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Summer Issue | July 2022



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Thank you to the
Manitoba Paraplegia
Foundation for their
continued financial
support of ParaTracks
and Manitobans living
with spinal cord injury.

Meet the Newest Staff at SCI Manitoba



Hi folks. My name is Darell Hominuk. I joined the SCI Manitoba team on May 16th as a Rehabilitation Counsellor – Vocational Services, and feel privileged to work with such a reputable organization to help members living with spinal cord injuries adjust, adapt and thrive! I have extensive experience in vocational and employment services with various non-profit organizations in Manitoba. In addition, I have significant senior leadership experience in program development, service delivery and government relations initiatives within the health charity field. I also have a Bachelor of Arts Degree with a double major in Political Science and Studies in Justice & Law Enforcement from the University of Winnipeg.

The entire span of my career has been dedicated toward the helping profession. I remain passionate about my work and am looking forward to working with SCI Manitoba members and making an impact!

My Name is Neil Okumura and I was recently hired by Spinal Cord Injury Manitoba as the Accounting Officer in late April of 2022.

I had retired right before COVID-19 hit. All the activities I thought I would participate in were no longer an option. It made me decide to get back into the workforce on a part-time basis working remotely. I am very fortunate that my work goals and that of SCI Manitoba are a good match. I am very fortunate to have this opportunity and to work with an organization with an extremely worthwhile cause.

I have worked primarily in the not for profit sector as a designated accountant with a number of years of experience with budgeting, financial accounting, and auditing. I am looking forward to working in this role once again. I have worked for disability organizations and understand the huge benefits they can provide to our community.

I am married to my wife Irene, who is a school teacher and works with special needs children. I have two children, my son Chad and my daughter Ciara.

I am active in a number of areas in sports and in our community, both as a participant and a volunteer.





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Moving Forward

In the article that follows, Tomas talks about his recent return to work after a four-year absence that involved multiple surgeries related to his spinal cord injury and other health issues. He also speaks about personal and emotional challenges that he experienced during this time and how he developed perspective, learned to remain positive, move forward with his life, and reclaim the self he thought he'd lost for a while.

Tomas, please tell the readers about yourself?

Well, I was born on the Island of St. Miguel which is part of the Azores in Portugal. I came to Canada with my parents when I was just over two weeks old. I've lived in Winnipeg since. I'm fluent in Portuguese. I have four siblings, two brothers and two sisters. I'm the father of a 10 year old boy. My hobbies include small engine repair and maintenance. I'm self-taught. I also enjoy movies that involve stories based on real-life characters and events.



Could you share a little about your spinal cord injury and how you came to be diagnosed?

Let's see. I was diagnosed with cauda equina in 2017. It started with a slip and fall while I was on vacation in Portugal with my family. Oh, yeah, I did experience issues with my back before this, sharp, stabbing pain in my leg. I saw a doctor who had an x-ray taken that showed nothing of concern. I was diagnosed with sciatica.

My slip and fall in Portugal occurred while I was racing with my son on the way to the washroom at a pool. We were just goofing around. As I took a corner, I slipped in a pool of water and landed on my butt or an area just above my butt. I experienced some pain but was able to carry on with my day and thought nothing more of it.

Three days after this incident, I went to a local bakery to get bread for our breakfast and was seated on a couch while waiting for my brother-in-law to arrive. This happened on Sunday. I adjusted my position and now think this sudden movement made things worse. I felt a sudden, sharp pain - as though I were being stabbed. Initially, I was unable to get up from the couch but then continued on with my day. My pain and discomfort increased over the next few days. My family and I were scheduled to leave Portugal around Thursday of that week so I didn't seek medical attention, thinking that I would recover on my own. A family member who was recovering from an injury to his ankle offered me pain killers, and these reduced my pain and discomfort.

My family and I arrived in Winnipeg late Friday night. By then, my pain had subsided. I thought that I'd make an appointment to see my doctor for the following week. By Saturday morning,

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the pain was unbearable, and I was taken to Concordia Hospital by ambulance since it was closest to my home. I remained there for five hours and was transferred to St. Boniface Hospital by ambulance. They did a lot of testing. My biggest medical issue at that time, surprisingly, was my stomach, not my back. I had been very constipated and experienced severe abdominal pain.

Staff did what they could to make me comfortable, and a week later I had surgery. The surgeon removed 4 cm of my small colon. While I was in the recovery room after surgery, I told a nurse I couldn't feel my legs. A doctor was called and arranged for me to have an MRI. I was told I would be transported by ambulance to Health Sciences Centre because they had spinal injury specialists.

