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ParaTracks
coming
fall 2026**

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(details on p.2)

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gentle



Easy
to use

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visit .coloplast.ca / Try-SpeediCathSoft



*Compared to uncoated catheters

1. De Ridder, D. J. M. K., Everaert, K., Fernández, L. G., Valero, J. F., Durán, A. B., Abrisqueta, M. J., ... & Sotillo, A. R. (2005). Intermittent catheterisation with hydrophilic-coated catheters (SpeediCath) reduces the risk of clinical urinary tract infection in spinal cord injured patients: a prospective randomised parallel comparative trial. *European urology*, 48(6), 991-995.

2. Cardenas, D. D., Moore, K. N., Dannels-McClure, A., Scelza, W. M., Graves, D. E., Brooks, M., & Busch, A. K. (2011). Intermittent catheterization with a hydrophilic-coated catheter delays urinary tract infections in acute spinal cord injury: a prospective, randomized, multicenter trial. *PM&R*, 3(5), 408-417.

SpeediCath Soft is indicated for use by patients with urine retention and patients with post void residual volume (PVR) due to neurogenic and non-neurogenic voiding dysfunction. The catheter is inserted into the urethra to reach the bladder allowing urine to drain. The product is for adult male patients only. SpeediCath catheters are available by prescription only. Patients performing self-catheterization should follow the advice of, and direct questions about use of the product to, their medical professional. Before using the device, carefully read the product labels and information accompanying the device including the instructions for use which contain additional safety information. The SpeediCath product is for single-use only; discard it after use. If you experience symptoms of a urinary tract infection, or are unable to pass the catheter into the bladder, contact your healthcare professional. The risk information provided here is not comprehensive. To learn more, talk to your healthcare provider. For further information, call Coloplast Corp. at 1 (866) 293-6349 and/or consult the company website at www.coloplast.ca.

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SpeediCath®



ParaTracks in your inbox



Starting in fall 2026, SCI Manitoba will begin the process of transitioning to a digital version of our news magazine and [we want to hear from you](#) how you want to receive ParaTracks in the future.

If you want to continue receiving ParaTracks [in print form](#), you do not need to take any action.

If you prefer to [make the transition to digital](#), you must opt in by scanning the QR code on this page with the camera on your smartphone or use the web link below and complete the online form so we can send you an email containing the link to view the digital version of ParaTracks on our website each time a new issue is available.

We understand many of our readers will continue to want to receive ParaTracks in print, and we will continue to make the print version available until further notice.

This transition to digital reflects our commitment to delivering relevant and newsworthy information to our readers and supporters in ways that are most convenient and accessible. The transition will also help reduce the rising costs for printing and mailing ParaTracks.

If you have any questions or feedback about the transition to digital ParaTracks, please contact Dan Joannis, Executive Director, by phone at 204-202-8326 or by email at dan@scimanitoba.ca.



... or type this link into the address bar of your web browser (Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome, Safari, etc):

<https://mailchi.mp/scimanitoba/digital-paratracks>

**ParaTracks is a publication of
Spinal Cord Injury Manitoba**

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With financial support from
Manitoba Paraplegia Foundation Inc.

ParaTracks is published three times each year and past editions are available for viewing and downloading from the SCI Manitoba website.

Circulation: 1,200 copies
Estimated readership: 2,500

Editor: Dan Joannis
Layout: Adrienne Conley and Dan Joannis

Advertising rates for photo-ready copy:

Full page \$160.00

Half page \$87.00

Quarter page \$55.00

Business card \$33.00

Classified advertisements are free
for members of SCI Manitoba.

Letters to the editor, submissions, suggestions, and comments are greatly appreciated and can be sent by email to info@scimanitoba.ca or by post to the mailing address above.

Canada Post
Publication Agreement #40050723

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Spinal Cord Injury Manitoba
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Spinal Cord Injury Manitoba acknowledges that our work extends throughout the province of Manitoba on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg, Anishinewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline, and Nehethowuk Nations, the ancestral lands of the Inuit, and the homeland of the Red River Métis. Spinal Cord Injury Manitoba is committed to creating an organizational and service delivery framework that respects and honours the rights of Indigenous Peoples living with spinal cord injury, and to moving forward in partnership with Indigenous Peoples in the spirit of truth, reconciliation, and collaboration.

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Spinal Cord Injury Manitoba thanks the **Manitoba Paraplegia Foundation**, the **Manitoba Government**, and **United Way Winnipeg** for their generous and continued financial support of ParaTracks and Manitobans living with spinal cord injury.



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PARAPLEGIA
FOUNDATION INC.

Manitoba 



United Way
Winnipeg

Accessible Canoe and Kayak Launches in Manitoba



The Manitoba Paddling Association welcomes people of all ages and abilities to participate in kayaking, canoeing and dragon boating. The Manitoba Canoe and Kayak Centre and the Winnipeg and Selkirk Canoe Kayak Centre have installed accessible canoe and kayak launches. However, access to the dock is steep and may require some additional assistance to navigate.

Also, currently there is not an accessible washroom at the club.

Equipment is available to be rented for a drop in fee of \$10, or \$15 for a family.

