

Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago d/b/a Shirley Ryan AbilityLab
Fiscal Year 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment
Implementation Strategy for Fiscal Years 2023-2025

Shirley Ryan AbilityLab (“SRALab”) completed its most recent three-year Community Health Needs Assessment (“Assessment”) during Fiscal Year 2022. As a result of the input received from various sources, four (4) areas of community health needs (“Priority Areas”) were identified. This Implementation Strategy (“Implementation Strategy”) addresses each Priority Area and: (i) details how SRALab plans to meet the identified needs, including the programs and resources that will be committed; (ii) describes the anticipated impact of its programs and resources on the needs; and (iii) where appropriate, describes planned collaborations with related organizations to meet the needs.

Four of the five Priority Areas from the 2019 Assessment continue as Priority Areas in Fiscal Year 2022; specifically, Access to Rehabilitation Health, Rehabilitation Research, Education Regarding Resources and Post-Discharge Support Programs.

1. Access to Rehabilitation Health

Given the increasing prevalence of conditions resulting in cognitive and physical disability, there is a continued need to expand access for patients in various rehabilitation settings in the areas of stroke, spinal cord injury, brain injury, neuromusculoskeletal conditions, pediatric care, and cancer. SRALab promotes access through a multi-faceted campaign to raise awareness of conditions treated and patient outcomes, along with education on SRALab services and leadership in the field of physical medicine and rehabilitation. SRALab continually engages in active media relations outreach and in Fiscal Year 2022, more than 11.6 million media exposures were secured. Annually, SRALab produces approximately 100 videos that focus on patient outcomes, clinical services, and research. SRALab also maintains a robust social media presence.

SRALab’s relationships with its referral sources are important to sustaining SRALab’s outreach efforts to improve access to rehabilitation health.

2. Rehabilitation Research

The Assessment also identified a continued need for rehabilitation research into new and more promising treatments to improve and eliminate the effects of injury, disease, and debilitating health conditions, as well as the impact of COVID-19/Long COVID.

An important part of this effort is SRALab’s commitment to expanding and diversifying its research grant portfolio. SRALab’s Fiscal Year 2022 research grant portfolio of \$150M is its largest to date. Grants from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (“NIDILRR”) and the National Institutes of Health (“NIH”), as well as donor-funded Catalyst Grants enable SRALab to serve multiple patient populations and diagnoses.

Additionally, SRALab has developed a clinical research registry (“CRR”) which is now serving as a repository for the vast number of patients in SRALab’s inpatient rehabilitation facility or for patients in SRALab’s outpatient facilities around Chicagoland. This year, SRALab also added an option for “Healthy Volunteers” to participate in the registry in a way that advances SRALab’s mission. The CRR not only increases community awareness of SRALab research opportunities, but also provides a deep

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method of educating patients, their families, and community advocates on the scientific basis of rehabilitation.

3. Education Regarding Shirley Ryan AbilityLab’s Resources

The Assessment identified that there should be an increased awareness among patients, visitors, and the community at large regarding SRALab’s LIFE Center – an on-site and virtual multimedia education center with a mission of providing opportunities for **Learning, Innovation, Family, and Empowerment** for patients, families, staff, and the community at large, including peer mentoring and other programs and resources for patients and their families transitioning from SRALab to their next level of care, along with many and varied opportunities to participate in clinical research trials.

Also, as addressed above, SRALab’s CRR not only provides community awareness of SRALab research opportunities, but also provides education for patients, families and community advocates on the scientific basis of rehabilitation.

4. Post-Discharge Support Programs

The Assessment also identified a continuing community need for support programming. In particular, helping patients and families manage expectations upon returning home, continued educational resources, and facilitating communication with existing community support groups.

The Fiscal Year 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment and the Implementation Strategy have been reviewed and approved by SRALab’s Board of Directors and submitted in accordance with 26 CFR § 501(c)(3).

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The north façade of Shirley Ryan AbilityLab®

1. Access to Rehabilitation Health

Previous Assessments identified a need for increased access to rehabilitation services given the increasing incidence of conditions that cause cognitive and physical disabilities, specifically in the areas of stroke, spinal cord injury, brain injury, neuromusculoskeletal conditions, pediatrics and cancer.