It was there that I was told that my spinal nerves were being crushed and that I'd have to undergo spinal surgery. Ten hours after my abdominal surgery at St. Boniface Hospital, I underwent spinal surgery at Health Sciences Centre. I remember having 50 staples down my back and 48 staples from the abdominal surgery. I remained in hospital for about 4 weeks or so and attended physiotherapy and occupational therapy daily.

How does your spinal cord injury affect you today?

I have to do all activities in moderation, take things slowly. I can walk unaided, but my tolerance is limited. Climbing stairs has continued to be challenging. I'm able to lift and bend but, again, have to do this slowly. Overall, I'd say my physical stamina is reduced but it's improving. I can't play basketball with my son, but I can watch him play. He doesn't push me to do what he knows I can't. He's a thoughtful and caring boy. I'm grateful that he's my son.

Would you tell the readers about your employment history?

At the time of my spinal cord injury, I'd been employed full-time, permanent with Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries as a maintenance technician or groundskeeper for 17 years. The work involved heavy equipment operation and the use of equipment like a forklift, Bobcat, scissor lift, and front loader. I was responsible for taking care of the landscaping at the Winnipeg casino, planting flowers, mowing the lawn, and performing snow removal with a shovel.

How did you manage financially while you were away from work?

It was difficult. Money was tight. I was on short term disability and, eventually, applied for and received Canada Pension Plan Disability.

What was it like being away from work?

Terrible. I enjoyed my work as a groundskeeper. I had worked with my parents since age 12, after school and during holidays, cleaning buildings. I was a little mischievous and my dad said, "If you can't stay out of trouble, then you can come work with us." At that time, they were responsible for cleaning the head office of the Sony and Saan stores.

You mentioned that it was terrible being away from work. Could you talk a bit more about that?

Well, I felt depressed. I was dealing with a lot of uncertainty, wondering what was going to

happen to me. I was fearful about losing my job. Thankfully, you connected me with a psychologist. Although it was short-term, it helped me tremendously to get a handle on my situation. In addition to my concerns about work, my marriage was faltering at this time, too. This compounded the stress and anxiety I was experiencing. I was very emotional during this time and would readily tear up, which was not like me. The psychologist helped me gain perspective on my life and taught me how to handle things.

Spinal cord injury impacts the entire family. Could you share a little about the effect your spinal cord injury had on your family?

My family has always provided me with lots of support regarding everything. I imagine it would have been difficult for my family because I wasn't the person they always knew me to be. I'm sure they had concerns and fears regarding my future, too. I had always been more active, more outgoing, and more spiritual. Suddenly, I became less so. But, I'm slowly working my way back to the person I was and becoming more like my old self. These positive changes in me have had a positive impact on my family.

Please, tell the readers about your return to work and how you decided when to return?

I was away from the workplace for four years. That's a long time. I listened to my body. I came to accept that I would always have pain. I figured that I would have to learn to manage my pain as best I could. I take medication for pain management and do a home-based exercise program that my physiotherapist gave me.

I called my doctor and told him I wanted to return to work. We met and I told him the different things I was doing at home, like vacuuming, cooking, cleaning, and said to him, "If I can do this at home, then I'm sure there are things I can do at work." My doctor said that I knew my body best and together we completed a form for my employer that described my functional abilities.

I had maintained contact with my employer during my absence from work and always said to them, when I was able, I wanted to return to work. I called the Human Resources department, and arranged a virtual meeting on Skype because of the COVID-19 restrictions. A union representative, the human resource director, and someone from the Department of Labour also attended. My employer told me that they would like to start me in a department where the work would be less physically demanding than grounds maintenance. It was decided I would return to work in housekeeping. I just want to say that my employer has always been supportive, helpful, and they worked with me.

What was your initial schedule for return to work?

Well, I worked five hours, 5:30 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. with three days on, then one day off. I was able to do this for two days but found it too difficult and became overwhelmed. As you told me, 'the goal has to be work that is safe and that I could sustain over the long haul.' I guess I was too ambitious. I wanted to return to normal quickly. I was in a lot of pain after work. The evenings at the casino are especially busy, so I told my employer immediately what I was experiencing and asked for a morning or day shift.

I was contacted by the supervisor of the housekeeping department on my day off and told, as

of the following Monday, I would be working 12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m., two days on, one day off, for approximately 1 – 2 months and that my hours could be increased as my physical tolerance allowed.

