

# Enhancing Timely Access to PSWs for Seniors Receiving R&R Services

## Summary

- The Rehabilitation & Reablement (R&R) program provides seniors with intensive, short-term care and services after a hospital admission or health event in the community. This home-based care service enables seniors to remain at home and regain their independence for a safe and healthy recovery.
- Currently, the program is facing a gap in securing timely and consistent access to Personal Support Workers (PSWs) with the appropriate level of training. These challenges can lead to delays in discharging seniors from the hospital, put seniors at a risk of going home without appropriate services in place to help with recovery, and create administrative inefficiencies in accessing appropriate PSW services.
- To address this issue, the project evaluated two new models of PSW services:  
Model 1: Using a dedicated home support agency to provide PSWs (the **Agency model**).  
Model 2: Hiring PSWs to join the Extra-Mural Program's (EMP) R&R care team (the **Hired model**).
- The aim of the evaluation was to assess the impact of the two models on (1) R&R patient satisfaction with PSWs, (2) EMP satisfaction with PSWs, (3) patient health outcomes after completion of R&R, and (4) PSWs' knowledge of the R&R philosophy of care.
- Participants in the evaluation included:
  - 16 EMP staff; All were female.
  - 19 PSWs; All were female.
  - 76 R&R patients; 20 women and 56 men.

All the participants within the three groups identified English as their preferred language.

## HSPF Focus Area

Developing innovative care pathways

## Project Start & End Date

May 1, 2021 – March 31, 2024

## Organization/Agency

Extra-Mural Program/Ambulance New Brunswick (EM/ANB), Department of Health (Home Care Unit) & Department of Social Development

## Location

Fredericton and East Charlotte, New Brunswick

## Principal Investigator(s)

[Charlotte Everett](#)

Indicator	Impact / Outcome / Result
<b>Patient satisfaction with PSWs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90% of R&amp;R patients who were surveyed indicated they were highly satisfied with the care provided by their PSW(s) from both the Hired and Agency model.</li> <li>• Many patients provided positive feedback, expressing that their PSW was efficient, helpful, friendly, caring, and good at their job. They also felt that the services received were beneficial to their recovery and would recommend the program to others.</li> <li>• Negative feedback focused on a lack of availability of PSWs.</li> <li>• Feedback from some of the PSWs suggested that there is some confusion amongst R&amp;R patients and their families with respect to the roles and responsibilities of the PSW. For instance, assuming that the PSWs will handle all the household tasks, or that the amount of support provided by the PSWs will remain consistent throughout the program (e.g. 7 days/week).</li> </ul>
<b>EMP Staff satisfaction with PSW services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Findings from the survey indicate that staff's satisfaction with the PSWs became more positive over time for both the Hired and Agency model.</li> <li>• However, findings from the focus groups suggest that staff's satisfaction with the PSW services varied depending on the type of model (Agency or Hired)           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hired model: EMP staff were highly satisfied with the PSW services and communication with the PSWs.</li> <li>○ Agency model: EMP staff felt that there was a lack of direct supervision of PSWs and insufficient communication with the PSWs. They were concerned that these challenges could have a negative impact on team cohesion and program implementation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Indicator	Impact / Outcome / Result
<b>R&amp;R patient health outcomes</b>	<p>Overall, R&amp;R patients reported significant improvements in health-related quality of life; many of which were sustained up to six months after the patient exited the program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>R&amp;R patients' problems with mobility, self-care, doing usual activities, pain/discomfort, and anxiety/depression significantly improved in both the short- and long-term.</li> <li>Their overall level of severity of health problems and emergency room visits significantly decreased in both the short- and long-term.</li> <li>R&amp;R patients' self-rated health status significantly improved in the short-term. However, they did not experience sustained improvements after they exited the program. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Due to the small sample of participants in the Agency model, health outcomes between the two models could not be compared.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>PSW knowledge and comfort with the R&amp;R philosophy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PSWs from both models agreed that they received sufficient initial training on the R&amp;R program's goals and philosophy.</li> <li>Many PSWs emphasized the importance of ongoing support and mentoring from EMP staff.</li> </ul>

### Methods and Comparison

Data was collected from two participating R&R units, where Site 1 implemented the Hired model and Site 2 implemented the Hired and Agency model. Surveys and focus groups were used to collect data from EMP staff and PSWs. A satisfaction survey and a health-related questionnaire were used to capture data from R&R patients.

### Conclusions and Lessons Learned

- Overall, the R&R patients who participated in the evaluation were highly satisfied with the services provided by their PSW. Additionally, R&R patients saw significant improvements in health-related quality of life upon program exit, with many improvements sustaining for months after exiting the program.
- EMP staff's satisfaction with PSWs varied depending upon the type of model. Altogether, it appears that the Hired model allows for more team cohesion, oversight from EMP staff, continuity of care, and efficient and effective communication.
- PSWs felt that they could perform their jobs well with the training received on R&R goals and philosophy, along with ongoing support and mentoring from the staff.
- Increased levels of satisfaction for PSWs could reduce turnover.

### Recommendations

- Patient understanding of R&R:
  - Provide R&R patients and their families with appropriate resources to clarify the role of the PSW.
  - Ensure R&R goals and principles are reinforced with patients throughout the program.
- PSW skills and training:
  - Screen PSWs for R&R-aligned behavioural skills during the interview process.
  - Incorporate opportunities (both formal and informal) for ongoing PSW training.
- Communication between EMP staff and PSWs:
  - Implement strategies to enhance communication between EMP staff members and PSWs in the Agency Model.
- Model delivery:
  - Consider the feasibility of a hybrid model of care provision between EMP staff and home care agencies.
  - Explore evidence-based approaches for engaging with home care agencies to provide PSWs.

### Next Steps

Further funding is being sought from the Department of Health to hire additional PSWs for a province-wide scale-up.

### Disclaimer

The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the Public Health Agency of Canada.

*Financial contribution from*



Public Health  
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé  
publique du Canada