Prior to SRAlab’s expansions in 2017 and 2019, SRAlab was capacity constrained by primarily semi-private rooms, gender-mix issues and infection control. Building a new facility in 2017 and adding twenty (20) beds in 2019, with a current capacity of 262 private rooms, and despite COVID-19, SRAlab maintained and even slightly exceeded pre-COVID-19 admission rates. Currently, the average daily census is about 215 patients, but often reaches a census of 230 or more. As a result of these expansions, capacity constraints affecting access have been resolved.

SRAlab has continued to increase access to care in the outpatient and DayRehab® settings as well. Since the Fiscal Year 2019 Assessment, SRAlab has relocated and upgraded certain DayRehab® clinics, resulting in improved access to care and further supporting patients’ rehabilitation health needs.

In Fiscal Year 2020, having immediately recognized the critical need to ensure ongoing access to care during the COVID-19 pandemic, SRAlab rapidly adopted and implemented telehealth and remote services. By providing these services to outpatients and DayRehab® patients, SRAlab was able to continue supporting the needs of the community by meeting its patients where they were, protecting them from exposure to infection, and ensuring that patients saw no interruption of their rehabilitation care. SRAlab provided approximately 25,000 telehealth and remote services with physicians, physical therapists, occupational therapists, psychologists, and speech language pathologists across all sites.

In Fiscal Year 2021, SRAlab provided approximately 20,000 telehealth and remote services with physicians, physical therapists, occupational therapists, psychologists, and speech language pathologists across all outpatient sites. SRAlab will continue to provide telehealth and remote services and fully utilize the waivers and flexibilities put in place by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (“CMS”), Health and Human Services (“HHS”), and the State of Illinois to provide telehealth and remote services to SRAlab patients.

The Assessment also emphasized the need to address social determinants of health, as well as social-science issues such as depression, quality of life, and advocacy for patients who will always depend on a wheelchair for mobility. SRAlab’s Health Disparities Subcommittee works to identify barriers that limit its patients from receiving care and finds solutions to promote healthcare equity.

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Additionally, SRALab is launching a new Global Ability Network that will enable hospital systems around the world to partner with its team of clinical and operational experts. SRALab will provide a broad spectrum of services from online learning and clinical audits to full-fledged Affiliate/Alliance relationships.

Social Determinants of Health

Social determinants of health (“SDOH”) which include economic stability, education access, healthcare access and quality, neighborhood environment, and social support, are worsened by disability and carry a corresponding increase in morbidity and mortality.^{i, ii} Disability can impede transportation, thus reducing healthcare access, and limit living environment options, all of which can worsen SDOH.ⁱⁱⁱ

Appropriately supporting SRALab patients and maximizing healthy outcomes for its community necessitates actively addressing not only the physical needs of SRALab patients, but also the emotional, social, and psychological needs of SRALab patients and their support networks. To achieve this, SRALab focuses on addressing their adjustment to disability and the impact of their disability on their self-perception and relationships. As such, all patients admitted to SRALab are seen by psychology and patient family counseling staff, who assess the patient’s emotional needs and determine an active treatment plan as part of their rehabilitation services. These needs continue to be identified and addressed at all levels of care. SRALab staff actively work with community partners to facilitate outpatient referrals as SRALab patients continue in their rehabilitation journey.

Healthy community reintegration after sustaining a disability is a key determinant of maintaining social health. To address this, SRALab provides support to facilitate a patient’s return to their avocations and employment, when appropriate. SRALab’s Therapeutic Recreation Team actively works with its patients to reengage in their hobbies and share opportunities to engage in athletics within the disability community. SRALab vocational counselors work with patients and their employers to facilitate their return to work with appropriate accommodations, as indicated.

Additionally, because a disability population is known to be at higher risk for suicide than the general population, SRALab has an active protocol in place to screen patients in all levels of care for suicidal ideation and then provide treatment and/or referrals, as needed. SRALab also has a plan in place for patients in its DayRehab® and outpatient levels of care, who may present with suicidal ideation, so that they can be appropriately treated.

