PROJECT PURPOSE

In 2012, the Rick Hansen Institute (RHI) partnered with Accreditation Canada (AC) to develop comprehensive and evidence-based standards for spinal cord injury (SCI) called the ACUTE AND REHABILITATION SCI STANDARDS OF CARE (SCI Standards), as part of the Qmentum accreditation program. Implementation of these standards through policy and practice changes will help standardize and optimize care for people with SCI in Canada. RHI’s goal is that, by the end of 2018, at least 50% of the acute and rehabilitation centres participating in the Rick Hansen SCI Registry (RHSCIR) will have used these new SCI standards as part of their organizations’ Qmentum accreditation site visits.

OVERVIEW

In a joint effort with RHI, AC set up a national Spinal Cord Injury Advisory Committee to assist in the development of the SCI Acute and Rehabilitation Accreditation Standards. The Advisory Committee consisted of experts in the field of SCI across the continuum of care and health care providers. The Standards were piloted in four Canadian centres: Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital, AB (Rehab SCI Standards); Ottawa Hospital, ON (Acute and Rehab SCI Standards); Capital Health, Halifax, NS (Acute and Rehab SCI Standards); Saint John Regional Hospital, NB (Acute SCI Standards).

A full copy of the acute and rehab SCI Standards can be found at SCI2.rickhanseninstitute.org (login required).
The Accreditation Canada SCI Standards is supported through a contribution from Health Canada. The views expressed herein represent the views of the Rick Hansen Institute.

The Rick Hansen Institute is a Canadian-based not-for-profit organization with the goal of creating a world without paralysis after spinal cord injury. It works towards this goal by accelerating research and translating clinical findings into practical solutions to develop new treatments, improve health care outcomes, reduce long-term costs and improve the quality of life for those living with spinal cord injury. www.rickhanseninstitute.org

The SCI Standards are comprised of criteria with three different levels of priority.

- **Required Organizational Practices (ROPs)** address critically important patient safety areas, requiring specific tests of compliance to demonstrate evidence-based practices. ROPs are defined by AC as essential practices (e.g. assessment and management of pressure ulcers or medication reconciliation) that must be in place at the time of the site visit, and are subject to a formal follow-up if not met. ROPs have the greatest impact on an organization’s overall accreditation award.

- **High Priority criteria** relate to other important themes of safety, ethics, risk management and quality improvement (e.g. training of team members on proper and safe use of equipment, devices and supplies used in SCI services). High Priority criteria that are unmet at the site visit may be subject to a formal follow up, at the discretion of AC.

- **Other criteria** usually pertain to enabling systems within the organization that allow clinical teams to perform well on ROPs and High Priority criteria (i.e. having access to the right resources, physical space and information systems).

RHI is working to encourage and support SCI centres to adopt the SCI Standards as part of their organizations’ existing Qmentum process. Accrediting centres with the new SCI Standards will help ensure that individuals with SCI across Canada are receiving the same level of quality care at any SCI centre.

Standardization of care benefits not only patients, but also the health care system overall by reducing unintended variation in care that is not driven by evidence-based practice, thereby making more effective use of resources, improving patients’ health outcomes, and reducing the burden on the healthcare system. This project will encourage centres to adopt best practices and policies that reflect the current state of knowledge and evidence-based best practices for SCI care.

**PROJECT STATUS**

RHI has developed a strategy to spread the adoption of the SCI Standards between 2014 and 2018. This strategy consists of a multi-phased approach including promotion and advocacy of the standards to SCI centres, development of practical tools and resources to aid in implementation of the practices described in the standards, and fostering a community of practice to celebrate and share successes.

An AC Toolkit has been developed to help support organizations with implementation of the SCI Standards. The toolkit includes an accessible library of resources that clinicians and policy makers can use to change practice (e.g. clinical practice guidelines, pre-printed orders), and frequently asked questions regarding the accreditation process. See RHI’s clinical resource website (SCI²) at http://sci2.rickhanseninstitute.org for more information.

Site visits are underway with SCI centres (participating in RHSCIR) to discuss how RHI can continue to support participation in the Qmentum program using SCI Standards. Other upcoming opportunities to engage with SCI centres may include workshops addressing best practices described in the standards, opportunities to grow SCI² to offer more interactive content and ability for sites to network, and resources and supports around AC’s newly enhanced content around patient and family-centred care.

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Learn More
http://sci2.rickhanseninstitute.org