**PROJECT PURPOSE**

The **Access to Care and Timing (ACT)** project is a national, multi-centre research study focused on describing the processes of health care delivery for people with traumatic spinal cord injury (TSCI) in Canada.

**OVERVIEW**

As of March 2013, process mapping was conducted at 25 participating acute care and rehabilitation facilities across Canada in order to determine the current landscape of TSCI care delivery and identify unique aspects of Canadian facilities treating patients with TSCI. This information, along with local data from the Rick Hansen Spinal Cord Injury Registry (RHSCIR), led to the development of a computer simulation model of the TSCI continuum of care (pre-hospital, acute, rehabilitation care through to discharge into the community).

The model, ACT Model Version 1.0, was designed as a tool to inform clinical and administrative decisions in TSCI care. It is able to simulate TSCI patient flow through the health care system and test various “what-if” policy scenarios (e.g. triaging to acute care hospitals, implementing recommendations regarding timing of surgery, reduction in secondary complications) to predict both short and long-term outcomes such as life expectancy, health service utilization, costs and health utilities following TSCI.

To accelerate the translation of knowledge obtained through the ACT project into improved patient outcomes and care, the project team hosted a workshop in April 2014 that had brought together over 85 participants from across Canada including persons with SCI, clinicians, administrators, policy-makers, researchers, community partners, health economists, SCI-affiliated organizations and national organizations to discuss the development of a National Action Plan to improve patient flow, access to services and monitor health system performance in SCI care.
MOVING FORWARD
Following the workshop, a National Working Group was formed to guide the National Action Plan in which the objectives are to measure national health system performance and to monitor patient flow across the SCI continuum with appropriate indicators. Outcomes from the ACT Workshop and the National Working Group will also help to inform a number of manuscripts that will be published as part of a focus issue devoted to the topic of optimizing care for TSCI.

Additionally, international collaborations are being developed, creating an opportunity to apply and compare the results of the ACT Model outside Canada, with Queensland, Australia being the first international on the ACT Project.