In addressing the emotional and psychological needs of SRALab’s patient’s families and social networks, there is a strong focus on family support, which includes actively managing and addressing caregiver burden. Emotional support services, including family education and family support services, are provided by the SRALab LIFE Center. SRALab also provides pastoral counseling and spiritual care to both patients and their families, and psychology and social work services at SRALab DayRehab® sites.

By actively addressing the psychological needs of SRALab patients and families, preventing suicide in a higher-risk population, identifying and addressing caregiver burden, and facilitating community reintegration, SRALab maintains an ongoing focus on the social determinants of health of its community. SRALab’s efforts to address these and other social determinants, including their disparate impact on minority communities, are being furthered by the establishment of the Robert R. McCormick Foundation

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Center for Hope and Equity (“Center”), funded under a \$3 million grant. The Center is in its first year of operation and is focusing on discharging patients into safe environments, exposing disadvantaged students to STEM careers and recruiting a more diverse workforce.

Patient Advocacy and Quality of Life

SRAlab’s Donnelley Ethics Program is committed to looking at ethical issues related to quality of life that its patients with disabilities and community populations (including those with disabilities) are facing. To address this, all SRAlab patients are able to request ethics consultations while in the hospital or while receiving services to address queries related to issues including, but not limited to, quality of life. Additionally, SRAlab routinely surveys ethics literature to design and provide educational offerings in various formats and forums to educate SRAlab clinicians about quality-of-life concerns of patients/families and disability rights groups. Of note, some of these forums are inclusive of broader communities (such as support groups, secondary school groups, campus partners, and trainees).

The Donnelley Ethics Program has also regularly connected with or presented to various community groups, such as the Brain Injury Association of Illinois and Access Living, both in SRAlab’s hospital setting and offsite. SRAlab has also co-hosted programming with other departments at SRAlab, including the LIFE Center – a resource center that offers patient education and community links and information for people living with disabilities.

Over the next several years, SRAlab will continue to offer education that relates to quality-of-life issues through a variety of inclusive forums.

2. Rehabilitation Research

There is a continued need for rehabilitation research into new and more promising treatments to improve and eliminate the effects of injury, disease, and debilitating health conditions, as well as the impact of COVID-19/Long COVID. SRAlab has specifically focused on the avoidable nerve damage that can occur when patients are placed in positions during rehabilitation that compress and injure nerves to the breathing muscles.

The research program at SRAlab has been in existence for decades and today has an active portfolio of over One Hundred Fifty (\$150,000,000.00) Million Dollars in funding. SRAlab’s research programs have international impact, continuously building on the organization’s mission of helping people with disabilities to achieve as independent and fulfilling a life as possible. The research program is vast, addressing basic issues in neuromuscular physiology, neuroscience and even stem cell biology and extending to device development for patients with amputations, community integration and even job placement.

SRAlab collaborates with, and will continue to collaborate with, public and private entities worldwide in conducting rehabilitation research. SRAlab is the sole academic and clinical partner of the Department of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. This relationship provides an academic framework that supports SRAlab’s ongoing research efforts by recruiting joint faculty and partnering on programs of mutual interest. A range of researchers are

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supported through this partnership, including post-doctoral researchers, pre-doctoral research graduates, physicians, residents, and other clinical fellows.

In addition to the inpatient care and treatment provided, the facility comprises 900,000 square feet dedicated to research and clinical programs, intentionally designed to facilitate the growth and translation of research into clinical care by fostering interactions between clinicians and researchers. This is in part accomplished through five Ability Labs, designed as integrated spaces to bring doctors, scientists, and therapists together to treat patients and conduct research. Each Ability Lab includes a combination of equipment, smart devices, and cutting-edge technology that represents not only current best practices in rehabilitation care, but also new and innovative practices that hold promise for future methods of advancing patient ability. Clinical and research staff working in this space together have, through their activities, created an environment of mutual motivation and learning. Additionally, each Ability Lab represents a hub of patient activity where the majority of daytime activities, such as patient therapies and applied research activities, take place. The Ability Labs represent the bridge between research and direct patient care where solutions to real patient problems are identified and solved quickly and efficiently to improve patient outcomes. The innovative design of the hospital integrates all aspects of human subject research and rehabilitation medicine and has facilitated the recruitment of world-renowned researchers and expansion of the SRALab research enterprise in furtherance of SRALab's search for new and more promising treatments. SRALab has seen this geographical arrangement result in spontaneous collaborations that were not previously possible based on separation of clinicians and researchers. This novel model was recently the focus of a presentation at the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine and was attended by colleagues interested in SRALab methods and outcomes.