Since then, I have been able to increase my hours to four hours per shift and have been able to maintain this for a while. I'm now feeling able to increase to five hours per shift and will discuss this with my employer.

What are the best things about returning to work?

I have a sense of freedom that I didn't before. I'm happier. I'm more active and feel like I'm back in the saddle, so to speak. I'm back to being more like my old self. Being around my co-workers and other people is great. I've started to get back into my hobbies, which is something I neglected for a while.

Do you have any advice for our readers who may be thinking about pursuing work or returning to work?

Stay positive. Surround yourself with good people who give positive advice. Never give up! If things become overwhelming, stand back and try to let go of the negativity. Give yourself a break. Collect your thoughts. Remember: every bad situation can be turned into a learning experience and you can find a silver lining.

What hopes and dreams do you have for the future?

I want to raise my son and have an active relationship with him. I try to be grateful and remind myself that things could be worse. I remain hopeful that, one day, I will be able to return to my former job as a groundskeeper. I do what I need to do to maintain my physical and mental health.

You mentioned earlier that spirituality has been important to you and that you sort of lost touch with it during some of your most difficult times. Could you talk about that?

Even during my most difficult times, my spiritual beliefs provided me with comfort and helped me stay positive. My beliefs gave me something to reach for each day. I prayed a lot and spoke with God often regarding my health concerns and issues in my personal life.

Any final thoughts you'd like to share?

Every step we take in life is accompanied by challenges and tribulations. We have to look for the positives in all situations. We need to focus on the positive and keep moving forward. Always try your best and stay away from negative thoughts and influences.

Tomas, thank you for your time today and for sharing your thoughts and feelings openly. I'm hopeful that your story will encourage others in our membership to remain focused, positive, and moving forward.

Written by Laurence Haien, Senior Rehabilitation Counsellor, Vocational Services

STEP-UP: Stakeholder Training and Education for Pressure Ulcer Prevention

What is a pressure ulcer?

A pressure ulcer is a localized injury to the skin and/or underlying tissues, usually over a bony prominence, that results from pressure (sometimes combined with shearing or friction) and loss of blood flow. When skin is subjected to pressure, there is a loss of blood flow to the skin and other tissues, and if blood flow is lost for too long, the skin will begin to die.

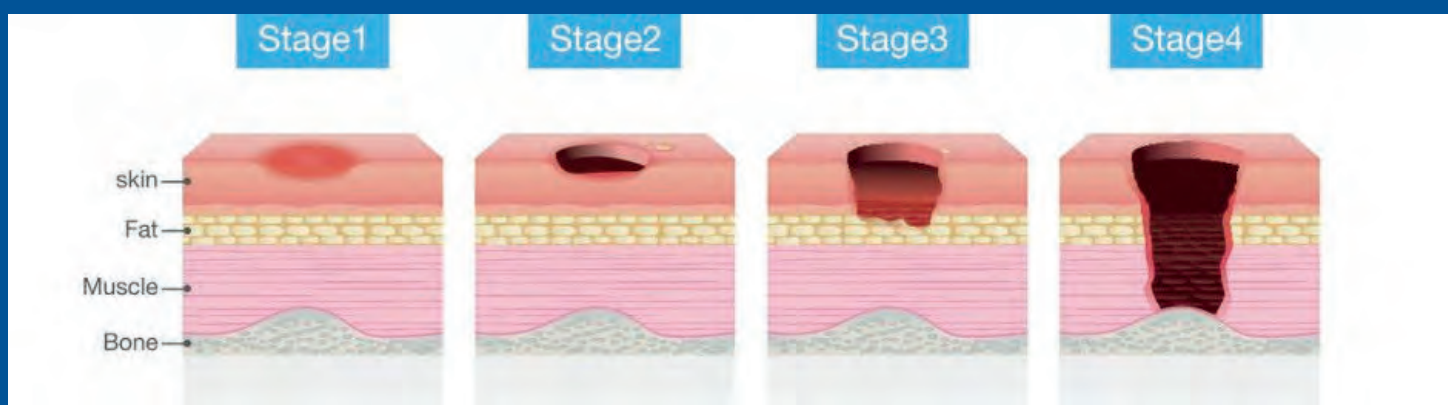
In simple terms, a pressure ulcer is a wound to the skin, but not all wounds are open - some wounds may be just a small red spot or bruise, while other wounds are large, open, and oozing. There are four stages of pressure ulcers, and each stage is defined by the extent of tissue damage (see diagram below). Most pressure ulcers (90%) are preventable through education and regularly practicing pressure relief techniques.