The Winnipeg club has Paralympic kayaks for members or registered camp participants to use. Although there is not an accessible program, if you are interested in joining, please email mpa@sportmanitoba.ca and we will do our best to accommodate you.

For more information and to learn about the current clubs, you can visit MPA's website at www.mpa.mb.ca or their Facebook page at [@manitobapaddlingassociation](https://www.facebook.com/manitobapaddlingassociation).

Free Online Courses

If you are interested in taking university courses but are unsure about committing to a degree or worry that you don't have enough time, there are free online courses that don't require a financial commitment.

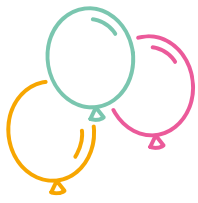
What's the catch? By choosing a free option, you will have access to the course modules and accompanying videos but free courses do not provide any formal recognition for your studies. If you prefer to receive a certificate acknowledging your effort, you will need to pay for the course, which typically includes lectures, discussion boards, and sometimes graded assignments.

The University of Toronto, the University of Alberta,

and the University of British Columbia offer online access to a variety of courses taught by professors. The best part is that no prior experience is necessary - if you start a course and find it's not for you or life gets in the way and you need a break, you can easily do so.

Several websites host free university coursework, but Coursera is a leader in this area - it partners with recognized institutions to provide both accredited (paid) and non-accredited (free!) programs. There are many universities from around the globe offering a wide range and countless hours of courses. Taking free courses is

(continued on next page)



Cheers to RETIREMENT!



Congratulations to Gail Burnside who retired as Director of Rehabilitation Services at SCI Manitoba at the end of December 2025.

Gail began her tenure as the hospital counsellor in 2009 and was an integral member of the interdisciplinary rehab team on RR5 at HSC, helping newly injured individuals and their families adjust and adapt to the many changes that follow the onset of a spinal cord injury. In 2023, Gail moved to the Director of Rehabilitation Services

position and helped guide our team of rehabilitation counsellors and ensure services to members were of the highest quality.

On December 12, we celebrated Gail's achievements and contributions to SCI Manitoba during the last 16 years, and wished her a long, healthy, and well-deserved retirement.

Once again, thank you, Gail, and best wishes in retirement from your SCI Manitoba Family!



(L-R) Mark Wherrett, Coleen Junio, Alina Babu, Kadija Ibrahim, Becky Norman, Terra Coulter, Gail Burnside, Alexandria Toews, Annika Onosson, Dan Joannis, Laurence Haien, and Adrienne Conley.

(continued from previous page)

great if you are thinking about making a career change, preparing to become a future student, or simply looking to learn something new!

Some of the available courses on Coursera:

- Indigenous Canada (University of Alberta): Dr. Gareau leads 12 modules on Indigenous history, the land and environment, Indigenous worldviews, art and expression. Est. 22 hours.
- Introduction to Psychology (University of Toronto): Dr. Joordens leads 12 modules on

- on cognition (memory, learning, attention) and human development. Est.22.5 hours.
- Paleontology: Early Vertebrate Evolution (University of Alberta): Dr. Murray leads 4 modules on paleontology, focusing on the origin of vertebrates and key Canadian fossil localities like Burgess Shale, Miguasha, and Man On The Hill. Estimated 7 hours to complete.

There are many topics to explore, so take a moment to check them out!



SCI Manitoba is hiring a [Peer Support Coordinator](#) who will be responsible for helping to build, support, manage, and supervise a team of peer support volunteers in Manitoba. Are you:

- [Trustworthy](#) - honest and responsible, as well as patient, caring, and friendly?
- [Professional](#) - able to manage difficult situations, refer to other resources or professionals when needed, and capable of remaining within the scope of your role?
- [Emotionally Supportive](#) - compassionate, kind-hearted, and empathetic?
- [Socially Engaging](#) - able to provide people with choices, relate to others, use positive language, and actively listen?
- [Ready to Help](#) - a strong desire to make a difference in people's lives by sharing your lived experiences to help others?
- [Mentally Prepared and Positive](#) - highly motivated, feel emotionally well, and have an optimistic, positive attitude?

If this sounds like you and you're interested in working at SCI Manitoba, please contact Dan Joannis, Executive Director, by phone at 204-202-8326 or by email at dan@scimanitoba.ca to get all the details.

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

*Marie Atkinson
Matthew Bencharski
Jeanette Erickson
Gordon Fedack
Dolores Flett*

*Keith Hanson
Brent Hrechka
Stefan Ingthorsson
Fred Jaehrlich
John Leoppky*

*Robert Michell
Roy Pedlar
Fred Pinder
Arnold Sakolinsky
Gary Willstrop*

Building Resilience through Mental Health Learning



Well Central
A place for your mental health

In today's fast-paced world, taking care of your mental health is just as important as your physical health. Recognizing this need, the Canadian Mental Health Association created Well Central, a free online learning platform designed to support mental well-being, personal growth and recovery.

Well Central functions as a Virtual Recovery College, offering structured, self-paced courses that help individuals better understand their mental health and develop practical skills to support daily life. Rather than replacing therapy or clinical services, it complements them by empowering people with knowledge, tools and strategies they can use independently.