Focus areas for research include the use of portable sensors to monitor patient activity and response to therapy, measurement of brain network activity in chronic pain patients, and measurement of neuromuscular tissue properties in neuromuscular disease.

The research conducted at SRALab ranges from cognitive behavior and decision making to epigenetic modification of stem cells in muscle contractures. Of particular note is that measurement of brain activity for research purposes is accomplished using a research-grade magnetic resonance imaging ("MRI") scanner with a field strength (3.0 Tesla) that is twice that of the typical MRI scanner (1.5 Tesla). In addition, SRALab's biologics lab is housed within the hospital and contains specialized facilities to perform cell culture, biochemical, biophysical, molecular and genetic studies of tissues (blood, saliva, joint fluid, muscle) obtained from SRALab patients.

In the next three (3) years, SRALab will be focusing on the use of sensors to not only detect movement abnormalities but to evaluate the efficacy of treatment in real-world settings. SRALab is creating the largest database of human movement development and has begun providing in-home early intervention to patients at risk of developmental delays. The fact that this research is performed in the home will also test the robustness of methods, developed in the laboratory setting, to be deployed in the home setting. This field is known as "implementation science" and, acknowledging its importance to the community, SRALab recently recruited a PT, PhD with specific training in the area and have appointed her as "Director, Implementation Services." This trans-hospital position will ensure that research discoveries made in the hospital are deployed into the community.

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3. Education Regarding Shirley Ryan AbilityLab’s Resources

The Assessment identified a continuing need for increasing the awareness of patients, visitors, and the community regarding SRALab’s LIFE Center, as well as additional programs and resources, such as Pathways.

SRALab’s Henry B. Betts LIFE Center, a multimedia education center and virtual web portal, provides access to patient education and consumer health information that is peer-reviewed and best-practice. The LIFE Center’s mission is to provide opportunities for **Learning, Innovation, Family, and Empowerment** for the populations SRALab serves, their families, and the community.

In connection with opening SRALab in 2017, the LIFE Center website^{lv} was redesigned and merged into a single platform with the new SRALab website. The website provides a virtual education portal to access patient education and community resources with real-time updates, printing on demand, and a dashboard that allows visitors to save their favorite resources for easy access in the future. Visitors to the website are also able to see the entire breadth of the hospital’s offerings, as well as learn about Pathways – now a member of the SRALab family – and a leading pediatric resource in early detection and intervention tools to maximize children’s motor, sensory, and communication development.

In addition to the virtual resources, there is a physical location on the 10th floor of SRALab that provides access to curated resources that span key topic areas relevant to the life-long needs of people living with a wide range of cognitive and physical impairments, chronic conditions, or diseases affecting function. Holdings also include information for family members, clinicians, and educators. Having access to this information enables individuals to make the best choices for themselves and their families.

In addition to online resources, knowledgeable, expert staff are available to help visitors and professionals find personal connections, guidance, and trusted resource information aligned with their needs through the various stages of their healthcare journeys.

