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Country: **Canada**

Titel of the project: **Patient Walkabout**

Project details

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Heart and Stroke Foundation of Nova Scotia

Award amount: €100,000

Patient Walkabout is an innovative program for people who have heart disease, survived a stroke or have risk factors for heart disease and stroke (i.e. atrial fibrillation, hypertension). The focus is on increasing walking. Active patients experience improved quality of life and reduced risk for heart or stroke events.

Heart&Stroke Walkabout™ is an innovative initiative that has already successfully supported thousands of Nova Scotians to walk. Multiple program components focus on multiple settings but the main target group has been generally healthy adult women. A patient focused component of Walkabout will be geared toward individuals who have risk factors for heart disease and stroke (i.e. hypertension, atrial fibrillation), cardiovascular disease, or survived a stroke. This component will increase awareness of the benefits of walking in primary and secondary prevention and in supporting quality of life, but most importantly, provide the support patients need to be active on an ongoing basis. It is poised for success as it will be built on the existing achievements and resources of Walkabout. It will strengthen the connection between HSFNS, patients and health care providers. Patients who engage in regular physical activity (PA) can prevent further health issues, reducing hospital readmissions, improving quality of life, and significantly reducing morbidity and mortality. PA has an important impact on factors that influence risk including hypertension and diabetes, two critical risk factors for predicting risk of stroke in atrial fibrillation patients. Research shows that patients experience significant increases in cardio-respiratory fitness upon completion of cardiac rehabilitation (CR) and it is recommended as an integral component of care for patients with cardiovascular disease. Those who do attend typically show an increase in PA during the program; however, their PA tends to steadily decrease after CR completion (Ferrier, 2010). Patients require additional supports in order to maintain PA over time. In addition, many patients never attend rehabilitation programs and also require support. As walking is the preferred activity of Nova Scotians and the most frequently recommended activity by health care providers, Patient Walkabout is ideal to link with existing programs geared toward cardiac/stroke patients (i.e., CR) and communities to support patients. Several rehabilitation programs in various District Health Authorities have already shown interest in partnering. Key Program Elements: referral mechanism through rehabilitation programs and physicians/health professionals who are in contact with patients; walking leader training by clinical expert; ongoing support for leaders; leader facilitated walks; completed stress test and/or doctor's approval requirement, heart rate, pulse and/or perceived rate of exertion monitoring to ensure appropriate intensity and patient confidence; goal setting and PA plan development; self monitoring (pedometers and activity logs); social connection with other patients (key to behavior change); promotion of safe and appropriate walking locations; feedback and support for patients; communication tools targeted at physicians for progress updates; an upgraded website and web based support Our existing website – www.walkaboutns.ca – is an online support for walking and the core resource. Walkers connect with and message others, create or join walking groups, track steps, find/map walking routes, participate in walking challenges and access walking resources. The website will be improved to enhance user experience and patient specific features will be added. Walkabout has demonstrated unprecedented success for HSFNS. It will experience continued achievement with Patient Walkabout.

Audience

Type

- AF Patients
- Healthcare professionals
- Carers of AF Patients

Location

Canada, North America