

April 14, 2020

Dear Stroke Stakeholders,

Re: COVID-19 Stroke Stakeholder Forum #2 Follow-up

As a follow-up to the COVID-19 Stroke Stakeholder Forum that took place on April 3, 2020, we would like to provide you with the following updates regarding the key discussion points/actions:

1. Management of Endovascular Thrombectomy (EVT) Patients During COVID-19

CorHealth Ontario conducted an environmental scan to identify and collate directional documents regarding the safe and effective management of COVID-19 positive/COVID-19 suspected stroke patients receiving EVT. Through this process, two key resources have been identified to inform local clinical and IPAC management decisions for this patient group:

- [Society of Neuroscience and Anesthesiology in Critical Care \(SNACC\) Consensus Statement: Anesthetic Management of Endovascular Treatment of Acute Ischemic Stroke During COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [Society of NeuroInterventional Surgery recommendations for the care of emergent NeuroInterventional patients in the setting of COVID-19.](#)

2. Ontario Health Clinical Triage Protocol in the Context of Stroke Patients

Further dialogue was held with Dr. Downar, a key author of the Ontario Health Triage Protocol, to seek clarification regarding the use of the NIHSS tool to support patient triage during different surge scenarios. As per this conversation, it was recommended that the NIHSS triage score should pertain to the patient's **post-treatment** status (tPA and/or EVT) and should not be used to determine or exclude patients from hyperacute stroke treatment options. This clarification is to be reflected in future updates to the document.

3. Use of CT Thorax to Screen for COVID-19

As per The Canadian Society of Thoracic Radiology and Canadian Association of Radiologists, CT thorax should not be used as a general screen for COVID-19. For further information please refer to the following joint statement: [*The Canadian Society of Thoracic Radiology \(CSTR\) and Canadian Association of Radiologists \(CAR\)*](#)

4. Communication and Awareness of COVID-19 Affected Stroke Centres

A process to support communication and awareness of EVT hospitals who may be experiencing downtime due to COVID-19 has been developed. This process will be confirmed with the Regional Stroke Program Directors on April 20 and subsequently distributed to stakeholders and posted on [CorHealth Ontario's COVID-19 Resource Centre](#).

5. Rehabilitation Care

CorHealth Ontario led a stakeholder forum on April 9, 2020, to discuss opportunities and share resources for the delivery of cardiac, stroke and vascular rehabilitation during the COVID-19 outbreak. Several opportunities to support the delivery of stroke rehabilitation were identified. As such, CorHealth will be leading a targeted discussion with our stroke rehabilitation stakeholders this Thursday, April 16th, to further discuss and develop guidance around the kind of stroke rehab care that can be provided virtually vs. what should be provided using an in-person model at home and to identify adaptations or guidance required to the current transitions of stroke patients from inpatient care (acute or rehab) to community during the COVID-19 outbreak.

We would like to extend our sincerest thank you to all of our stroke stakeholders who have continued to show their dedication and commitment to ensuring high quality stroke care during these difficult times. To ensure that we can continue to meet your needs, please send any agenda items that you would like discussed at the next Stroke Forum to be scheduled for Thursday, April 23, to Shelley Sharp at shelley.sharp@corhealthontario.ca.

Sincerely,

Dr. Leanne Casaubon
Chair of the COVID-19 Stroke Stakeholder Forum
CorHealth Ontario