

Lyndhurst Newsletter

June 2025



Welcome to the Lyndhurst Spinal Cord Rehab Program Newsletter!

We are thrilled to be able to bring you news from the program including updates, highlights and achievements. The goal for this newsletter is to connect with past and current patients, families and friends delivering health care information that can help keep you healthy and engaged after spinal cord injury. We hope that you find this Newsletter informative and helpful with updates on our team members, education opportunities, research highlights and program initiatives.

At Lyndhurst, we continue to improve the patient experience and care. In this issue, we're excited to share information and education on:

- pelvic health,
- the risks of smoking after SCI,
- how the myUHN Patient Portal can keep you connected to your health information,
- and why your voice matters through our patient experience survey.

Your feedback helps shape our programs — thank you for being a part of making Lyndhurst even better.

We hope you find this newsletter helpful. Please share your feedback on topics and content you would like to see highlighted in this space!

Michael Roberts - Clinical Director
Dr. Cathy Craven - Medical Director

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<https://www.uhn.ca/TorontoRehab/Spinal-Cord-Rehab>

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Staff at Lyndhurst



STAFFING CHANGES AT LYNDHURST



Michael Roberts

Michael Roberts, new Clinical Director, Brain/Cardiac/Spine Program at TRI
Michael is a skilled healthcare leader with experience in hospitals, home and community care, and the provincial government. He helps teams from different professional backgrounds work together to provide excellent care and service. Michael is a trained Physiotherapist with a Master's degree in Physical Therapy. He also holds certifications as a Six Sigma Black Belt, Project Management Professional (PMP), and Certified Health Executive (CHE).
Michael joins us from Ontario Health at Home where he was the Director of Patient Services Operations.



Over the past 6 months, We have welcomed the following staff to the Lyndhurst team:

Rowen Cancelliere - OT in the Assistive Technology Clinic
Veena Lewis - Social Work
Sofia Lamarche - Physiotherapist
Melissa Basso - Discharge Coordinator

We also welcome many new nurses and PSWs to our team!

Over the past 6 months, the following staff have left Lyndhurst to pursue other opportunities:

Anellina (Nelly) Ventre - Speech Language Pathologist
Anita Salehoun - Occupational Therapist in the Assistive Technology Clinic
Dionne Rockley - Discharge Coordinator
Pema Zela - Unit 1 Program Manager
Simone Smith - Physiotherapist
Stephanie Teffer - Social Work
Iulia Agache - Nursing
Rob Nadeau - (June) Maintenance



Photo credit: Marlene Adams

Education Corner



Pelvic Floor Physiotherapy: A Vital Step in Recovery

Pelvic floor physiotherapy can play a key role in improving bladder and bowel function, postural control, and balance for some individuals with spinal cord injury. Your pelvic floor muscles sit deep in your lower body. After a spinal cord injury, working with a qualified physiotherapist to exercise these muscles can help:

- make bladder and bowel control easier
- improve your posture and balance
- reduce tightness or spasms in your muscles
- add strength to your core so everyday activities feel safer and easier

If any of these issues sound familiar, ask your doctor or physiotherapist whether neuro-pelvic-floor physio could help you. They can arrange an assessment or point you to local services.

Did you know?

Friends and Family Education Days

Friends and Family Education Days happen every 4 months in-person and virtually. These education sessions highlight important topics related to spinal cord injury that friends and family need to know to support their loved one. Please join this event to increase your knowledge and awareness of SCI related concerns.

The next Friends and Family Education Day is **Wed. July 9, 2025** from **4:00pm - 6:30pm** at Lyndhurst or virtually on MSTeams.



Please contact Sandra Mills: Sandra.mills@uhn.ca for more information.