Well Central is accessible from anywhere with an internet connection and it removes common barriers such as cost, long waits, and location. Courses are co-developed by mental health professionals and people with lived experience, ensuring the content is both evidence-based and deeply relatable.

Well Central offers a variety of courses, including:

- Well-being Course
- Stress Less: Practical strategies to reduce stress and boost well-being
- Developing Self Compassion
- Grief, Loss and Celebrating Life
- Building Healthy Boundaries
- Overcoming Loneliness and Isolation
- Postpartum Emotional and Mental Health
- Recovery
- Understanding and Managing Anxiety

Well Central recommends starting your learning experience with the Well-being Course as it will provide a good foundation from which to explore the other topics. You can, however, access any course you like at any time.

What is the Well-being Course?

The Well-being Course is an innovative, online learning experience designed to assist people achieve greater levels of mental health, well-being and life satisfaction.

The Well-being Course is unique because it is based on current research and is co-produced with people who have lived experience of mental health and addictions challenges. This means the information and helpful strategies are introduced to learners in ways that can be readily applied to real everyday life.

The Well-being Course is suitable for people...

- dealing with everyday life struggles
- living with mental health challenges
- living with mental illness
- dealing with addiction issues

New courses will be added on an ongoing basis, so check back often.

How to get started with Well Central:

1. Go to <https://wellcentral.ca> using a computer, tablet, or smartphone
2. Click "Start Now" at the top of the page and create a new account (don't worry, it's free)
3. Confirm your account by clicking on the link in the confirmation email
4. Log in with the username and password used during registration

Five Tips for Going Out as a Catheter User

Whether it's going out to a party or grabbing coffee with friends, leaving the house as a catheter user might feel daunting. However, with a little planning and preparation, you can work up to going out with confidence. Here are five top tips from our friends at Coloplast Canada:

Plan your activity

It may be tempting to skip catheterization when you aren't at home, traveling, or if you are with people that don't know about your condition. However, skipping catheterization might result in leaks and can also be harmful to your bladder in the long term.

Plan your activities ahead of time instead so you can enjoy them without interruptions. Set aside time for catheterization during your activities. Catheterize as close to the time you leave your home as possible, and find out where the nearest bathrooms are in advance at a time that is convenient for you.

If you go somewhere to have fun, it is easy to get preoccupied - and that's perfectly okay! Setting an alarm on your phone or watch can help put your mind at ease if you are concerned about remembering when to catheterize.

Know where the bathrooms are located

It may be handy to check out available bathrooms at an event in advance. This may be especially important if you use a wheelchair. Use the internet or call to learn about how the location or venue you are visiting is equipped with accessible bathrooms.



Pack extra supplies

When away from the security of your home, it is good to know that you have all your intermittent catheterization supplies with you. Public restrooms are not as clean and might not be equipped in a convenient way. If you worry about leaks, it may also be important that you can clean yourself or change your clothes. Some people use a different type of catheter when they are away from home. You might want to have a more compact catheter, or one with a urine bag attached. Pack extra supplies – just in case!

Choose the right catheter for you

Choosing a catheter that fits your lifestyle may help with your overall confidence and comfort. SpeediCath® compact catheters are designed to be discreet, so your self-catheterization routine doesn't have to get in the way of your social life.

These catheters come pre-lubricated and ready to use right out of the packaging! SpeediCath® compact catheters are available in both male and female.



Consider what to wear

Wearing dark colours may help make small leaks less noticeable. Have a blazer, sweater or cardigan that you can quickly wrap around your waist if necessary. You might also consider using a pad or incontinence briefs to feel safe from leakage until you feel comfortable in your routine and being out and about.

Get more useful tips in Coloplast's free downloadable eBook called 20 Tips for Self-Catheterization at the following link: [visit.coloplast.ca/20-tips-self-cath](https://www.coloplast.ca/20-tips-self-cath).

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.

Coloplast Care is a free product and lifestyle support program for catheter users. We offer support through free online resources on our website, phone support, and product guidance. Learn more at www.coloplast.ca or call a dedicated Care Advisor at +1-866-293-6349.



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Living with a spinal cord injury comes with challenges — but you don't have to face them alone. At The Access Store, we've been empowering Manitobans with the products, knowledge, and lived experience to help you regain mobility, comfort, and confidence.

Our founders understand your journey — because they've lived it. That's why every recommendation, every product, and every bit of support we offer is built on real-life experience and trusted expertise.



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SOCIAL CLUB

A PLACE TO LAUGH, LEARN, AND CONNECT

On March 17, the Social Club had a great time visiting The Leaf and enjoyed a break from winter. We escaped the snow by relaxing in the tropical dome and strolling through the Mediterranean zone.

The Social Club continues to grow in membership, and we are looking forward to expanding our outing locations! After the recent visit to The Leaf - our first off-site adventure, we have more outings planned. Weather permitting, we are also looking forward to some outdoor activities!

We are also excited to announce that the Social Club will celebrate its first anniversary in May. Thank you to everyone who has participated and contributed to the learning, laughter, and camaraderie!



Below are some future dates for Social Club gatherings, so please mark your calendars and let us know if you are interested in joining! Details about plans and locations will be shared as the dates approach:

April 21

May 26

June 16

July 21



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Sign up for our email list to receive periodic news and updates from SCI Manitoba.

