REHABILITATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE
IN THE LIVES OF PERSONS WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

1001 de Maisonneuve Blvd. West, suite 430, Montreal (Quebec) H3A 3C8
Phone: (514) 282-4205 Fax: (514) 847-9473
Email: info@aerdpq.org
www.aerdpq.org

For Valérie Grand'Maison, paralympian, rehabilitation made the difference.
REHABILITATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF PERSONS WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

Specialized and ultra-specialized rehabilitation services make it possible for persons with a physical impairment to increase their abilities and to reduce or compensate for their disabilities.

Quebec’s physical rehabilitation centres (PRCs)* provide adaptation, rehabilitation and social integration services to persons with a significant and chronic disability, regardless of their age, type of impairment, or whether that impairment is congenital or acquired.

Thanks to the specialized and ultra-specialized services they receive, and to their own hard work, these persons have the opportunity to be socially active, to participate in the life of their community, and to avoid premature institutionalization.

PRCs PLAY A KEY ROLE IN IMPLEMENTING GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS AND POLICIES TO INCREASE THE SOCIAL PARTICIPATION OF PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY.

* In the context of this document, PRC refers to all establishments with a specialized rehabilitation mission, mandated by the provincial ministry of health and social services (ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux—MSSS), and targeting persons with a physical disability in Quebec.
HEARING, SPEAKING, SEEING, GETTING AROUND: THESE ARE DAILY CHALLENGES FOR PHYSICALLY DISABLED PERSONS

Playing outside with friends, going to work, or preparing a meal with loved ones can be daily challenges for persons living with a physical disability. This is because activities that involve listening, speaking, moving around, or seeing can require a considerable amount of effort for them. What’s more, physical and social environments may also create barriers that make it even harder for them to carry out these activities.

According to a study published in 2004, nearly 30% of Quebec households include at least one person with some form of disability caused by physical and other impairments. These people are among the most vulnerable members of our society; their situation often results in financial, psychological and social difficulties—for themselves and for their significant others.

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION FOR PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH SUPPORTED BY MINISTRY AND GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS

In recent years, the government has committed to better meeting the needs of persons with a disability.

To promote integration:
- The amendment of the “On Equal Terms” policy has led to the drafting of a new policy proposal titled, “À part entière : pour un véritable exercice du droit à l’égalité.” This follows the adoption of the “Act to Secure Handicapped Persons in the Exercise of Their Rights with a View to Achieving Social, School and Workplace Integration.”
- The cross-sectoral implementation plan for the “À part entière” policy calls upon all government authorities to advance the social participation of persons with a disability.

To promote economic participation:
- The goal of the “National Strategy for Labour Market Integration and Maintenance of Handicapped Persons” is to mobilize and involve partners from the labour market in the effort to help more persons enter the labour market and continue to be active in the workforce longer.

To promote access to rehabilitation services:
- The “Service Access Plan for Individuals with an Impairment” identifies concrete ways of promoting access to the continuum of high-quality services required by persons living with a disability. Successful implementation of the Access Plan over the 2008–2011 period depends on a number of actions and decisions by ministries and by the affected establishments, including PRCs as well as health and social services centres (centres de santé et de services sociaux—CSSSs) and intellectual disability rehabilitation centres (centres de réadaptation en déficience intellectuelle—CRDi).
The Québec ministry of health and social services has mandated the PRCs to provide specialized and in some cases ultra-specialized adaptation, rehabilitation and social integration services to persons with a physical disability. The services offered by PRCs are part of a continuum of services offered by their partners in the health and social services network.

Each year, over 75,000 people with a hearing, language, motor or visual impairment receive specialized and ultra-specialized rehabilitation services from PRCs.

A network of 20 public physical rehabilitation centres provides services to those with a physical impairment at 104 locations throughout Québec. The PRCs work in alignment with their partners (hospitals, CSSSs, private practices, etc.), before and after intervention and coordinate services with them, by using means such as service plans. The PRCs ensure that persons with a physical disability have access to state-of-the-art specialized and ultra-specialized rehabilitation services close to where they live.

A SHARED INTERVENTION PHILOSOPHY AND COMMON VALUES

The professionals of the PRC network share a holistic approach that takes into account each person’s individual circumstances, including their capabilities, needs and lifestyle, their participation in their living environment, and the needs of their significant others.

To provide continuity within the rehabilitation process, the highly qualified personnel of PRCs work with partners in the persons’ living environment such as daycare centres (CPEs), schools, leisure organizations, and the workplace. By sharing their know-how with these partners, PRC staff help their clients to better integrate into their daily living environment.