The LIFE Center embraces a holistic approach that provides access to information spanning the lifetime of needs. Resources are organized according to eight topic areas:

- Medical Information & Care
- Caregiving & Equipment
- Housing & Transportation
- Education & Employment
- Support & Wellness
- Recreation & Leisure
- Finance & Law
- Inspiration & Hope

Providing resource assistance and referral information to patients, families, staff, and the community remains the cornerstone of LIFE Center service. The LIFE Center receives and responds to thousands of resource requests from across the globe, illustrating not only the community’s awareness of the LIFE Center, but also the value it provides. Resource requests are submitted to the LIFE Center in-person as well as by phone, e-mail, and mail. In Fiscal Year 2021, total outreach and service efforts represented

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6,490 person contacts. Services provided included individualized patient, family and community education programs –in person or virtual, virtual classes, virtual special events, and a peer-mentor program – in person or virtual. LIFE Center web traffic in Fiscal Year 2021 averaged 12,349 page views per month, or 148,198 page views annually, with visits from more than 173 countries.

SRAlab will continue to increase awareness of the LIFE Center by communicating with acute care hospitals, inpatient rehabilitation hospitals, and community agencies that serve persons with disabilities to make their patients and communities aware of the resources the LIFE Center offers. In addition, a video will be developed to showcase the LIFE Center’s unique resources. Finally, the LIFE Center offers an annual open house that is available to the public to learn about these key resources. Scheduled events and other relevant information that will bring attention to the LIFE Center will be shared through social media outlets to expand community, national, and international reach.

4. Post-Discharge Support Programs

The Assessment identified a continuing need for support programming. In particular, (i) support for helping patients and families manage expectations upon returning home; and (ii) developing clinical community links and formalizing communication with existing community support groups.

SRAlab has, and will continue to have, numerous programs to assist patients with transitioning back to their homes and communities. SRAlab also has programs intended to help patients’ families and other members of the community, regardless of whether they have been SRAlab patients.

Aphasia Programs

SRAlab aphasia experts are investigating novel ways to treat aphasia through technological innovation, clinical research studies, and unique therapeutic treatments. The following examples illustrate how the aphasia team is addressing patient and community needs:

- (1) More than fifty (50) community members with aphasia take part in the weekly aphasia community group program. During the last two years, the program was offered virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Four book clubs and five conversation groups are offered each week in addition to a movie discussion group. Each group is facilitated by a speech language pathologist with expertise in the use of strategies to support the communication difficulties of the participants.
- (2) SRAlab’s Annual Aphasia Day was also held virtually in June 2021 to celebrate National Aphasia Awareness Month. In addition, a YouTube playlist featuring past Aphasia Day presentations was created to increase more widespread community awareness of aphasia (see [Aphasia Day Presentations](#)).
- (3) Intensive Aphasia Program (IAP) — This month-long, self-pay program offers six (6) hours of daily therapy that focuses specifically on improving the communication skills (speaking, understanding, reading, and writing) of the person with aphasia. The IAP is offered four (4) times a year. At the start of the pandemic, it was offered via telehealth, but is now being offered in person.

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- (4) Aphasia Research — SRALab has several aphasia-related studies underway to better understand recovery in aphasia and to investigate novel treatment methods to achieve the best outcomes. More than thirty (30) people with aphasia participate in these studies each year.

Youth Transition Program

Transition from adolescence to adulthood presents unique challenges for rehabilitation patients. Like most peers their age, they are going through changes in puberty, sexual identity, increased abstract thinking, self-determination, and increased responsibility; but with the added responsibility of navigating the world with a disability. This challenge requires additional support and services. In an effort to help adolescent patients through the transition to adulthood, SRALab operates a Youth Transition Program for adolescents ages 13 to 21 who have the potential for independent living and ability to direct their own care. The program focuses on providing social support and training in cooking, money management, community transportation, medical information and care, and education and employment.

Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Beginning a career or returning to work following an illness or injury is important to a patient's financial security and emotional well-being. Employment can contribute to achieving a productive, independent, and fulfilling life. For more than fifty (50) years, SRALab has been providing comprehensive vocational rehabilitation services tailored to meet the needs of each client. Services include initial assessment, evaluation, work trial assessments, return-to-work evaluation, job placement, résumé writing, interviewing workshops, an Internet job skills course, and internship coordination. SRALab covers the cost of initial assessments, which are not covered by most third-party payers. Patients can receive vocational services at any of SRALab's seven facilities, ensuring that employment assistance is closely tied to community reintegration. During the past five years, the program has served an average of 900 clients annually.