Smoking after SCI

Smoking is harmful for everyone, but it creates extra problems after a spinal cord injury (SCI). It can:

- slow healing of your spine and any wounds
- make your bones weaker and break more easily
- worsen pain
- raise your risk of lung cancer and other cancers
- interfere with some of your medicines
- add to the usual dangers of heart disease, stroke, and lung damage



Quitting is tough and often takes several tries, but you don't have to do it alone. At Lyndhurst, our team works with the Ottawa Heart Institute's Ottawa Model for Smoking Cessation (OMSC):

- While you're an inpatient: we give you support and a quit-plan right in the hospital.
- After you go home: OMSC coaches keep in touch to help you stay smoke-free.
- If you're ready later: you can still join the OMSC Community Program at any time.

It is never too late to quit. Just ask—we are here to help you start and stick with a smoke-free life.

OMSC COMMUNITY PROGRAM

The OMSC has launched a new Community Program to provide **smoking cessation treatment and support to patients in Ontario**. This Community Program has been created for patients who do not have access to smoking cessation supports through their healthcare provider or that cannot easily access smoking cessation treatment and support.

HOW DOES THE OMSC COMMUNITY PROGRAM **HELP PATIENTS**?



A Nicotine Addiction Treatment Specialist will **conduct a smoking cessation consultation over the phone** with the patient.



Following the consult, the Nicotine Addiction Treatment Specialist will guide the patient on how to enroll in a Nicotine Replacement Therapy Voucher program.



Once enrolled, the patient will **receive 6 weeks' worth of Nicotine Replacement Therapy** in the mail.



For 6 months after the initial consultation, the patient will receive automatic follow-up calls or emails to check-in on how they are doing. If the patient indicates that they need additional help, a Nicotine Addiction Treatment Specialist will call them to provide counselling support.

HOW DOES SOMEONE **ACCESS THE OMSC COMMUNITY PROGRAM**?



The patient calls **1-888-645-5405** and leaves their contact information on the voicemail.



The OMSC Community Program line is **monitored daily by the Nicotine Addiction Treatment Specialist**.



They will reach out to qualifying patients **within 2 business days**.

FOR ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT OMSC@OTTAWAHEART.CA OR 1-888-645-5405.



SCI Implementation,
Evaluation &
Quality Care Consortium

Launched in 2019 with the goal to achieve equitable and optimal health care for Ontarians with Spinal Cord Injuries.

Who We Are



A group of SCI rehabilitation centres across the province and country work together to improve quality of care. The Lyndhurst team consists of Allied Health clinicians, Leadership, and Research.

What We Have Done



Emotional Well-Being - We have implemented routine depression, anxiety and suicide screening at admission and discharge.



Sexual Health - We have increased staff knowledge of sexual health by 10% and developed gender inclusive education materials.



Walking - We are exploring the relationship between hours of walking therapy, walking skills (SWAT scores) and rehab length of stay.



Community Participation - We have developed tools and refined policies to promote therapeutic outings and weekend passes for inpatients.



Tissue Integrity - Daily head-to-toe skin checks have led to a 13% drop in new pressure injuries during rehab.



Urinary Tract Infection - We have reduced inappropriate antibiotic use, service interruptions and sepsis incidence among inpatients.



Wheeled Mobility - We've introduced wheelchair skills training and made step-by-step improvements in how wheelchairs are provided.

How We Work

- Input from research and experts
- Solutions specific to Lyndhurst
- Lyndhurst team feedback
- Patient feedback
- Learning from people with lived experience
- Learning from our Consortium partners at other sites
- Collaboration with Spinal Cord Injury Ontario



SPINAL CORD
INJURY ONTARIO

**National Patient
Advisory Panel**

Follow us:

<https://www.sciconsortium.ca>
[https:// www.linkedin.com/in/sci-ieqcc](https://www.linkedin.com/in/sci-ieqcc)
sciconsortium@uhn.ca

KITE Research Corner

Helping People Walk Again After Spinal Cord Injury

New non-invasive therapies show promising results. Dr. Shirin Tajali and Dr. Kei Masani are developing new ways to help people with spinal cord injuries (SCI) move more confidently and safely.