All four stages of pressure ulcers should be taken seriously and treated with care, since a stage one pressure ulcer can quickly progress to a later stage. To help members with a new spinal cord injury prevent and recognize early signs of pressure ulcers, SCI Manitoba developed the Stakeholder Training and Education for Pressure Ulcer Prevention, or STEP-UP.

What is STEP-UP?

STEP-UP is a series of educational sessions offered by SCI Manitoba to help members better understand pressure ulcers, one of the many potential secondary complications following spinal cord injury. The aim of STEP-UP is to help members learn how to properly care for their skin so they can avoid developing pressure ulcers. When skin breaks down, SCI Manitoba provides information and support to assist members with healing, coping with, and recovering from pressure ulcers. STEP-UP helps prevent painful, debilitating wounds, hospitalizations, and unnecessary surgeries.

Stages of pressure ulcers



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Pressure ulcer prevention is important for members who experience partial or complete loss of sensation below the level of their spinal cord injury because pressure ulcers compromise health, reduce quality of life, and interfere with going to school/ work and participation in other meaningful community activities. For example, a pressure ulcer can require extended periods of bedrest, cause infections, require hospitalization, surgery, and in some cases, amputation of extremities, especially when they coincide with other conditions like diabetes.

Preventing pressure ulcers also helps to limit unnecessary strain on our health care system, since they can be expensive to treat and can quickly exhaust limited resources. In 2018, a report by the Canadian Patient Safety Institute indicated that a pressure ulcer developed within an Ontario hospital could cost the healthcare system \$44,000.00 – \$90,000.00. Similarly, according to Wounds Canada: *The lowest cost for treating a deep-tissue injury or Stage 1 or 2 wound is \$2,450 per month, while an uncomplicated Stage 3 or 4 is \$3,616 per month. Pressure injuries complicated by osteomyelitis cost \$12,648 per month to treat. The equipment and interventions required to prevent pressure injuries are less expensive than the cost of treatment.*

The presentations and modules in STEP-UP are customized to meet the individual needs of each member, and include a variety of learning activities, written material, videos, and visual aids and techniques that lead to good habits for maintaining healthy skin. Members work closely with SCI Manitoba's health promotion services counsellor throughout the program.

The learning sessions can be done virtually or in person, and after completion of the modules, the material is reviewed to understand what has been retained, and to determine if there is a need to reinforce specific areas of learning. The health promotion services counsellor will also reconnect with each member at set intervals after completing the modules to answer any questions or concerns.

Written by LéAmber Kensley, Rehabilitation Counsellor, Health Promotion Services

SCI Manitoba extends its sympathies to the families of the following loved ones who recently passed away:

*Karl Brown
Jose Fernandez
Gaston Fluet
Melford Govereau
Ernie Hasiuk*

*Melvin Kiesman
Stanley Lavallee
Charles Mackelson
James Mateychuk
Sheldon McKay*

*Brian Miller
Elinor Osinski
Victor Ryle
Sister Alicia Telenko*

Financial Empowerment

At Manitoba Possible, Angel Prefontaine-Gibson is the program facilitator for the Financial Empowerment program. The program works under the umbrella of SEED Winnipeg and is a collaboration with United Way Winnipeg, Assiniboine Credit Union, and the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP). The program's goals are to assist individuals and families living with a disability with low-income, as well as offering the tools needed to help build a sustainable foundation for financial wellness.

Access to Benefits provides information on benefits through the government that many people do not know about. Here are a few such programs that Manitoba Possible can assist you with, either by giving information or helping to fill out application forms.

Disability Tax Credit: As stated on the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) website, The disability tax credit (DTC) is a non-refundable tax credit that helps persons with disabilities, or their supporting persons, reduce the amount of income tax they may have to pay. An individual may claim the disability amount once they are eligible for the DTC. This amount includes a supplement for persons under 18 years of age at the end of the year.

The purpose of the DTC is to provide for greater tax equity by allowing some relief for disability costs, since these are unavoidable additional expenses that other taxpayers don't have to face. Many people will hear their families or friends talk about a large amount they receive back from having the DTC however, it is based on your income and the taxes you pay. While others receive a large amount, others may also receive nothing on their tax refund due to their income.