Scan the QR code with your phone or go to <https://rebrand.ly/scimanitoba-subscribe>



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Introducing Dr. Brett Cameron

Meet Dr. Brett Cameron, the new and welcomed addition to the physiatry team in the Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation Program at HSC Winnipeg's Rehabilitation Hospital. Dr. Cameron is working in the outpatient clinic (RR2) and on the inpatient unit (RR5) at the Rehabilitation Hospital. Terra Coulter, SCI Manitoba's Hospital Services counsellor, who works closely with Dr. Cameron and other members of the interdisciplinary team, had the pleasure of conducting an interview and prepared this article to introduce Dr. Cameron to SCI Manitoba's membership.



Brett Cameron, MD, FRCPC

What brought you to the field of medicine?

My mom was a nurse. I think that's what initially sparked my interest into the idea of working in the field of medicine. Then as I went along in school, I liked sciences, and I enjoyed trying to help people. So, all that fit into why I wanted to pursue a career in medicine. Once I got into med school, I really liked the musculoskeletal and neurologic systems. I found out about the field of physiatry or physical medicine and rehab, and that aligned with the way I think, and how I am motivated. You work to try and optimize someone's function and optimize their quality of life, and that fit with what I wanted to do in a career in medicine.

Why did you choose to stay in Winnipeg to work in spinal cord injury rehabilitation?

I'm from Winnipeg, so I always wanted to end up here. I have all my family here, and I wanted to stay a part of the community. I had great experiences in my time at residency working in Winnipeg and doing spinal cord injury rehab. So being from here, and then my positive experiences during residency made it a good fit for me in my career as an attending doctor.

When were you first introduced to SCI rehabilitation?

I was introduced a little bit earlier on in my training than most people. My first year of residency was in 2019/2020. When COVID happened in March of 2020, the typical rotations for your first year of residency changed. Typically, we'd be doing other rotations in other fields and parts of the hospital. The opportunity came up to do spinal cord injury rehab, which usually you weren't doing until your third year of residency, but I was getting to do it in my first year. I was excited for the opportunity, did the rotation, and I really loved it. Over the course of the residency, we were to spend a certain amount of time within spinal cord injury rehab. I ended up spending more time than was expected, because I really enjoyed it. So, it's sort of funny how it all worked out. I didn't think that I'd end up doing spinal cord rehab, but how things worked out due to COVID, it got me on the right track of getting exposure quite early in

residency. I then just kept seeking it out after that. I think a lot of that is because of the great people I worked with. Dr. Ethans and Dr. Casey were good mentors for me. Getting to work with them, seeing how they interact with patients, and how the patients liked working with them made it seem like a great area to be working in.

What do you love about your job?

So, there are two parts of spinal cord rehab: there's the inpatient and the outpatient. The inpatient part is great because you get to meet people from when they've initially had their spinal cord injury, as well as going and seeing patients around the hospital. We're seeing people in very difficult times when they're first experiencing their injury. We only get to see them in that very short period when they're on these surgical wards, and in different parts of the hospital. Then in a few weeks, some patients end up coming to our ward, and they work with the team over the next few months. To see the progress in that short period of time is pretty remarkable. It is rewarding working in inpatient spinal cord rehabilitation because you get to see how far people come, and the big improvements people can make in a short period of time. Also, working on inpatient is great because we are working as part of a team. Nursing, occupational therapy, physical therapy, recreational therapy, social work, SCI Manitoba, and the unit assistants on the ward: everyone works together to try and optimize each person's function and hopefully allow them to have the best possible rehab that they can while they're admitted with us under rehab.

I love the outpatient part as well. So that's getting to see people over an extended period of time, and possible challenges they have faced along the way in those years that followed, but at the same time seeing how so many of them have accomplished great things. Our patients really have remarkable,

fulfilling lives. It's really inspiring, and I'm grateful to be able to be there to try and help a little bit along the way. In my role, I feel like we're just trying to help people, point them in the right direction, and offer our expertise as best we can. However, it's the patient who is doing all the work, so it's good to be there along the way to try and help them. So far, in the outpatient experiences I've had, I'm still quite new. I am seeing a lot of patients that used to be followed by Dr. Ethans. Some of these people have been seeing Dr. Ethans for 20 years. When I'm first meeting with them, I get to see all the progress, changes, and challenges they have experienced. It's pretty amazing. As of right now, I haven't been able to see people over an extended period but I'm looking forward to being able to establish relationships with people over the long term and doing my best to support people with spinal cord injuries.

What are the challenges of your job?

I guess a challenge is managing issues related to spinal cord injury, which can be complicated, and it doesn't just affect one system. It affects lots of different things: strength, sensation, bladder, bowel, skin. There are multiple areas that are affected by a spinal cord injury, and every person is different. Trying to make sure that we're covering all those issues in an effective way is a challenge because you want to make sure that you're doing everything possible to help the patient. I think



another challenge is navigating some of the barriers that exist in our society for people with spinal cord injuries. Navigating the system, trying to understand how to best support people, how they can get funding for a piece of equipment, or who can support this person in the community. Sometimes trying to work through some of the logistics can be challenging.