Graduate Equivalency Degree Program

SRALab also offers no-cost, accessible Graduate Equivalency Degree ("GED") classes at its downtown Chicago location. These classes have the potential for long-lasting and life-changing impact. This program is offered to any individual with a spinal cord injury ("SCI") who is looking to earn their GED. Unlike other GED programs, the SRALab Vocational Rehabilitation program is offered at an accessible location. The Vocational Rehabilitation staff are experienced in meeting the unique needs of individuals with SCI as they pursue a GED. These considerations help reduce the barriers to continuing education for people with SCI, increasing their potential for further education, employability, and increased quality of life.

Adaptive Sports and Functional Fitness Program

The Adaptive Sports and Functional Fitness Program provides wellness opportunities for people with certain physical disabilities through sports and recreation, as well as through Functional Fitness programs. All services offered in the Sports program, which marked its 40th year in 2021, are free of charge or offered at a nominal fee. The Adaptive Sports and Fitness Program is funded primarily by grants and generous community donations and is operated by 10.5 full-time equivalent staff. Additionally, program volunteers assist in a wide variety of community sports and fitness events, and volunteer hours in Fiscal Year 2021 alone totaled nearly 4,000. Although certain Sports and Fitness programs were temporarily suspended due to COVID, during Fiscal Year 2021, the sports program recorded 2,854 visits by its 194 registered

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participants. A separate program for youth, Sports for Kids, recorded 455 visits by 70 children with disabilities from the Chicago area. SRALab's Sports and Fitness Program is considered a national leader in health promotion for people with disabilities.

Military Sports Camp

SRALab's Military Sports Camp is designed for injured military personnel, and all individuals who have or are currently serving in the U.S. Armed Forces and have a primary physical disability are welcome to apply. Introductory-level athletes are invited to learn sports skills from elite-level coaches, while enjoying all that Chicago has to offer. Adaptive sports offered include wheelchair basketball, wheelchair rugby, wheelchair softball, biathlon, archery, sled hockey, wheelchair tennis, field sports, judo, rock climbing, SCUBA, swimming, cycling, kayaking, fitness and golf. Transportation to and from Chicago, including all associated costs, is provided for all participants. The camp aims to help participants develop a healthy and active lifestyle through adaptive sports and recreation and includes health education and wellness opportunities. At the end of the program, each participant receives an at-home workout program, a list of adaptive sports programs near their home, and a grant resource page so that they can continue their adaptive sports journey.

With the exception of calendar years 2020 and 2021 when the camp was suspended due to COVID-19, SRALab offers the camp each year, usually over multiple days in the summer. The 2022 camp was hosted by a core team of staff, invited coaches, and volunteers. In prior years, each camp exposed participants to several sports for brief periods of time; however, participants offered feedback that they would prefer to focus on a single sport. In response to this feedback, SRALab offered two separate camps in 2022; one which focused on sled hockey and one which focused on wheelchair softball. This proved successful, and a total of 18 participants attended the camps.

Accessible Fitness Programs

In 2012, SRALab moved its Adaptive Sports & Fitness Center ("Sports Center") into a newly designed and expanded, state-of-the-art accessible fitness center. The Sports Center includes the latest designs in adapted weight training and aerobic equipment, and experts in exercise physiology and therapeutic recreation are present to lead programs and assist participants. In response to the identified needs for community-based integrated exercise programs, the Sports Center developed a Functional Fitness program to transition patients from inpatient hospitalization to customized exercise programs, allowing them to continue building towards health and fitness goals following discharge. Additional fitness programs have been added to the Sports Center's offerings and have been extended to the communities at SRALab's suburban DayRehab® locations.

The Sports Center provides adaptive recreation and competitive sports programming at no cost to participants. The Sports Center's competitive sports and Paralympic programs are among the best in the United States and are offered for both adults and children. Participation in programs held at the Sports Center requires a written membership application that includes medical approval from a physician.