If you have a child living with a disability who is approved for the DTC, you will see a higher amount when you receive the Child Tax Benefit every month. Having the DTC also opens the door to getting a Registered Disability Saving Plan (RDSP), which is intended to help parents and others save for long term financial security.

Manitoba has a benefit called the Primary Caregiver Tax Credit, which can be given to someone who cares for an individual and who does not get paid. The result is receiving \$1,400 when filing your taxes. The main requirement for this benefit is the following: Assisting and/or supervising with personal care such as bathing, feeding, dressing, grooming/hygiene, mobility, transfers, toileting/elimination, and/or administration of medication. You can only apply for this credit once, no matter how many people you may care for.

A few other benefits that someone may need assistance with are the Canada Pension Plan Disability, Rent Assist, and Employment and Income Assistance.

The Financial Empowerment program also offers a free tax clinic for individuals who live with a disability, or families who care for someone living with a disability.

Eligibility for the tax clinic is based on the following requirements:

The income tax return is simple and income level is:

- 1 person – total family income under \$35,000
- 2 people – under \$45,000
- 3 people – under \$47,500 and so forth.

The clinic does not file taxes for individuals who are self-employed, own their own business, have rental income and expenses, have interest income over \$1,000, own foreign property, filed bankruptcy in the year of filing or year prior, and for the deceased.

Although the clinic runs through March and April, taxes can be filed all year round and can go back 10 years. Filing your taxes will help you get the Child Tax Benefit, GST, and the Climate Action Incentive Refund.

The Financial Empowerment program also offers a 10-week money-management course called the Saving Circle. Individuals living with a disability, or a family member caring for a person living with a disability, can participate in this course.

There are 10 chapters and some of the information learned will be on budgeting, understanding credit and banking, and community economic development. When signing up, you will be given a voucher and referral to open a special account at Assiniboine Credit Union and in 6 months, you can save up to \$250.00 (averages to approximately \$42/month) and we match it 3:1 to help with purchasing something you need, including items such as a laptop to help look for work or go back to school, household needs, disability health needs, RESP, and RDSP.

After graduating from the Saving Circle, you may be eligible to sign up for the Individual Development Account (IDA). Here you can save up to \$1,000 in a year and receive a 2:1 match. Items may include education, RDSP, health disability needs like hearing aids or a scooter. Many individuals who have taken this course come out understanding the difference between a 'need' vs. a 'want', and learn to budget their money more carefully.

The monies cannot go towards paying off bills, vacations, and things that are considered a 'want'. We use Statistics Canada's Low-Income Cut-Off (LICO) as a guide for your income. If your income is higher than what is shown, there may be factors to consider when going through the qualification process.

- 1 person: \$19,965
- 2 people: \$24,865
- 3 People: \$30,557
- 4 people: \$37,100, and so on

For more information, contact Angel Prefontaine-Gibson by phone at 204-975-3103 or by email at aprefontaine-gibson@manitobapossible.ca. You can also find more information at Manitobapossible.ca, and look for the Financial Empowerment Program under Programs.



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City of Winnipeg Launches Accessible Vehicles for Hire Pilot



Winnipeggers who rely on wheelchairs can now try a new way to book vehicles for hire, which advocates hope will shrink wait times for rides. The city launched Winnipeg Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (or Winnipeg WAV) on May 11, 2022.

The on-demand, accessible booking service for taxis, limousines and ride-hailing vehicles will offer a central accessible trip booking service, which multiple companies are invited to participate in. Users can set pickup and drop-off locations to connect with the nearest vehicle.

An advocate for people with disabilities said the new service should help people get rides much more quickly, an improvement he says is greatly needed. "I know co-workers and friends who have had to often wait one or two hours to get (an accessible) van... It's those really long wait times that are one of the biggest problems from a community sticking point," said Patrick Stewart, a consultant for the Independent Living Resource Centre.

The new app will allow multiple companies to list accessible vehicles through the same service, which should make them quicker and easier to book, Stewart said. The city is testing the new dispatch service through a two-year, \$1.8-million pilot project, which it hopes will also increase the number of accessible vehicles available.

The pilot includes financial incentives to drivers of accessible vehicles, who can earn up to \$2,250 per year for participating and owners of the vehicles, who can earn up to \$2,500 per year. Drivers who own their vehicles are eligible for both. The amount paid out depends on the number of trips provided through the app, trip acceptance ratings, driver ratings, and city inspections, among other factors.

