Clinical Pathways Update - March 2015

Clinical pathways support standardized best practice care and reduce inappropriate clinical variation. When developed cooperatively by providers and patients, pathways aim to provide a tool for communication, reduce wait time for assessment and treatment, increase system efficiencies and improve patient experience and outcomes.

To date, four pathways have been implemented in Saskatchewan (see below). Two additional pathways, the Lower Extremity Wound Pathway and the Acute Stroke Pathway, are currently in development. The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with regions and stakeholders, will continue to develop and implement pathways as a tool for improving care for Saskatchewan patients.

**Prostate Assessment Pathway**
The Prostate Assessment Pathway allows primary care providers to refer patients directly for prostate cancer diagnostic testing using the pathway referral form and algorithm. Urologist consult prior to biopsy is not required.

Saskatoon Prostate Assessment Centre reports that patients going through the Pathway receive a biopsy within an average 22 days of primary care referral (compared to 108 days when patient goes to urologist and then to biopsy).

Staff at the Prostate Assessment Centres in Regina and Saskatoon process referrals and book patients for biopsy. A nurse navigator contacts patients with positive pathology for education and support (either in person or by phone/Telehealth). Patient feedback on the services of the Nurse Navigator has been extremely positive. Full Nurse Navigator services are not currently available in Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region, but referrals for biopsy are still accepted.

**Pelvic Floor Pathway**
he Pelvic Floor Pathway improves access to treatment for female incontinence and vaginal prolapse. 582 patients were assessed at pelvic floor clinics in 2014 and over 1000 were educated in the clinic, in public information sessions or by downloading publications. When provided with comprehensive education and access to a range of conservative and surgical treatment options, only 10% of pathway clients select surgical intervention for pelvic floor disorders. Education booklets are available from www.publications.gov.sk.ca at no cost (select “Health”, then “Women’s Health”).

Medical leadership of the pelvic floor pathway is now addressing fertility care. The Fertility Care Pathway will clarify best practice and provide patients and providers with better information about fertility assessment and treatment in Saskatchewan.

**Hip & Knee Pathway**
The Hip & Knee Pathway was launched in 2010 with the establishment of multidisciplinary clinics for patient assessment and education. The pathway continues to support potential joint replacement patients and their primary care providers with advanced assessment and appropriate triage to surgery or conservative measures.

In 2014, the RQHR hip and knee clinic underwent a complete redesign to better meet the needs of patients who may be candidates for hip or knee replacement surgery. The newly redesigned RQHR Hip and Knee Treatment and Research Centre includes orthopedic surgeons, nurses, physical and occupational therapists and therapists assistants. The Saskatoon Health Region is currently in the process of reviewing and redesigning the model of their multidisciplinary clinic.

**Spine Pathway**
The Spine Pathway, launched in 2011, improves the assessment of low back pain by health providers, so patients can quickly receive care that is appropriate to their condition. Spine Pathway clinics in Regina and Saskatoon assess patients and identify treatment options so that patients who would benefit from surgery are referred to appropriate specialists.

The Spine Pathway continues to provide the online and in-person CME program Assessment and Management of Low Back Pain www.spinepathwaysk.ca. Beginning in 2014, the Pathway also provides training to new family medicine residents. Print and web-based education materials are available for patients from www.sasksurgery.ca.

Find pathway resources, including patient education materials, referral forms and clinical tools online.

www.sasksurgery.ca/provider/patientpathways.html