What is your educational background?

I'm from Winnipeg. I went to St. Paul's High School and then went on to the University of North Dakota where I was playing football. I then went to the University of Manitoba for medical school, followed by a residency. My physical medicine and rehabilitation residency was a five-year residency program at the University of Manitoba. After those 5 years, I did a fellowship at the University of Ottawa in interventional musculoskeletal ultrasound, where I did extra training and specialization in ultrasound guided procedures, gaining further expertise on procedures like joint injections or injections for spasticity. I gained extra exposure to that, which was great.

What is something your patients and colleagues may not know about you?

My brother and I were in the same med school class, and I'm four years older than my brother. After university, I was messing around trying to play football. I tried out for a couple years, and was cut by the Bombers and the Saskatchewan Roughriders. My younger brother was applying to med school, so I said, I've got to stop trying to do this football thing. I applied as well, and luckily, we ended up in the same med school class. So that was pretty fun. He is a rheumatologist at Health Sciences Centre. We ended up in the same class, and we both did residency. Now we are both practicing at HSC.

Another thing people wouldn't know about me is that I commute by bike all year round, that's the way I get to work. That's sort of fun and interesting, getting to bike along the river in the wintertime.

My dad played for the Winnipeg Blue Bombers for 23 years. He's a punter, Bob Cameron. I was around football a lot growing up, he played until I was 12.

I enjoy spending time with my family. I have a wife, two young kids and my dog. We like to do lots of fun stuff as a family: going for walks, bike rides, playing lots of games and stuff with them is always a fun thing to do.

Anything else you would like to add?

I'm excited to be working in spinal cord injury rehab. I am going to do my best to support patients the best I can: to help them achieve their goals, and to help and maximize their function and quality of life. I look forward to learning from them a lot along the way as well to better serve people in the future. I'm really looking forward to the opportunity to work in spinal cord injury, and to work with patients all across Manitoba.





LATEST NEWS

MPF Trustees

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MPF funds go to work in four main areas that are not supported by other sources in Manitoba: special projects, product testing, research, and direct aid to Manitobans living with SCI. MPF is a funder of last resort and 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 sources to support the request, including potential for contributions from family. SCI Manitoba thanks MPF for its continued support and

commitment to improving the quality of life for Manitobans living with spinal cord injury. Since the last issue of ParaTracks, financial support totaling \$23,170 has been granted. Some of the highlights follow:

- Financial support was provided for the purchase of a manual tilt wheelchair and associated positioning aids for an SCIM member who required these items for admission to a personal care home.
- Funding was granted for the purchase of a shower chair to allow an SCIM member to shower safely, promote independence with daily routines, and to protect against further pressure ulcers.
- Funding was providing for the purchase of back-up wheelchair wheels, tires and tubes for an SCIM member who lives in a remote community without ready access to repair services, allowing the member to be self-reliant and to participate fully in their community.
- Partial financial support was provided for a wheelchair lift for an SCIM member's vehicle, allowing the member to work and achieve financial independence.
- Funding was granted for the cost of repairs to an automatic door opener for a SCIM member to open and close their apartment door independently while reducing physical strain and enhancing safety.
- Funding was provided for the purchase of an armrest and wireless mouse for an SCIM member transitioning back into the workforce through independent, home-based work.
- Financial support was provided for a wheelchair cushion, backrest and headrest for an SCIM member to improve postural support and enhance function, mobility and independence.
- Funding was granted for the purchase of a thigh pad and hardware for an SCIM member's wheelchair for optimal positioning, comfort and safety.
- Funding was provided for the cost of a mobile pulley for an SCIM member, which will help preserve upper extremity strength and function for daily activities and independent power wheelchair mobility.

*Visit MPF's website for more information at www.scimanitoba.ca/mpf.
Information about applying for assistance is available by contacting SCI Manitoba.*

Northern Connections Medical Centre

Supporting northern and Indigenous patients with coordinated healthcare, rehabilitation services, and culturally respectful care in Winnipeg

Accessing healthcare in a large city can be challenging, particularly for people travelling from northern Manitoba communities or navigating a new healthcare system. For people living with spinal cord injuries (SCI), ongoing medical care and equipment needs can make these challenges even greater.

Located within Seven Oaks General Hospital, Northern Connections Medical Centre provides primary care and coordinated health services for people travelling between Winnipeg and northern Manitoba communities. The clinic also supports First Nations individuals living in Winnipeg who may not yet have a primary care provider and are seeking care in an environment that respects culture and community.

Being located within the hospital also offers practical advantages. Patients are close to hospital services such as X-ray, laboratory testing, and urgent care, making it easier to access several healthcare services in one location when needed.

Team Based Healthcare Services

At Northern Connections Medical Centre, care is provided by an interdisciplinary team. This means there are several professionals who work together to support people living with spinal cord injuries and coordinate their care. The team includes:

- Primary care physicians and medical residents
- Nursing services
- Occupational therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Social work



The Northern Connections Medical Centre is part of Seven Oaks General Hospital in Winnipeg

- Dietitian services
- Pharmacist consultation
- Coordination of medical appointments and referrals to specialists or hospital services

Occupational therapists can assist with equipment assessments and functional needs, helping patients find solutions that support independence and daily activities. Physical therapists support mobility and recovery following illness or injury, while social workers help patients navigate healthcare and community resources.