The Independent Living Resource Centre advocated for the service, which Stewart believes will help the city better track and inspect accessible vehicles. The participation bonuses are warranted since it can cost more to operate and fuel an accessible van than a standard cab, he said. "Often people with disabilities have limited choices when it comes to transportation, so we definitely want (this project) to work," said Stewart.

Duffy's Taxi and Unicity Taxi will run the central dispatch.

"We are proud to be part of this initiative to improve accessible taxi service in our city," Unicity Taxi President Gurmail Mangat said in a news release.

Winnipeg WAV can be reached through its app available at the Apple App Store (iOS), the Google Play Store (Android), at winnipeg.ca/wav, and by calling 204-986-4WAV (204-986-4928).

Article courtesy of Joyanne Pursaga and the Winnipeg Free Press, originally published May 11, 2022. Reprinted with permission.

Health Services Resources for Indigenous Members

When Indigenous people living with spinal cord injury come to Winnipeg to receive medical care it's important to know what kind of health care services are available and how to access them. In the article below we will list some of these services.

INDIGENOUS HEALTH PATIENT SERVICE

Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA) Indigenous Health – Patient Services has offices at Health Sciences Centre, St. Boniface Hospital, Seven Oaks General Hospital and Grace Hospital and also have a mobile team that travels to other locations. They provide language interpretation, advocacy, Indigenous medical transportation coverage, spiritual/cultural care, resource coordination, discharge planning and coordination, and other patient resources.

If you need to contact patient services call :204-940-8880; Toll Free: 1-877-940-8880; connectme@wrha.mb.ca

PATIENT ADVOCATE UNIT

Another of the services Indigenous people can access when in Winnipeg for medical needs is the Patient Advocate Unit. This service ensures medical needs are met and medical issues are addressed in a timely and meaningful way. This program is an Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) partnership with the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA). This program is also known as patient navigator. It provides resources for Indigenous patients/clients and family to connect them to the right services to meet their health care needs and guide, provide information and support throughout their medical journey outside of the hospital. Some of the services provided are transportation referral unit, medical relocation information, accessing medical records, non-Insured health benefits information and/or assistance with coverage/appeals, filing critical incident/hospital complaints, and Employment Assistance (E.I.S.) processes.

For direct referrals, the Patient Advocate can be reached at Patient Advocate Unit, 200-275 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 2B3, or by phone 204-987-4120 (main line), fax 888-324-5483 or 204-944-0582. In-hospital referrals: Indigenous Health Programs - Central Intake call 204-940-8880 or 877-940-8880 (toll free), fax 204-943-1728.

SPECIAL NEEDS ADVOCATE UNIT

The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs in partnership with the EAGLE Urban Transition Center (EUTC) and First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) created a Special Needs Patient Advocacy program to improve the quality of life for Indigenous children and their families living with special needs and/or disabilities and mental health in First Nation communities and urban settings, to ensure meaningful participation and engagement, and also for ongoing

communication between First Nation health care and social services, in the Jordan's Principle implementation process both on and off reserve. Used to resolve disputes between government services provided to First Nation children.

They can be reached at 200-275 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 2B3, by phone 204-954-3050 (main line) or 888-345-1883 (toll free); fax 204-942-0253.

FNIHB Contact Info: 391 York Avenue, Suite 300 Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 4W1
Medical Supplies and Equipment/Mental Health Counseling/Vision
• Toll-free: 1-800-665-8507; • Fax (toll-free): 1-800-289-5899

Medical Transportation phone 204-983-0911 or toll-free 877-983-0911, fax 204-984-7834

Northern Connections Medical Centre (NCMC)
Open Monday to Friday 8:30-4:30 p.m. - 425 Elgin Avenue ph. 204-940-8777

Quick Care Clinics
Open 1- 9 p.m. Monday through Friday, weekends and holidays from 9 - 5 p.m.
363 McGregor St. ph. 204-940-1963 and 17 St. Mary's Road ph. 204-940-4332

Mental Health Crisis Response Centre
Open 24 hours/7 days a week (no appointment necessary)
Urgent Mental Health Services for Adults - Located at 817 Bannatyne Avenue (at Tecumseh)

Aboriginal Health Programs - Health Services Central Intake
Open Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. 1-877-940-8880 (toll free) or 204-940-8880

Prescriptions
• Grand Medicine: Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00 to 5:30; Phone: 1 877 612 2132
• Shoppers Drug Mart: Open 24 hours for After Hours Prescription Needs - Phone: 204-958- 7000 (Osborne/River)

Health Links/Info Santé: Available 24 hours/7 days a week - 1-888-315-9257

WRHA Mobile Crisis: 204-940-1781

I hope the information provided in this article will help you navigate the Indigenous Health Care system better when in Winnipeg. Spinal Cord Injury Manitoba is also here to support you, provide advocacy for you, connect you with other needed services, and to provide emotional support during your time of need.