Therapeutic Recreation

Therapeutic Recreation is a community reentry program developed to assist individuals with disabilities to adjust and learn new ways to participate in community offerings and Activities of Daily Living ("ADL"). Each week therapists lead multiple therapeutic recreation sessions with patients and their families. During these sessions, patients and their family members travel to museums, stores, restaurants, and even the

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airport, where patients practice boarding airplanes. All of these activities prepare patients and their families to navigate the community and continue to engage in ADL that are of interest to them.

Car Seat Program

SRAlab has a long-standing car seat program to ensure that each pediatric patient is discharged with an appropriate car seat, properly fitted into the vehicle. If the family does not have a car seat, one is obtained for them free of charge. SRAlab has staff who are also trained car seat technicians to complete this process with each inpatient patient and family.

Peer Mentors

The LIFE Center has developed a highly regarded peer mentor program to support patients in the early stages of recovery. The program's unique model incorporates peer mentors into patient education, providing opportunities for patients and families to glean insights from someone who has "been there" and developed strategies that support goal achievement and community integration. Currently, the peer team includes 40 individuals with various conditions (cancer, multiple sclerosis, spinal cord injury, traumatic brain injury, stroke, ventricular assist device, and limb loss) who are successfully navigating life post-rehabilitation and can share the "lived" experience of disability. All peers are carefully screened and receive extensive training and ongoing talent development through quarterly in-service training. In addition, peers are coached and mentored to ensure effective development of communication skills. The peer program is directed by the LIFE Center with additional educational consultation from Access Living of Metropolitan Chicago, a non-residential independent living center. Ongoing collaboration provides helpful insights and strategies for team development and community advocacy.

Support Group for Caregivers

Through chaplaincy, SRAlab offers weekly support group meetings for caregivers. The meetings, which began in November 2019, offer caregivers and other loved ones a safe space to express their emotions and concerns confidentially. Participants benefit from recognition, counseling, support, peer socializing, and the sharing of problem-solving ideas. While initially focused on caregivers of SRAlab's inpatients, SRAlab will be expanding the program to SRAlab's outpatient caregivers as well.

Family Education Days

SRAlab offers formal training for family members and friends of patients, as well as home aides. This education includes training with occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech therapists/speech language pathologists, and nursing staff, all in preparation for a patient's discharge. Education days can be scheduled in single or multiple-day increments, depending upon how many people are being trained and whether additional training is required.

In addition to these programs, SRAlab will maintain a position in its Care Management department that is partially dedicated to working with post-discharge patients. This position provides assistance to discharged patients in areas such as nursing home placement, Durable Medical Equipment ("DME") follow up, management of transportation issues, medication management, home aide referrals, outpatient appointments, DayRehab®, and transitions to home health.

SRAlab intends to continue these support services at little to no cost for patients and participants.

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Conclusion

In accord with the foregoing, SRAlab looks forward to continued implementation of the above strategies to assist in addressing the four (4) identified Priority Areas; Specifically, Rehabilitation Health, Research, Education Regarding Resources and Support Programs.

- SRAlab will continue to expand access for patients in various rehabilitation settings in the areas of stroke, spinal cord injury, neuro-musculoskeletal conditions, brain injury, pediatric care, and cancer, while also supporting the emotional, social, and psychological needs of SRAlab patients.
- SRAlab will continue to focus on translational medicine, both for its patients as well as collaborating with public and private entities worldwide related to cutting edge research.
- The LIFE Center will continue to communicate its programs and identify appropriate outreach for patients and their families through scheduled events and social media.
- SRAlab will assist patients and their families through programs relating to transitioning back to their homes and communities.

Over the next three years, SRAlab will work diligently to continue implementing the strategies identified above which are designed to provide community benefits to SRAlab patients and their family members.

ⁱ Frier A, et. al. Understanding disability and the 'social determinants of health': how does disability affect peoples' social determinants of health? *Disabil Rehabil.* 40(5), 538-547 (Mar. 2018).

ⁱⁱ Social Determinants of Health. *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.*

<https://health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/social-determinants-health>. Accessed July 8, 2022.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Id.*

^{iv} <https://www.sralab.org/lifecenter>