For individuals living with spinal cord injuries, coordinated care from multiple healthcare professionals can be especially valuable. Medical follow-up, rehabilitation support, and assistance navigating services are often most effective when providers collaborate as a team.

Northern Teaching Program

Northern Connections Medical Centre also contributes to medical education through northern teaching initiatives connected to the

University of Manitoba. Medical residents and learners gain experience providing care in a clinic environment focused on the health needs of northern and Indigenous patients.

Training healthcare providers in this setting helps build a better understanding of the realities many northern patients face when travelling long distances for care. It also prepares physicians to work in northern and remote communities while providing care that respects culture, community relationships, and lived experience.

Harm Reduction and Substance Use Support

Northern Connections Medical Centre also provides harm reduction supports aimed at improving health and reducing risks associated with substance use.

Patients can receive guidance on safer substance use practices and referrals to addiction medicine services or community programs when additional care is needed. This approach recognizes that people may be at different stages in their health journeys and ensures individuals can access care without stigma or judgment.

Supporting Health and Independence

Living with a spinal cord injury often involves ongoing care needs and regular follow-up with healthcare providers. Accessing these services can be more complicated for people who live far from major medical centres or who are navigating healthcare in a new city.

Northern Connections Medical Centre helps simplify this process by bringing together primary care, rehabilitation supports, and service coordination in one location. Its location within Seven Oaks General Hospital also allows patients to access additional hospital services when required.

For northern and Indigenous patients—whether travelling to Winnipeg for care or establishing primary care after relocating—having a clinic that understands these healthcare journeys can make a meaningful difference.

Seven Oaks General Hospital
2300 McPhillips Street, Winnipeg, MB R2V 3M3
Phone 204-940-8777
Hours are Monday–Friday 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM



The interdisciplinary team is an integral part of the Northern Connections Medical Centre's approach to providing comprehensive care to patients from northern Manitoba communities

Ask a Rehabilitation Counsellor



In this issue, Kadija Ibrahim (Health Promotion Services) responds to a reader's question about managing bladder and bowel function following a spinal cord injury. Questions for future issues of ParaTracks can be submitted through your rehabilitation counsellor or anonymously at www.scimanitoba.ca/ask.

Managing Neurogenic Bladder and Bowel

Spinal cord injury (SCI) commonly results in significant bladder and bowel dysfunction due to interference in the neural pathways that control the urinary and intestinal systems. Depending on the level and severity of the injury, individuals may experience either spastic or flaccid bladder and bowel function. Understanding these distinctions is an important step in determining the appropriate care and support required for bladder and bowel management. Effective care may involve a structured bladder and bowel regimen, including scheduled bladder emptying, various forms of catheterization, suppositories and laxatives, digital stimulation, lifestyle adjustments, and in some cases clinical intervention.

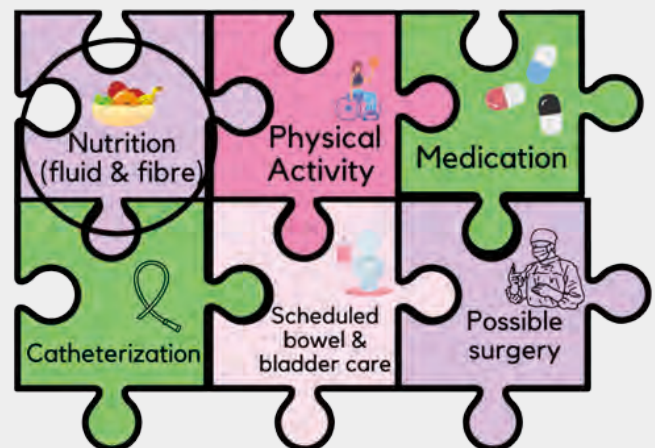
With proper guidance and recommendations from healthcare professionals, individuals can weigh the risks and benefits of different treatment options and develop bladder and bowel routines that are manageable and supportive of overall health.

Managing Neurogenic Bladder

Many individuals with SCI experience neurogenic bladder, a condition caused by nerve damage that interferes with communication between the bladder and the brain, resulting in impaired bladder control. Although there is no cure for neurogenic bladder, several management strategies can help control symptoms, including lifestyle adjustments, different forms of catheterization, and other medical interventions.



Neurogenic Bladder and Bowel Management Puzzle



Depending on the level of injury and the nerves affected, the bladder may become either flaccid (underactive) or spastic (overactive). Individuals with a flaccid bladder may experience urinary retention, which is the inability to completely empty the bladder. This condition can increase the risk of urinary tract infections and potential kidney damage. Medications such as Flomax are often prescribed to help relax the bladder outlet and improve urine flow, thereby reducing the risk of complications.

In contrast, individuals with a spastic bladder often experience the opposite issue. Symptoms may include difficulty holding urine, urinary urgency, frequent urination, and episodes of incontinence. Mirabegron is a medication that may be prescribed to help manage these symptoms. It works by relaxing the bladder muscle, increasing bladder capacity and reducing episodes of urinary leakage.