Persons are the overriding concern of PRC professionals, and their actions are driven by a number of key values:

- Compassion and humanity
- Autonomy
- Respect for individuals and their environment
- Social justice and equity
- Solidarity and true commitment.

These rehabilitation professionals are knowledgeable of the most up-to-date approaches and technologies. They continuously incorporate innovative practices based on the latest scientific developments, while also using recognized practices and relying on conclusive evidence. With a focus on continuous improvement, these experts participate in research and teaching in order to gain new knowledge, use innovative approaches, and share their expertise.
AERDPQ: CREATING SYNERGY TO BETTER SHARE EXPERTISE

The AERDPQ (Quebec’s association of rehabilitation establishments for the physically impaired) is a grouping of the province’s PRCs, that facilitates a more efficient sharing of expertise for the benefit of all.

Its mission includes, among others:
• Promoting and representing its members’ interests;
• Offering its members consulting and support services;
• Promoting and supporting access to specialized and ultra-specialized rehabilitation services, and ensuring that persons living with a physical disability, who are among the most vulnerable members of our society, receive the quality services they need to maintain or enhance their independence and maximize their potential to fully participate in society;
• Contributing to the reduction of the environmental and social barriers (handicap situations) that hinder a physically impaired person’s daily living and social participation.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE PERSONS LIVING WITH A PHYSICAL DISABILITY

CHALLENGES:

1. To provide sufficient and timely access to a range of specialized and ultra-specialized rehabilitation services required by persons living with a physical disability, in all areas of Quebec.

2. To provide access to specialized and ultra-specialized rehabilitation services, in continuum with those offered by partner establishments.

3. To provide sufficient access to specialized staff in all areas of Quebec.

CHALLENGES AND COMMITMENTS OF PRCs

Persons with a physical impairment need to go to school, work, be socially active, and live at home without being limited by their disability. To help them achieve this, PRCs play an active role in ensuring the accessibility, continuity and quality of services. In view of the essential contribution made by PRCs, the AERDPQ has targeted three priority challenges faced by PRCs and some clear commitments to help ensure that rehabilitation empowers persons with a physical disability to participate fully in society.
than 90% were satisfied with their relationships with professional staff.

Facing increased needs:
A challenge for PRCs
Several factors are contributing to an increase in the number of people who need specialized and ultra-specialized rehabilitation services, which is making it necessary for PRCs to adapt their service offering. These factors include:

• Aging of the population;
• Increasingly precise and early diagnoses;
• Advances in medical technology and expertise, which are saving the lives of more and more people, but may also leave them with permanent sequelae.

This increased need means that PRCs must make a concerted effort to offer services in a timely manner, in order to provide the best possible rehabilitation process to persons living with a physical disability.

Making comprehensive services available in all areas of Quebec

While many areas of Quebec have PRCs that offer comprehensive services for all four types of impairment, not all types of service are available everywhere in the province, nor are the available services sufficient to meet the need. Therefore, people in many areas do not have access to specialized rehabilitation services for hearing, speech, motor or visual impairments.

What’s more, not all areas of the province benefit equally from workplace-integration services.

CHALLENGE

1. To provide sufficient and timely access to a range of specialized and ultra-specialized rehabilitation services required by persons living with a physical disability, in all areas of Quebec.

PRCs COMMITMENTS

• To make every effort to provide a complete range of high-quality services, with adequate availability to meet the needs of persons with a physical disability.

• To make every effort to comply with the terms of the “Service Access Plan for Individuals with an Impairment,” with regard to specialized and ultra-specialized rehabilitation services.

OBSERVATIONS

Each year, more than 75,000 individuals receive specialized and ultra-specialized rehabilitation services from PRCs. Because each person has different needs, PRC professionals work together to develop specially adapted intervention plans. This personalized approach, combined with a service period of 9–12 months, promotes good relationships between staff and clients. The special nature of these relationships is an integral part of the high-quality service that is offered, and the success of the rehabilitation process depends on it.

High-quality services, satisfied clients

The vast majority of people who receive specialized rehabilitation services from PRCs are satisfied with those services. Data from surveys carried out at PRCs between 2004 and 2009 show that overall, the average rate of client satisfaction is over 86%. Of the individuals surveyed who had received services from PRCs, nearly 90% were satisfied with the professionalism and organization of those services, and more
PRCs: CHALLENGES AND COMMITMENTS 2009–2012

**CHALLENGE**

2. To provide access to specialized and ultra-specialized rehabilitation services, in continuum with those offered by partner establishments.

**PRCs COMMITMENTS**

- To strengthen the methods of collaborating with partner establishments, in order to promote service continuity and fluidity for persons with a physical disability.
- To assume a leadership role, and work in cooperation with partner establishments, so that individuals with multiple and concomitant needs receive the full continuum of services they require.