What They're Studying

1. Improving Balance with FES + TSS
Functional Electrical Stimulation (FES) activates weak muscles.
Transcutaneous Spinal Cord Stimulation (TSS) re-engages spinal pathways

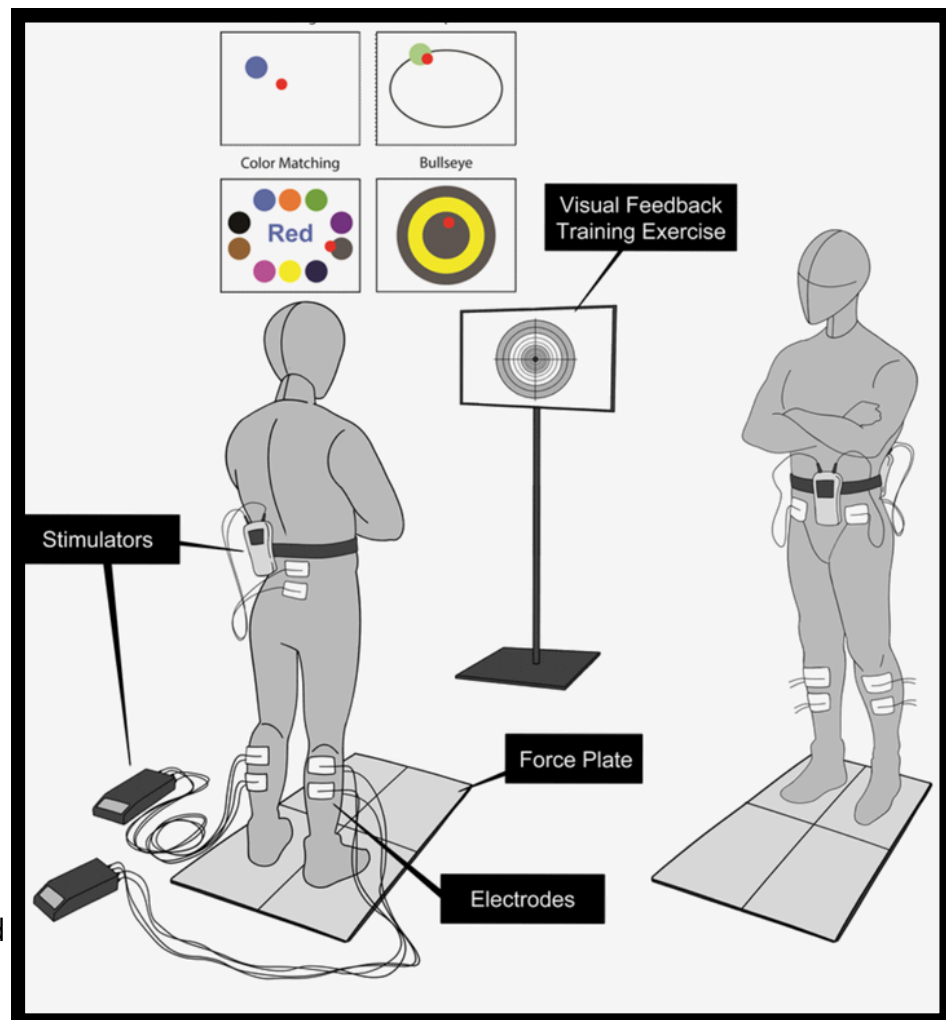
✅ Combined, they improve balance, boost confidence, and offer longer-lasting results

2. Safer Walking with FES
FES was tested in different ways during walking

✅ Each method improved toe lift, reducing the risk of tripping and falls

Why It Matters

These studies suggest that non-invasive therapies like FES and TSS could significantly improve mobility, safety, and independence for people living with SCI.



Learn more:

Published in Top Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation and Frontiers in Neuroscience



SCIO Update



Staffing News

Stuart Howe concluded his nine-year tenure with Spinal Cord Injury Ontario at the end of March. We thank him for his service and wish him well.

