

January 2015

---

**MEMORANDUM TO:** Primary Care Physicians, Emergency Department Physicians, Community Neurologists, and Paediatricians

**CC:** Medical Directors, Chief Nursing Executives

**FROM:** Dr. Jim Rutka and Dr. Robert Howard, Co-Chairs, Provincial Neurosurgery Ontario

**SUBJECT:** **Provincial Guidelines for the Management of Epilepsy in Adults and Children**

---

Dear Colleagues,

We are pleased to release a new resource for primary care physicians, neurologists, and any health care provider engaged in the care of patients with epilepsy. The *Provincial Guidelines for the Management of Epilepsy in Adults and Children* provide guidelines for evidence based practice to support the diagnosis, treatment and referral process from the moment of a patient's first seizure.

The *Provincial Guidelines for the Management of Epilepsy in Adults and Children* were produced by Critical Care Services Ontario (CCSO), in collaboration with Provincial Neurosurgery Ontario (PNO), and the Epilepsy Implementation Task Force (EITF), a provincial initiative to implement an integrated system for Epilepsy care in Ontario.

For their tremendous contribution to the Guidelines and ongoing support, we would like to recognize Dr. Carter Snead and Brenda Flaherty for their leadership of the EITF and Dr. Rajesh Ramachandran Nair and Dr. Jorje Burneo for their time, energy and leadership in developing the Guidelines.

The Guidelines may be shared with anyone involved in the care of patients with epilepsy including family physicians, nurse practitioners, pediatricians, internists, emergency physicians, community epilepsy agencies and neurologists. In addition to supporting equitable and timely access to neurosurgical care, the Guidelines provide recommendations for diagnosis and evaluation, drug initiation and monitoring, and patient education. The Guidelines also provide best practices for caring for women with epilepsy, follow-up procedures, and the treatment of co-morbidities.

The Guidelines can be downloaded by accessing Critical Care Services Ontario's website here: <https://www.criticalcareontario.ca/EN/Toolbox/Pages/Library1.aspx>.

Please see [Appendix A \(below\)](#) for an overview of the Epilepsy Implementation Task Force and the work we are doing to improve neurosurgical care in the Province.

Support from the primary care community is essential to the EITF initiative. We ask that you please take time to review the attached Guidelines to assist in the treatment of adults and children who present with an initial diagnosis of epilepsy.

If you have any questions about Provincial Neurosurgery Ontario or the provincial neurosurgery strategy, please visit [www.criticalcareontario.ca](http://www.criticalcareontario.ca) or contact Anastasia Vogt, Project Manager, Critical Care Services Ontario by e-mail at [Anastasia.Vogt@uhn.ca](mailto:Anastasia.Vogt@uhn.ca), or call (416) 340-4800, ext. 7435.

Thank you for contributing to the improvement of neurosurgical care in Ontario.

Sincerely,



Dr. Jim Rutka,  
Chair, Department of Surgery,  
University of Toronto



Dr. Robert Howard,  
President and CEO,  
St. Michael's Hospital

#### **Provincial Neurosurgery Ontario Co-Chairs**

- c: Dr. Carter Snead, Paediatric Neurologist, SickKids  
Brenda Flaherty, Executive Vice President and CEO, Hamilton Health Sciences  
Linda Kostrzewa, Director, Critical Care Services Ontario  
Dr. Bernard Lawless, Provincial Lead, Critical Care and Trauma

## **Appendix A:**

### **Overview of Epilepsy Implementation Task Force**

The Epilepsy Implementation Task Force (EITF) was formed in June 2013 to develop and implement a provincial approach to an integrated system for epilepsy care in Ontario, under the leadership of Dr. Carter Snead, Paediatric Neurologist at the Hospital for Sick Children, and Brenda Flaherty, Executive VP and Chief Operating Officer at Hamilton Health Sciences.

The EITF brings together senior clinical and administrative leaders from the epilepsy community to:

- Improve access along the full continuum of care by coordinating resources and wait lists;
- Establish standardized diagnostic and surgical protocols across centres; and
- Develop supports for primary care providers.

The EITF is a subgroup of Provincial Neurosurgery Ontario (PNO), a committee working to develop a comprehensive provincial neurosurgical system. The EITF works in collaboration with PNO to support equitable and timely access to neurosurgical care, including epilepsy surgery, and to help maintain the province's neurosurgical capacity. This work is supported by the Ministry through Critical Care Services Ontario ([www.criticalcareontario.ca](http://www.criticalcareontario.ca)).

### **Upcoming Initiatives**

1. *Provincial Guidelines for Epilepsy Surgery Referrals in Ontario*  
This document provides an approach to referral of medically-refractory epilepsy patients by defining evidence-based indications to epilepsy surgery in all age groups, with careful consideration given to age-specific issues ranging from infants to the elderly.
2. *Provincial Guidelines for Transitional Care of Paediatric Epilepsy Programs to Adult*  
To ensure uninterrupted quality medical care for adolescent patients with chronic disorders, this document provides guidelines for paediatric and adult practitioners to assist in the seamless transition of epilepsy care for adolescents who are departing the paediatric system and entering the adult health care network.
3. *Provincial Guidelines for Regional Epilepsy Surgical Centres of Excellence*  
This document presents best practice guidelines and sets out accountabilities for hospitals and their collaborative interdisciplinary teams that provide care for patients at Regional Epilepsy Surgical Centres of Excellence.

EITF Membership

Name	Title/Role	Organization
Dr. Carter Snead (Co-Chair)	Paediatric Neurologist	The Hospital for Sick Children
Brenda Flaherty (Co-Chair)	Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer	Hamilton Health Sciences
Dr. Jorge Burneo	Adult Academic Neurologist	London Health Sciences Centre
Dr. Sandrine De Ribaupierre	Paediatric Neurosurgeon	London Health Sciences Centre
Pat Elliot-Miller	CNE and VP Patient Services	Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario
Liz Ferguson	Director, Centre for Brain and Behavior	The Hospital for Sick Children
Laurie Gould	EVP Patient-Centred Care	London Health Sciences Centre
Dr. Ayman Hassan	Community Adult Neurologist	Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre
Kathryn LeBlanc	Director, Neurosciences	Hamilton Health Sciences
Dr. Athen MacDonald	Academic Paediatric Neurologist	Kingston General Hospital
David McNeil	Vice President Clinical Programs/CNO	Health Sciences North
Janet Newton	Clinical Director	University Health Network
Kirk Nysten	Director, Outreach	Ontario Brain Institute
Dr. Rajesh RamachandranNair	Academic Paediatric Neurologist	McMaster Children's Hospital / HHS
Mary Secco	Director of Strategic Initiatives	The Epilepsy Support Centre, London
Dr. Laurene Sellers	Family Practice Physician	Kitchener, Ontario
Dr. Michelle Shapiro	Adult Academic Neurologist	Hamilton Health Sciences
Rosie Smith	Director of Adult Services	Epilepsy Toronto
Mike Tierney	VP Clinical Programs	The Ottawa Hospital
Dr. Taufik Valiante	Adult Neurosurgeon	University Health Network
Dr. Sharon Whiting	Paediatric Neurologist	Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario