for policy vetted with stakeholders | March 2010 |