The Board has appointed Sheila Casemore, former Director of Client Services, as Interim CEO. Sheila's deep SCIO experience and sector expertise will guide us while we launch a search for a permanent CEO.

Our priorities remain long-term sustainability, stronger fundraising, and outstanding service and advocacy. For questions, contact Sheila at sheila.casemore@sciontario.org.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

TORONTO ACCESS EXPO

Accessibility empowers everyone to live fully and reach their potential. Adaptive equipment, products, and services enable people with disabilities to accomplish both everyday tasks and extraordinary feats. Discover the latest in adaptive technologies and accessible products, and connect with your community over free food and inspiring ideas. Do not forget to register and let us know you are coming!



When: Thursday, July 24

Time: 3:00 – 6:00 pm

Where: Lyndhurst Centre

520 Sutherland Dr.

Toronto, ON

<https://sciontario.org/events/toronto-access-expo-2/>



Patient Stories



PAST PATIENT DARIUS PATEL TELLS HIS STORY

On April 15, 2024, at 59 years old, my life changed dramatically after spinal cord surgery. Before this, I was active, hardworking, loved traveling, woodworking, and most importantly, spending time with my family. I grew up in Mississauga, built a career in pharmaceutical sales, and earned my Bachelor of Commerce while balancing work, marriage, and raising two beautiful daughters. After 26 years in upper management, constant travel made me shift to a more balanced, remote role.

Just as life was settling, an MRI revealed severe spinal stenosis from C2 to C7. The neurologist was amazed I could still walk. Surgery was urgent, but complications caused major blood loss and severe spinal shock, leaving me a quadriplegic with a neurogenic bowel and bladder. Two weeks later, I faced another emergency surgery to remove part of my colon and create a stoma.

Rehabilitation at Toronto Rehab Lyndhurst Center was intense. I had to relearn basic skills — sitting, eating, moving — and adjust to a wheelchair and rollator. Home renovations were necessary to accommodate my new reality. Recovery has been grueling: six months in hospitals and now continuous physiotherapy and gym sessions. Though my left side has improved, my right side, especially my arm and leg, remains significantly impaired.

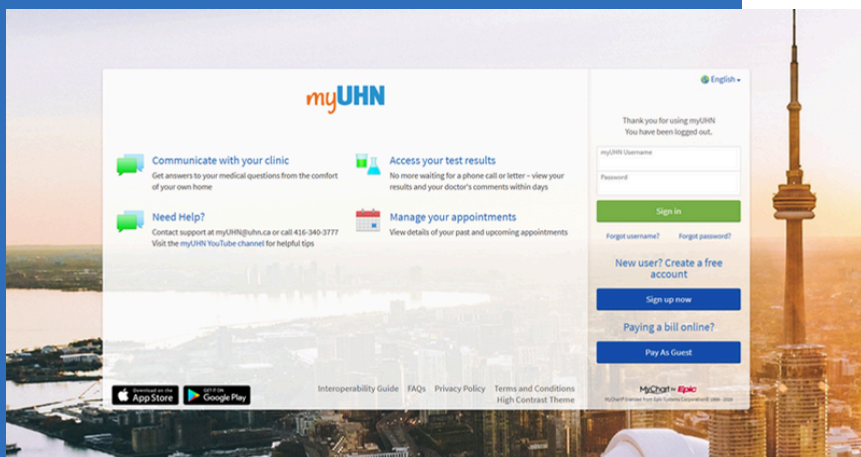
Despite the setbacks, I remain determined. Each day I push myself to improve, grateful for the support of my family, therapists, and fellow patients. My journey is far from over, but I refuse to give up.



Cancun Mexico on November 2024. Darius' immediate family

From left to right: Darius Patel, spouse Farah, mother-in-law Mahrukh, daughter Natasha, daughter Alina, Alina's boyfriend Thomas.