As with any medication, there may be side effects ranging from mild to severe. Establishing an effective bowel and bladder management program can feel overwhelming at times.

However, gaining a clear understanding of the condition and participating in regular health screenings can help prevent complications such as kidney damage, skin breakdown, and urinary tract infections. Collaboration with an interdisciplinary healthcare team—including physicians, nurses, and rehabilitation specialists—is essential for effective management.



Managing Neurogenic Bowel

Similarly, SCI-related nerve damage often disrupts normal bowel function. This may manifest as hard or infrequent stools, impaired rectal sensation, and spontaneous bowel movements.

Restoralax is a frequently utilized laxative that facilitates stool softening by retaining water within the intestinal tract. By drawing water into the bowel, it softens stool and helps to relieve constipation and prevent bowel backup. Dulcolax is another laxative that stimulates the intestinal

muscles, promoting contractions that help move stool through the digestive tract more quickly.

Suppositories, such as the Magic Bullet, are water-soluble medications inserted into the rectum to stimulate peristalsis and encourage bowel movements. They work by triggering the colon to contract and expel stool in a more predictable manner. One advantage is the use of a water-soluble base rather than an oil-base, allowing it to act more quickly. This can reduce the amount of time required for bowel care and make the process more manageable for individuals in both clinical and home care settings. Additional benefits include a lower incidence of staining compared to oil-based suppositories. Furthermore, the ability to schedule bowel movements enhances predictability, helping individuals reduce discomfort and prevent accidents.

Through education, professional medical support, and consistent management routines, individuals living with SCI can maintain effective bladder and bowel control and improve their quality of life.

Downtown Community Safety Partnership



Enhancing Safety, Health & Well-Being in Downtown Winnipeg

Established in 2020, the Downtown Community Safety Partnership is a non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening health, safety, and well-being in downtown Winnipeg. Serving the area between the Assiniboine River, Red River, Route 62/47, and Higgins Avenue, DCSP delivers coordinated, compassionate, and proactive outreach through integrated service teams.

Integrated Service Teams

- **Connect Community Safety** – Daytime foot and mobile patrol, wellness checks, courtesy walks, event presence, business check-ins, and voluntary transports.
- **Mobile Assist and Connect 24/7** – Around-the-clock outreach, advanced first aid, and social needs assessments for non-emergency situations.
- **Mental Health Navigators** – Specialized mental health response team collaborating with the Crisis Response Centre, Winnipeg Police Service, Health Outreach and Community Support, and Winnipeg hospitals.
- **Community Outreach Advocacy Resource Team** – Wraparound case management supporting identification, income, housing stability, health connections, and system advocacy.
- **Indigenous Women’s Support Initiative** – Rooted in Indigenous knowledge, supporting healing from gender-based violence, exploitation, human trafficking, addictions, and mental health challenges.
- **Clean Slate Social Enterprise** – A 12-month paid employment and skills program providing litter cleanup, graffiti removal, snow clearing, and biohazard services, reinvesting revenue into participant success.
- **Coordinated Assistance Network** – Downtown’s 24/7 dispatch and communications hub, integrated with Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service.

When to Contact DCSP

Voluntary transports • Wellness checks • Courtesy walks • Advocacy and support • Non-emergency crisis intervention

204-947-3277 | DCSP Mobile App (iOS & Android)

People helping people — strengthening collaboration, connection, and safety across Winnipeg’s downtown community.



CREATE YOUR FREEDOM

scisupply.ca
877 363-2284

Eagle's Nest Empowers Urban Indigenous Youth

The Eagle Urban Transition Centre (EUTC) proudly operates the Eagle's Nest Project, a dynamic and supportive program designed for urban Indigenous youth who are currently outside of the traditional education system and job market.

The Eagle Nest Project supports up to 60 Indigenous youth each year, helping them build confidence, develop essential skills, and work towards their personal and professional goals. Participants are empowered to either return to school or transition into meaningful employment.

The program serves Indigenous youth aged 15-30 years who are not currently in school or working. Through a holistic and culturally-grounded approach, participants engage in opportunities that foster personal growth and career readiness.

Rooted in the teachings of the Medicine Wheel, the program focuses on spiritual, emotional, physical, and mental well-being of each participant. By addressing these four areas, the Eagle's Nest Project ensures a balanced and empowering experience.

Located at St. John's Leisure Centre in Winnipeg's North End, the Eagle's Nest Project thrives thanks to the continued and valuable support from the City of Winnipeg, which plays a vital role in the program's ongoing success.

The 12-week program runs Monday to Friday from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm and has three annual intakes: January – April, May – August, and September – December. This structure ensures accessibility throughout the year.

What is offered

Participants have the opportunity to earn certifications and develop valuable life and employment skills, including (partial list):

- First Aid & CPR Level C Certification
- Level 1 Food Handler Certificate
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)
- Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (NVC) Training
- Mental Health First Aid Certification
- Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS)
- Training and employment counselling
- Volunteer opportunities
- Recreation activities
- Nutrition program
- Indigenous culture, language, and traditional skill-building

Please call for the next program start date. Applications are accepted throughout the year.