Written by Maria Cabas, Rehabilitation Counsellor, Indigenous Services

Manitoba Paraplegia Foundation (MPF) News

MPF Trustees:

Doug Finkbeiner, Q.C. (President)
James Richardson Jr. (Treasurer)
Dr. Lindsay Nicolle
John Wallis
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Dr. Jan Brown
Leonard Steingarten
Lyll Hallick

MPF funds go to work in four main areas that are not supported by any other sources in Manitoba: special projects, product testing, research, and direct aid to Manitobans living with spinal cord injury who do not have the necessary financial resources for equipment and/or services. All requests for direct aid are initiated through SCI Manitoba. Individuals must provide information on their finances, explain why they cannot meet the expense within their own budget, and identify any other potential sources to support the request, including potential for contribution from family.

SCI Manitoba thanks MPF for its continued support and commitment to improving the quality of life of Manitobans living with spinal cord injury.

MPF has approved several requests for financial support during the past several months. Since the last issue of ParaTracks, financial support totaling \$38,100 has been granted. Some of the highlights follow:

- Funding was granted for the purchase of a backrest for an SCI Manitoba member whose new wheelchair has a tilt/recline feature. This equipment will help reduce the member's pain and allow for their participation in life activities.
- Funding was provided for supportive transportation for an SCI Manitoba Member who was required to attend an in-person medical assessment. This assistance will support the member's independence and allow for a medical assessment that will help prevent additional health concerns from arising as well as address current medical concerns (pain management and professional mental health support).
- Funding was granted for the purchase of a walker for an SCI Manitoba member who was being discharged from hospital. This equipment will allow the member to be safe and independent with ambulation in their home.
- Funding was provided to Spinal Cord Injury Manitoba to assist with increased operating expenses for the 2022/2023 year.
- Funding was provided for a customized backrest for an SCI member who obtained a new wheelchair. This specialized equipment will help prevent deterioration of the member's health and allow them to remain independent in their community.

Visit MPF's website at www.scimanitoba.ca/mpf. Applications for assistance are available by contacting the SCI Manitoba office at info@scimanitoba.ca or 204-786-4753.

Wolseley Woodworking & Construction



Wheelchair Ramps designed and built to code	
Wheel-in showers	Accessible bathrooms
Doorways widened	Home Modifications
MPI, WCB, VAC and Family Services friendly	

667-5787 Mike Hladky (SMR, U of M)

How Much Fluid Should You Drink?



Why is it important to keep drinking when you have issues emptying your bladder?

When you have certain bladder issues, you might feel less encouraged to drink a lot of water, because you feel that this increases your problem, but it's actually the opposite. When you are well hydrated, your urine is more diluted and less irritating to the bladder. Not drinking enough fluid can make your symptoms worse. Instead, you should time your intake as well as your bathroom visits to gain better control.

Drinking lots of fluid can help flush bacteria out of your bladder. Water is best option, but fruit juices can count towards some of your fluid needs as well. Drink at least six 8-ounce glasses (equivalent to 1.5-2 liters) of fluid every day. Always check with your health care provider, as some medical conditions may require you to limit your fluid intake.

Tip: Fill one or more bottles or jugs with the recommended amount of water and store them in the fridge. Then the water is kept nice and cold and you know that once you have emptied them you have reached your daily amount.

When you travel or do sports you might want to drink less, because you are afraid of leakage or don't want to catheterize at inappropriate times. But it is even more important to drink then. If you travel in a hot climate or sweat during physical exercise you risk dehydrating if you don't drink adequately.

Not drinking adequately can also result in constipation, which also can affect your bladder health.



When you have a urinary tract infection (UTI)

Increase the amount of water you drink when you've got a UTI. Fluids perform two jobs: they help flush bacteria out of your bladder, and thin (dilute) your urine.

Urine is made of waste products from your body. Concentrated, dark urine increases irritation and is sometimes more painful to pass when you have a bladder infection. Diluted urine is lighter in colour and usually doesn't burn as much.

Avoid caffeinated drinks like coffee, tea or fizzy drinks. Caffeine can irritate your bladder even more when you have an infection.