Patient Experience





Become a Patient Partner

UHN is looking to engage with patients and family caregivers to help improve care and service.



The Patient Partner program:

- Recruits and prepares UHN patients and family caregivers in the role of a Patient Partner
- Matches Patient Partners to collaborate with leaders and staff on UHN initiatives by participating in committees, hiring panels, focus groups or sharing your story and care experience
- Provides supportive education and skill-building opportunities

Patient partners are:

- Living well in the community with their health condition
- Willing to talk about their experience to help shape care and service
- Patients and/or family caregivers who have had care at UHN

To join, contact us: 416-340-5085 PatientExperience@UHN.ca

At UHN we are committed to championing accessibility, diversity and equal opportunity.



Get Connected with myUHN

myUHN is a secure website and app for patients of University Health Network (UHN). It gives you safe, easy access to your health information anytime, anywhere—on your phone, tablet, or computer.

- With myUHN, you can:
- View appointments and test results as soon as they're ready
 - Access your UHN record and Ontario lab results (OLIS)
 - Message select clinics and update your health info
 - Check in early and complete forms before your visit

Need help?
Contact myUHN Support (Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm):
✉ myUHN@uhn.ca
☎ 416-340-3777
📺 Find us on YouTube: myUHN Patient Portal

Patient Partners at UHN Lyndhurst

Do You Want to Make a Difference at UHN?
Become a Patient Partner!

Are you a former Lyndhurst patient? We'd love to have you join us as a Patient Partner. By volunteering your time, you can help shape programs, join committees, or share your story to inspire others.

Interested?

Contact the Patient Experience team at:
416-340-5085
or patientexperience@uhn.ca.



YOUR VOICE MATTERS:

TELL US ABOUT YOUR STAY!

At UHN, we're always looking for ways to make care better—and that starts with you.



About a week after you leave Lyndhurst, you'll get an email with a **Patient Experience Survey**. It's your chance to tell us what worked, what didn't, and how we can do better.

- ✓ Anonymous
- ✓ Confidential
- ✓ Completely voluntary

We won't share responses with your care team, but your insights will help shape future care for everyone



Surveys are sent by email, so we need your consent and a correct email address in EPIC to stay connected.

Let's make sure every voice is heard—because better care starts with your feedback!

Make a Donation!

Supporting UHN in our vision to achieve global impact are our two partner foundations:

- [UHN Foundation](#)

The Foundations work as catalysts to transform our hospitals. From the creation of new medical and research facilities to the recruitment and retention of the best health care professionals and scientists in the world, the Foundations are helping UHN build a healthier world for the patients we are privileged to serve, today and tomorrow.

Click [here](#) for more information.

Need assistance?
416-603-5300

The logo for the UHN Foundation, featuring a stylized leaf icon to the left of the text "UHN" in a large, bold, sans-serif font, with the word "FOUNDATION" in a smaller, bold, sans-serif font below it. The entire logo is set against a bright yellow background.

Honour Your Hero allows patients and their loved ones to say thanks to Lyndhurst staff for the care they receive, while also donating to support innovation and care across UHN.

Say thanks with a gift today.
honouryourhero.ca

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Adapted Sport Information Sessions

Therapeutic Recreation & the Ontario Para Network bring you a series of adapted sport information sessions. These sessions are held in the main lobby of Lyndhurst.

Dates:

- Monday May 12 - Wheelchair Rugby
- Monday June 16 - Wheelchair Tennis
- Monday July 14 - Wheelchair Basketball
- Monday August 11 - Wheelchair Rugby
- Monday September 29 - Wheelchair Tennis

Time: 3:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Who: Inpatients and Outpatients Welcome!

Contact Charlene Alton, Recreation Therapist
416.597.3422 ext. 6273



Connect with us!

We welcome your feedback
about this Lyndhurst Newsletter.

Please contact:

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Patient Education and Engagement Lead

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