

focus
on

Serious Injury Care

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National education program aims to improve quality of life for Canadians with spinal cord injuries

Bayshore Home Health has embarked on an exciting new partnership with the Canadian Spinal Research Organization (CSRO). The relationship will lead to an enhanced level of care for Canadians with spinal cord injuries and add a new dimension to the service that Bayshore provides.

CSRO, founded in 1984, funds research to find a cure for paralysis and improve quality of life for the estimated 40,000 Canadians with spinal cord injuries. Currently, it supports projects at numerous research centres, including the University of Toronto, St. Joseph's Hospital and McMaster University in Hamilton, and several centres in the United States and overseas.

At the heart of the three-year partnership with Bayshore is CSRO's *After and Beyond Spinal Cord Injury Resource Manual*, a comprehensive, in-depth guide written in everyday language about issues and topics relevant to people with spinal cord injuries, their families, caregivers and health care professionals.

"The CSRO is in a great growing phase right now," says Jacqueline Cooper, who works in Research and Communications at CSRO and edits the manual. "We've branched off into side projects like the resource manual. It doesn't directly fall under our mandate, but since we're involved in the field, we saw a great need for it. There is no equivalent document, so we took on the task of developing it."

First released in 2002 to complement a journal the CSRO had created for newly injured consumers, the resource manual has been very well received. CSRO's

website explains that it was designed to guide consumers from the rehabilitation hospital back to life in the community. It helps readers understand their injury and what happens following an injury (acute care and rehabilitation), and also provides resources to help ease the transition.

"We were promoting the resource manual at a conference last fall hosted by Toronto Rehab, and Barry Munro, CSRO's chairman, made a connection with Suzanne Amodeo at Bayshore," explains Cooper. "Bayshore was eager about the document and wanted to get involved."

It turns out that Amodeo and Munro are old friends. "Barry and I were high-school chums," says Amodeo, Bayshore's Business Development Manager and manager of the overall partnership with CSRO. "It was nice to see him again at the conference this past fall. He talked about this book, and I brought it to Bayshore's attention and that's how it all began."

The two organizations explored how they could both benefit from collaboration, and the idea of a training program for Bayshore staff based on a new version of the resource manual was born. The program will ensure that caregivers are prepared to provide expertise and coping strategies to people living with a spinal cord injury.

Bayshore also helped with the manual's revision. A team of Bayshore's clinical managers spent several days reviewing and editing the manual and preparing feedback for CSRO. Now heading into its third edition, the manual will have 16 chapters, including sections on bladder care, bowel management, skin



Barry Munro, Chairman, Canadian Spinal Research Organization

care, sexual health, pain management, psychosocial adjustment, home modifications, transportation, self-advocacy, recreation and exercise, health and wellness, attendant care, mobility, research and financial aid. It will be completed this summer.

The fortuitous partnership also fits into Bayshore's goal of establishing a national serious injury program. "The first phase was a brain injury care training program with the Ontario Brain Injury Association (OBIA)," says Brenda Hunter, Bayshore's Clinical Programs Manager, who is managing the development of the program. "This partnership with CSRO is the second phase – spinal cord injury training. Our partnership will enhance

The logo for Bayshore Home Health. The word "Bayshore" is written in a large, blue, serif font with a stylized wave graphic under the 'B'. Below it, the words "Home Health" are written in a smaller, orange, sans-serif font.

the spinal cord injury care that both our clients and the general public will receive.”

Amodeo says that Bayshore is keen to educate its care staff, especially personal care workers, who provide a lot of hands-on care but don't usually have educational opportunities in specialized care. “One way to help clients is to have personal care workers who are trained, and available at a lower cost to the clients than nurses.”

Bayshore hopes to launch the training program in the fall of 2007 for caregivers working with clients with spinal cord injuries. Hunter says the program's curriculum will be similar to that of the brain injury training that Bayshore introduced last year – 16 hours over two days. “We'll offer the program over several years to our branches. It's a modular approach, with topics such as the different types of spinal cord injuries, skin health and pain management. It covers a wide range of challenges and physical changes that people with spinal cord injuries face.”

Cooper says that the partnership is a great example of working together to mobilize knowledge. “The manual is a fantastic resource, and Bayshore is facilitating its distribution and helping us market it. It's about educating consumers and those in the industry and, ultimately, achieving a better quality of life for people with spinal cord injuries..”

The collaboration lends credence to the old adage that two heads are better than one. “Bayshore recognizes that we're stronger if we partner because we can reach more people in need and let them know that we offer this enhanced training,” says Hunter. “We only deal with a certain population of people with spinal cord injuries, and through the partnership we can reach a whole other population.”

Bayshore Home Health – a leader in serious injury home care

Bayshore Home Health is a Canadian-owned company and has been a trusted provider of home and community care services since 1966. It operates more than 40 offices nationally and works with many organizations that deliver specialized home care services to clients with serious injuries, including workers compensation boards, auto insurers, rehabilitation service providers and government care agencies. To learn more about any of the services listed below, please call 1-866-265-1920.

Brain and spinal cord injury care • Wound and burn care • Fracture and amputation care • Palliative care • 24-hour nursing • Personal care and home support • Serious injury care planning • Safety assessments • Teaching • Care coordination with third parties

By working together, Bayshore and CSRO can also enhance one another's reputations as being at the forefront of spinal cord injury care. In addition to its involvement in revising the manual and launching a training program, Bayshore will have articles in CSRO's magazine, sponsor its annual golf tournament and have a link on CSRO's website.

“Being affiliated with CSRO lets people know that we are working within the community to partner with people who are dealing with serious injuries and who are supporting research to find a cure and ways to deal with injuries,” says Amodeo.

Amodeo is thrilled about the benefits the partnership will provide. “It's exciting that this partnership has happened, and that we can help CSRO achieve its goal of finding a cure for spinal cord injuries. Often, when people have a spinal cord injury and are discharged from the rehabilitation centre, they don't have a lot of places to turn. Letting them know about these organizations and support groups helps everyone. You need the tools

to understand what you're dealing with – and this leads to better care.”

Hunter agrees. She says that a lot of people are in need of high-quality bedside care with regards to catastrophic injuries. The new training program has the potential to make a strong, positive impact in the lives of Bayshore's current and future clients. “If we can reach one caregiver to enhance the care of one client, I think we've been successful.”

The new *After and Beyond Spinal Cord Injury Resource Manual* will be available free to consumers and families online at www.csro.com or by calling 1-800-361-4004.

Visit the Bayshore Home Health booth at the 15th Interurban Spinal Cord Injury Conference at the Hamilton Convention Centre, October 25-26, in Hamilton, Ontario. For more information, visit www.spinalcordinterurban.org

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