

## Section 1: Introduction

### INTRODUCTION

Rehabilitation is an essential component of Ontario's new vision for connected care.

Whether it takes place in the hospital or in the community, rehabilitation is a key component of improving outcomes for both patients and the health care system.

Rehabilitation promotes recovery from illness or injury and helps with the prevention and management of chronic conditions. It can reduce disability, optimize participation in daily living and help individuals remain independent in their homes well into their older years. Rehabilitation can also help prevent admissions and re-admissions, reduce costs, improve efficiency and reduce hallway health care by shortening length of stay, reducing emergency department visits and helping patients flow through the system.

#### Using the primer to support planning

In Ontario's changing health care context, Ontario Health Teams (OHTs) are taking on responsibility and accountability for the planning and provision of health care across the continuum. This primer is designed to help OHT administrators and planners as well as regional/provincial policy-makers by outlining how rehabilitative care can improve patient and system outcomes in primary care, hospitals (acute care, rehab or complex continuing care) and in the community. A good understanding of the benefits of rehabilitative care across the continuum is central to providing holistic and integrated care.

**To achieve these outcomes, OHTs must ensure rehabilitative care providers are at the planning table.** Partnering with local and regional rehabilitative care providers will strengthen planning and evaluation of patient care and services. The active participation of rehabilitation partners is particularly important given the complexities and particular considerations that may be unique to certain populations regarding access, service delivery and capacity planning.

For assistance in identifying and contacting local/regional rehabilitative care stakeholders, contact the [Rehabilitative Care Alliance](#).

## How the primer is organized

This primer has been organized to provide a brief overview of rehabilitative care (Sections 2-3); information relevant to particular parts of the care continuum (Sections 4-6); and sector-specific appendices that highlight additional rehabilitative care considerations for particular rehab populations. While the primer is evidence-based, it is not intended as an in-depth, comprehensive treatise on rehabilitative care or a best practices framework for clinicians. It has been written for OHT administrators and planners and regional/provincial policy-makers to support their understanding of rehabilitative care.

Readers can choose to read the primer in its entirety, select the sections that are relevant to them and/or select a specific sector within the care continuum. The sections provide the following:

- **Section 2 - Benefits of rehabilitative care** provides a brief overview of rehabilitation, including how rehabilitative care is helpful to patients and to the health care system. It also addresses the potential costs/risks that may arise in the absence of timely access to rehabilitative care. This section also includes information on rehabilitative care within the context of COVID-19.
- **Section 3 - About rehab professionals** provides brief descriptions of rehab professionals, examples of their areas of expertise and links to their professional associations where further information can be obtained.
- **Section 4 – Rehab in primary care, Section 5 – Rehab in inpatient settings and Section 6 – Rehab in home and ambulatory settings** provide information on rehabilitative care that is sector-specific. Each of these sections includes the following:
  - Introduction: A brief introduction that describes that sector of the care continuum and the role of rehabilitative care professionals within that sector
  - Patient and system-level benefits of rehabilitative care: Evidence-based information on how rehabilitative care is used within the sector
  - Rehabilitative care considerations: Information on rehab post-injury/illness, rehab for progressive/chronic conditions and rehab for prevention. Information describes patient characteristics, how rehab can help, rehabilitative care recommendations and where to access rehab
  - References

- **Appendix A – Primary care, Appendix B – Inpatient, Appendix C – In-home & ambulatory** are sector-specific appendices describing additional rehab care considerations for populations/conditions typically requiring rehabilitative care along with links to other resources or research literature.