These are general guidelines meant to help you with typical questions. You should follow the specific instructions provided by your healthcare provider and the intermittent catheterization solution you are using.

Concerned about UTIs?

Download our **FREE**
guide to keeping your
bladder healthy



www.coloplast.ca/uti-ebook



 Coloplast

We Want Your Feedback

ParaTracks

SCI Manitoba is interested in getting your feedback about ParaTracks, our long-standing publication focused on providing local information and stories on all things related to spinal cord injury in Manitoba. We have every intention of continuing to make ParaTracks available, but as more and more people move to online sources for news and information, we wonder, quite naturally, if you would prefer to receive ParaTracks electronically as well. With costs for printing and mailing inching upwards every year, it may be possible to provide a full colour, magazine style version of ParaTracks while reducing our costs by simply offering an electronic version, thereby lowering the number of printed copies. So, please take a minute and let us know your preference by answering this simple question:

In what format would you prefer to receive ParaTracks in the future?

- 1. Print edition (what you currently receive)**
- 2. Electronic edition (a PDF document emailed to you)**
- 3. Electronic edition (a link sent by email for downloading or viewing ParaTracks on our website)**

To provide your response, please go to the following address and submit your feedback:

rebrand.ly/ParaTracks-Survey. If you cannot respond to this survey online, please contact our office at 204-786-4753 extension 222 or toll-free within Manitoba at 800-720-4933 extension 222 to indicate your preference.

Email Subscription

SCI Manitoba is continuing to build an email list that can be used to send our subscribers important information and news about our organization, our services, and other items of interest to people living with spinal cord injury in Manitoba. Please note this email list is separate from our list of clients, who have already given consent to receive services from SCI Manitoba. The email list, however, requires a separate consent for us to be able to send you news and information by email.

If you're already on our email list, we're asking you to take a few minutes to complete and submit the online subscription form at the link noted below. This will update your profile with your current email address, name, and phone number. If you're not already on the email list, please take a few minutes to subscribe so you'll never miss out on important news updates, research opportunities, and other noteworthy announcements of interest to Manitobans living with spinal cord injury.

rebrand.ly/scimanitoba-subscribe

By subscribing or updating your profile information, you are giving your consent for SCI Manitoba to communicate with you about news and information that we believe will be of interest to our subscribers. Once subscribed, you may unsubscribe at any time, for any reason, without impacting in any manner the services you are currently receiving, or may receive in the future.



Proud History | Vibrant Future

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

YES!

Count me in as a member of Spinal Cord Injury Manitoba Inc. All members receive "ParaTracks" SCI Manitoba's newsletter and voting privileges at the Annual General Meeting.

Members also receive discounts at various health care supply stores.

Stevens Home Health Care Supplies (10% off supplies & equipment), The Access Store (10%), Northland Home Health Care (10% off medical supplies) and Fido Mobile (\$10 off monthly phone plan).

PLEASE ENTER MEMBERSHIP FOR:

NAME:

ADDRESS:

CITY: PROV:

POSTAL CODE: PHONE:

E-MAIL:

(PROVIDING YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS WILL HELP SAVE ON MAILING COSTS)

SIGNATURE: DATE:

I wish to select the following category of Membership:

- ☐ MEMBER \$15 - \$24
- ☐ SUPPORTING MEMBER \$25 - \$99
- ☐ SUSTAINING MEMBER: \$100 - \$249
- ☐ CHARTER MEMBER: \$250 - \$499
- ☐ PATRON MEMBER: \$500 AND OVER

All Monies donated remain in Manitoba to support SCI Manitoba. An income tax receipt will be issued for any amount over \$15.00. Sustaining, Charter and Patron Members will receive recognition of their generous contribution in the context of events such as our Annual General Meetings or in the programs of other SCI Manitoba functions.

☐ NEW ☐ RENEWAL

*Make cheque payable to: Spinal Cord Injury Manitoba
Mail to: 825 Sherbrook Street, Winnipeg MB R3A 2M5*

IMPORTANT!

By signing above, you are consenting to the use of your personal information (name and address only) by SCI Manitoba for the purposes of sending out SCI's newsletters, membership cards and receipts, reminder notices and meeting notices. SCI Manitoba does not sell or trade personal information and does not rent out its mailing lists.

For more information:

Phone: 204-786-4753

Fax: 204-786-1140

Email: info@scimanitoba.ca

Toll free within Manitoba: 1-800-720-4933