Eagle's Nest Program Centre

601 Aikins Street

Winnipeg, MB R2W 4J5

204-954-3075

General inquiries:

amceaglesnest@manitobachiefs.com



Indigenous Summer Games Returning in 2026

After a 15-year pause, the [Manitoba Indigenous Summer Games](#) are officially returning in 2026, marking an exciting new chapter for Indigenous youth to connect through sport, culture, and community.

Originally scheduled for summer 2025, the Games were postponed due to widespread wildfires that significantly impacted northern Manitoba. During that time, the host nations Norway House Cree Nation and Sagkeeng Anicinabe First Nation redirected their efforts toward supporting evacuees and assisting families displaced by the fires.

First founded in 1999 in Opaskwayak Cree Nation, the Manitoba Indigenous Summer Games have grown into an important provincial gathering that connects Indigenous youth through competition, cultural pride, and leadership development. The last Games were held in 2011. With renewed support from key partners, including the Province of Manitoba and Manitoba Hydro, the Games are making their long-awaited return.

The multi-sport event will feature a wide range of competitions, including:

- Archery
- 3×3 Basketball
- Volleyball
- Canoeing
- Softball
- Track and Field
- Soccer
- Athletics
- Ball Hockey
- Golf

The 2026 Manitoba Indigenous Summer Games



will take place in Norway House Cree Nation from July 8–12, and in Sagkeeng Anicinabe First Nation from August 10–15, 2026. Up to 3,000 athletes under the age of 17 along with coaches and managers are expected to participate from communities across Manitoba.

The Manitoba Indigenous Summer Games continue to open doors for young people, especially those from northern Nations who often face the greatest barriers to sport and recreation. These Games are an investment in our youth.

As anticipation builds, communities across the province are preparing to come together once again to celebrate athletic excellence, cultural pride, and youth empowerment.

The Manitoba Indigenous Summer Games' long-anticipated return in 2026 promises to be a powerful celebration of connection, resilience, and Indigenous strength.

Recreation on RR5

Building Community, Creativity and Connection

Recreation services on RR5 at HSC Winnipeg's Rehabilitation Hospital are evolving in meaningful and exciting ways. As part of each patient's rehabilitation journey, the RR5 recreation team recognizes that healing extends far beyond physical recovery. Emotional wellbeing, social connection, creativity, and personal growth all play an essential role in rebuilding life after a spinal cord injury.

The RR5 recreation program has several new and growing programs designed to foster community, reflection, and self-expression during admission on RR5.

Communal Dining Program

The new communal dining program invites patients to gather for lunch in the RR5 recreation room, rather than eating alone in their rooms. What may seem like a simple change has already begun to make a meaningful impact. The program is currently offered every second week.

The goal of communal dining is to create a welcoming, inclusive space that reduces isolation and fosters connection. Sharing a meal provides an opportunity for patients to:

- Get to know their peers
- Offer encouragement and understanding
- Form new friendships
- Experience a sense of normalcy and belonging

For many patients, rehabilitation can feel isolating, and communal dining transforms lunchtime into a moment of shared experience, conversation, and mutual support.



Ashleigh Lund, Recreation Coordinator, and Andre Vanderstoep, Spiritual Health Practitioner

Meeting of the Minds Group

Meeting of the Minds is a guided peer-support group that runs for four sessions every few months. Designed as a safe and inclusive space, this group encourages patients to reflect, share, and build community during their time on RR5. Importantly, sharing is always optional. The group is facilitated by Andre Vanderstoep, Spiritual Health Practitioner, and Ashleigh Lund, Recreation Coordinator, who guide conversations with compassion and care, ensuring every participant feels respected and supported.

The four sessions include:

Who Am I?

Patients are invited to reflect on who they are beyond their injury: exploring identity, values, and the parts of themselves that remain unchanged.

Music and Meaning

Participants share a song that holds personal significance. Through music, patients explore memories, emotions, and the meaning behind their chosen piece.

Show and Tell

Patients are encouraged to bring a photo or memento that carries personal meaning. These items often open space for storytelling, reflection, and meaningful connection among peers.

My Life as a Story

This session frames life as a series of chapters. Patients often use this opportunity to share accomplishments prior to their injury, as well as milestones and goals achieved during their admission on RR5.

Introduction to Watercolour

Creativity is another powerful avenue for healing. Introduction to Watercolour is led by Viola Davidson, a former RR5 patient who now generously volunteers her time on the unit.

Viola introduces participants to the basics of watercolor painting, teaching step-by-step techniques while encouraging personal expression. The program offers a relaxed and supportive environment where patients can:

- Try something new
- Express emotions visually
- Build confidence through skill development
- Discover unexpected talents

Many participants are surprised by what they create. Beyond learning technique, the group provides a calming, meditative experience that supports emotional well-being and self-discovery.

More Than Rehabilitation

The evolution of recreation services on RR5 reflects a holistic understanding of rehabilitation. Healing is not only about regaining strength and mobility, it is also about rebuilding identity, nurturing connection, and rediscovering purpose.

Through communal meals, reflective peer groups, and creative expression, RR5 Recreation continues to create opportunities for patients to connect, reflect, and grow. These programs remind us that recovery happens not only in therapy sessions, but also in shared stories, creative moments, and meaningful community.



Viola Davidson, SCI Manitoba member



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.

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