



# GRAND ROUNDS

At RVH, we are committed to implementing best practice guidelines for all of our patients to improve quality of life and optimize patient outcomes.

Now Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) patients have an explicit blueprint of care and guidelines for treatment that seamlessly follow practices at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute (UOHI).

“The CHF Pathway is a multidisciplinary care plan and patient documentation tool that organizes patient care in order to optimize patient outcomes,” explains Jessica Gilbert, RVH’s Clinical Nurse Manager of the Acute Care Program.

It was implemented at the hospital in mid-May by a multidisciplinary team of Gilbert as the lead clinical manager and Dr. Allison Clarke as the lead physician.

Gilbert says the goals of the pathway are to: organize and standardize care for RVH’s congestive heart failure patients according to patient need; provide a process to implement; evaluate the plan of care; and to utilize resources available to patients in order to improve patient outcomes.

“In conjunction with the UOHI, we have designed and implemented several tools and resources to provide patients with education about congestive heart failure,” she adds.

Heart failure affects approximately 400,000 people in Canada. The syndrome occurs when the heart can’t pump enough blood to the body’s organs, therefore failing to meet the peripheral demands of metabolizing tissues.

RVH has designed a new “Heart Failure Guide” for patients and families that describes the process of heart failure, proper diet information, exercise guidelines, how to manage being on a daily fluid restriction, medication references, symptom management and the importance of keeping a daily weight record.

Patients also receive education while in the hospital as to how to better manage their heart failure symptoms—the goal is to have patients engaged in their own recovery and treatment, notes Gilbert.

Patients are taught the importance of adhering to their medications as prescribed

by their doctor, how to track their weight every day to ensure they are not retaining fluid and to make lifestyle adjustments in the way of a low-sodium diet and fluid restriction as ordered by their doctor.

RVH is taking extra steps to share this information with community partners, says Gilbert, as it is important that what is taught to patients in the hospital setting continues after discharge. “We have had good response from many community affiliations and will provide more education sessions to other health care facilities in the area.”

“For individuals with heart failure, the most common and most distressing event they face is that of unplanned hospital re-admissions. The heart failure pathway employs an evidence-based, multidisciplinary management approach that has consistently been shown to reduce both in-hospital mortality and unplanned re-admission rates for this patient popu-

lation,” comments Lorraine Montoya, an Advanced Practice Nurse for the UOHI.

“By implementing the CHF Pathway and providing additional educational opportunities, we are ensuring that best practice care is provided whether heart patients are in Ottawa at the Heart Institute or at any rural hospital in the Champlain LHIN,” says RVH’s Vice-President of Patient Care Services, Chris Ferguson.



**Chris Ferguson, RVH VP of Patient Care Services, and Jessica Gilbert, RVH Clinical Nurse Manager, Acute Care Program, display some of the Congestive Heart Failure Pathway resources available to patients and their families.**