**OBSERVATIONS**

**PRCs: At the heart of the continuum of services**

As providers of specialized and ultra-specialized rehabilitation services, PRCs play a central role in the continuum of services designed for persons with a physical disability—from diagnosis to integration in their living environment. PRCs therefore make a very specific contribution to the physically impaired, one that complements the expertise of their partner establishments.

**Proximity to home, successful interventions**

There is a well-established tradition of working in partnership with hospital centres and CSSSs, which bring together hospitals, community clinics (CLSCs), and residential centres. PRCs also work in close cooperation with the following: specialized establishments that offer regional services (to the intellectually disabled, to youth, or to those with an addiction); the private network (medical offices and other healthcare professionals); and social and community organizations (client associations, community groups, etc.) The creation of regional service networks and the development of clinical projects highlight the importance of clearly defining the responsibilities of all involved in the service continuum and consolidation of established partnerships.

**An integrated approach linking the actions of all partners**

In recent years, PRCs have entered into formal and informal partnerships with their provincial and regional partners. Agreements concluded with cross-sector partners facilitate linkages between services for persons living with a physical disability. Partners include Transports Quebec; the provincial ministry of education, leisure and sport; the health insurance board (RAMQ); the Quebec automobile insurance bureau (SAAQ); the workplace health and safety commission (CSST); schools; daycare centres (CPEs); the Quebec housing corporation (SHQ); as well as many adapted workplaces and employers.
CHALLENGE

3. To provide sufficient access to specialized staff in all areas of Quebec.

PRCs COMMITMENTS

• To develop proactive strategies for recruiting and training human resources.

• To optimize the use of human resources by reviewing work processes, without compromising quality, and in compliance with professional standards.

• To create a stimulating work environment that helps recruit and keep qualified personnel in all areas of Quebec.

OBSERVATIONS

People who put their heart and soul into their work

Persons living with a physical disability receive services from the more than 6,500 people working in the PRC network. The highly qualified personnel work in multi-disciplinary teams whose goal is to maximize the abilities and reduce or compensate for the disabilities of persons with a physical impairment. Their ultimate purpose is ensuring the success of each client’s life project!

The labour issue

People who work in rehabilitation have varied and complementary expertise, as well as highly specialized know-how. PRCs already face a labour shortage. This has begun to be felt as a result of growing numbers of retirements, of a decreasing active population, of growing needs, and other factors.

PRCs want to act proactively to prevent services for the physically disabled from being adversely affected by a lack of specialized personnel:

• Always do better with existing human resources

PRCs are working on perfecting their work processes in ways that don’t compromise service quality and that comply with professional standards. Accordingly, they are implementing innovative work-process projects with a participatory approach, that will help ensure that the required personnel give the necessary services at the right time.

• A stimulating work environment

PRCs are dynamic workplaces where it is enjoyable to work, as shown by the surveys carried out by the Conseil Québécois d’Agrément during the establishment-accreditation process. The compiled statistics show that PRC employees have a very high staff mobilization rate.
SOME OF THE SPECIALIZED PERSONNEL IN PRCs:

- Audiologists
- Vocational Counsellors
- Physical Educators
- Specialized Educators
- Occupational Therapists
- Nurses and Nursing Assistants
- Orthosis-Prosthesis Mechanics and Technicians
- General Practitioners and Medical Specialists (Physiatrists, Neurologists, Rheumatologists, etc.)
- Optometrists
- Prosthetists- Orthotists
- Speech Language Therapists
- Physiotherapists
- Psycho-Educators
- Psychologists and Neuropsychologists
- Specialists in Orientation & Mobility
- Specialists in Vision Rehabilitation
- Special Education Technicians
- Physical Rehabilitation Therapists
- Social Workers

These healthcare workers are supported by administrative, technical and supervisory staff.

They are creative and innovative in their interventions with persons living with physical disabilities. Because they are determined to remain abreast of the most recent developments, a number of PRC professionals work with university researchers and participate in clinical research activities with centres such as the Centre de recherche interdisciplinaire en réadaptation du Montréal Métropolitain (CRIR) and the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Rehabilitation and Social Integration (CIRRI.S).

PRC personnel have one of the highest staff mobilization rates in the health and social services network, according to statistics gathered by the Conseil Québécois d’Agrément. The positive work environment in the PRCs facilitates innovation and personnel involvement, which in turn, have a positive impact on service quality. Indeed, the average rate of client satisfaction for PRC services is 86%.
IN SUMMARY,
ACCESS

> to a wide range of specialized and ultra-specialized rehabilitation services
> in continuum with the services offered by partner organizations
> to the necessary specialists

DEPENDS ON:

1. Recognizing that priority must be given to improving access to rehabilitation services for the persons with a physical disability
   Government commitments to improve access to services and to social integration demonstrate the importance of meeting the needs of persons living with a physical disability, who are among the most vulnerable members of our society.

