About Rick Hansen Institute

Rick Hansen Institute (RHI) was incorporated on January 15, 2009 under the Canada Corporations Act. On October 26, 2009, the Institute was registered as a charity under the Income Tax Act and, as such, is exempt from income taxes and is able to issue donation receipts for income tax purposes. RHI commenced operations on January 1, 2010.

RHI’s mission is to lead collaboration across the global spinal cord injury (SCI) community by providing resources, infrastructure, and knowledge and to identify, develop, validate, and accelerate the translation of evidence and best practices to reduce the incidence and severity of paralysis after SCI, improve health care outcomes, reduce long-term costs, and improve quality of life for those living with SCI.

F2013: A Year of Impact and Outreach

It was a historic year for the Rick Hansen Institute and members of our clinical research partner network. It is thanks to the tremendous collaboration of partners and funders and by working on a number of coordinated fronts – innovation, collaboration, tools and resources and standards – that we can say that we are affecting change to improve the health and quality of life of those living with a spinal cord injury in Canada and abroad.

Throughout the year, we continued to make progress to improve treatment and care outcomes for people with spinal cord injury in Canada. In F2013, RHI supported 41 translational research, best practice implementation, community participation and network development projects involving more than 1,180 health care professionals and individuals with SCI. We solidified our partnerships with individuals, organizations and health authorities in Canada, the US, China, Jordan, Israel, and Australia to accelerate the pace of discoveries. RHI co-developed the first accreditation standards for acute and rehab care facilities in Canada (in conjunction with Accreditation Canada). In an effort to increase efficiencies and reduce costs, RHI entered into a reciprocal service agreement with the Rick Hansen Foundation whereby costs for functions such as Resource Development, finance and human resources are shared.

Financial Snapshot

In Fiscal 2013, the Rick Hansen Institute generated $9.5 million in total revenue, a drop from previous years due to the completion of contribution agreements with several provincial government funders. RHI receives the majority of its funding on an annual basis and therefore, net assets (funding reserves) are minimal. Total expenses came to $9.4 million. Of these expenses, $8.1 million went to grants and in-house programs, and $1.3 million went to fundraising, management and administrative costs which accounted for 14% of total expenses. RHI achieved significant savings throughout the year as we wound down in-house fundraising and entered into a reciprocal services agreement with the Rick Hansen Foundation whereby the Foundation fundraises on behalf of the Institute and provides Finance, Marketing and Communications and HR support on a fee for service basis. RHI recently received significant new funding from the Rick Hansen Foundation and the Government of Canada to continue its work for years to come.
Institute Accomplishments in 2013

In five short years, progress has been made to improve treatment and ultimately outcomes for people with SCI. Our new Strategic Plan, covering 2013-2018, will build on four key program pillars – Cure, Care, Collaboration and Commercialization – bringing us closer towards a world without paralysis after spinal cord injury. Below are just a few, concrete examples of progress delivered against RHI’s commitment to Health Canada and RHI’s impact on the way clinicians care for and treat people with SCI, and on the health outcomes of individuals with SCI.

Bringing the World Together for SCI Research

Interdependence 2012: Global Conference on SCI, hosted by RHF and RHI and held in May 2012, featured the latest findings from peer-reviewed researchers and clinicians in a comprehensive range of SCI-related subjects. In all, 23 sessions featured 87 speakers and 62 Abstract Presenters. Research teams and organizations from Denmark, Switzerland, Australia, China, UK, Belgium, USA and Canada shared their work, presented the newest treatments and technologies in the field and began a global conversation on how to advance research, implement new best practices and shape the next generation of SCI research.

A Common Drug for an Uncommon Problem

Minocycline has shown neuroprotective effects in animal models of spinal cord injury. This study expands upon a single-centre, human, double-blind, randomized, placebo controlled pilot study examining the use of intravenous Minocycline in acute spinal cord injury within 12 hours after injury. This study indicated promise with respect to improving outcomes during the acute stage of SCI, particularly in incomplete cervical injuries.

Knowledge into Practice

According to an independently conducted Summative Evaluation, RHI has successfully supported the translation of new knowledge into clinical practice and clear majorities of respondents in every stakeholder group surveyed agreed that RHI’s initiatives have affected the lives of people with SCI by increasing physical function, reducing incidence and severity of secondary complications, increasing satisfaction with quality of life, increasing community participation among people with SCI, and by ensuring needs of people with SCI are met.

A Snapshot of Canadian SCI Rehabilitation

The first atlas of Canadian spinal cord injury (SCI) rehabilitation, Rehabilitation Environmental Scan Atlas: Capturing Capacity in Canadian SCI Rehabilitation (E-Scan Atlas), was released in 2012 by Toronto Rehabilitation Institute – UHN and the Rick Hansen Institute. Canadian rehabilitation providers, people with SCI and their care-givers now have evidence-based data to advocate for preventive care, improved clinical care services and a reduction in regional service disparity.

Going Forward

With funding secured for the next five years (2013-2018), we are transitioning our efforts from infrastructure building towards greater emphasis on implementing the results of this research into clinical practice, in the centers where people with SCI are cared for across Canada and internationally. Having renewal funding confirmed is a major milestone for the Institute and could not have been achieved without the tremendous work our research network partners. Going forward, RHI will place greater focus on identifying cures for SCI and effectively translating research results into the medical and technological interventions required to improve the quality of life for individuals with acute and chronic SCI and reduce health care costs.