2. Implementing an access plan for ages 0–110
   Implementing the “Service Access Plan for Individuals with an Impairment” will require cooperative action by all partners if improving access to specialized and ultra-specialized rehabilitation services is to be successful.

3. Optimizing resources
   Because PRCs play a central role in implementing the “Service Access Plan for Individuals with an Impairment,” they must constantly seek innovative ways of optimizing their resources, for example by reviewing their work processes and other processes.

4. Securing a budget that makes it possible for PRCs to meet their responsibilities
   The investments made in recent years have helped meet the needs of an increasing number of people. It is important that these investments be maintained to continue meeting growing needs and to develop the range of specialized rehabilitation services, in continuum with those offered by partners from the health and social services network.
REHABILITATION: AN INVESTMENT WITH TANGIBLE RETURNS

In strict economic terms, not investing in the PRC network today will eventually translate into a long-term loss affecting many areas.

Rehabilitation makes a difference in the daily lives of persons living with a disability. In addition to having positive benefits for the quality of life of persons and their significant others, rehabilitation also allows them to participate more actively in:

- The economy—by working, studying, doing the groceries, etc.;
- Society—by going to the restaurant or hosting a meal for friends, participating in conferences, being part of user committees, etc.;
- Culture—by sculpting, visiting museums, playing the violin, etc.;
- Sports and leisure—by swimming at the municipal pool, participating in adapted cycling, being part of a walking club, etc.

More than ever, a populational approach, coupled with the development of clinical projects, highlights the need to provide specialized and ultra-specialized rehabilitation services to the persons with physical disabilities, that are timely and that complement general services.

Adequate financing for the PRC network represents, without any doubt, a cost-efficient investment, not only for the physically impaired and their families, but for Quebec society as a whole.

"These findings confirm that the additional investment in rehabilitation for patients with complex needs can indeed represent cost-efficient management [...]"

A FEW EXAMPLES:

- Specialized rehabilitation services can enable children with a physical impairment to develop their functional and social abilities and be integrated into a normal school environment; therefore, their education is less costly for the government. And even if these children require support services at school, the cost for these would still be lower than placement in specialized educational establishments. And the children have a much better chance of attaining their full potential.

- Specialized rehabilitation services contribute to the independence of persons with a physical disability, thereby promoting the continuation of their life habits with minimum support. This can prevent institutionalisation and greatly reduce government costs.

- Specialized rehabilitation services can promote the integration of the physically disabled into adapted work environments or into the regular workforce, benefiting the individuals, their families, and society at large.

Integrating persons with a physical disability into the workforce with the necessary adaptations is cost-efficient for the government. By enabling these persons to stop depending on social assistance and to fully participate in society like any ordinary citizen, the government saves approximately $1,600 per year per person in an adapted position or workplace. Furthermore, if the persons with a physical impairment are employed by the private sector (without any state subsidies), the government saves $16,000 per year. Integration into the work-force makes economic sense for all involved.

What’s more, researchers make it clear that in the case of a rehabilitation program for persistent musculoskeletal-related pain:

"[It means that] approximately 1 year and 7 months after the end of the rehabilitation programme, it may be estimated that the economic gains of the intervention surpassed the costs of the rehabilitation programme (for the successfully rehabilitated as well as for the non-successfully rehabilitated with regards to work resumption)."

A society’s values are reflected in the way it treats its most vulnerable. As fully fledged citizens, persons with a disability must have access to the resources that allow them to optimize their participation in society. The government must supply the tools and resources that translate its commitments into action in order to meet the access standards to specialized rehabilitation services for all persons with a disability, who are among the most vulnerable members of society.

The contribution that these thousands of Quebecers make to our society depends on our willingness to recognize their abilities and to invest in the services they need to reach their maximum potential. Therefore, the work done by PRCs that offer specialized and ultra-specialized rehabilitation services to a growing number of people must be upheld by sufficient financing. This is not only a choice we must make as a society, but is a cost-efficient investment that benefits us all.

The current transformation of the health and social services network is an opportunity to create a better service continuum for all Quebecers.

The successful social integration and participation of thousands of Quebec citizens relies on the contribution and the cooperative action of all concerned. This means ensuring that the PRC network has the means to carry out its role. These linkages and this commitment will enable Quebec society to call upon the contribution of its entire human capital. We can’t afford to deny ourselves the precious human capital that Quebecers living with a physical disability represent.