

## Introduction

According to the Canadian Best Practices for Stroke (2015), continuity of care is enhanced when patients and their family have adequate and comprehensive information about their ongoing health, transitions, and end of service. The outpatient clinic at Providence Healthcare does not currently provide discharge documentation to patients or primary care physicians at time of discharge unless requested.

## Purpose

To create an Interprofessional outpatient discharge letter that will improve communication between the outpatient team, patients/caregivers, and the primary care physician.

To ensure a smooth transition and continuity of care for patients being discharged from the Stroke and Neuro Clinic.

## Methodology

Surveys were completed with other outpatient Rehabilitation Clinics across the GTA, members of the Providence Outpatient Stroke and Neuro Clinic, primary care physicians and current patients and caregivers.

Surveys were performed to complete an environmental scan of current practice across the GTA and also to determine the needs of patients, their caregivers, Providence staff and primary care physicians.

Based on feedback collected, an Interprofessional Outpatient Discharge Letter template was developed, trialed and implemented.

## Results

Survey results revealed inconsistencies across the GTA in how information was being shared at time of discharge from outpatient Stroke and Neuro clinics.

% of rehab facilities that provide a formal discharge summary	% of rehab facilities that <u>do not</u> provide a formal discharge summary
25%	75%

Staff at Providence as well as primary care physicians felt that completion of an Interprofessional Outpatient Discharge Letter would be beneficial to their practice.

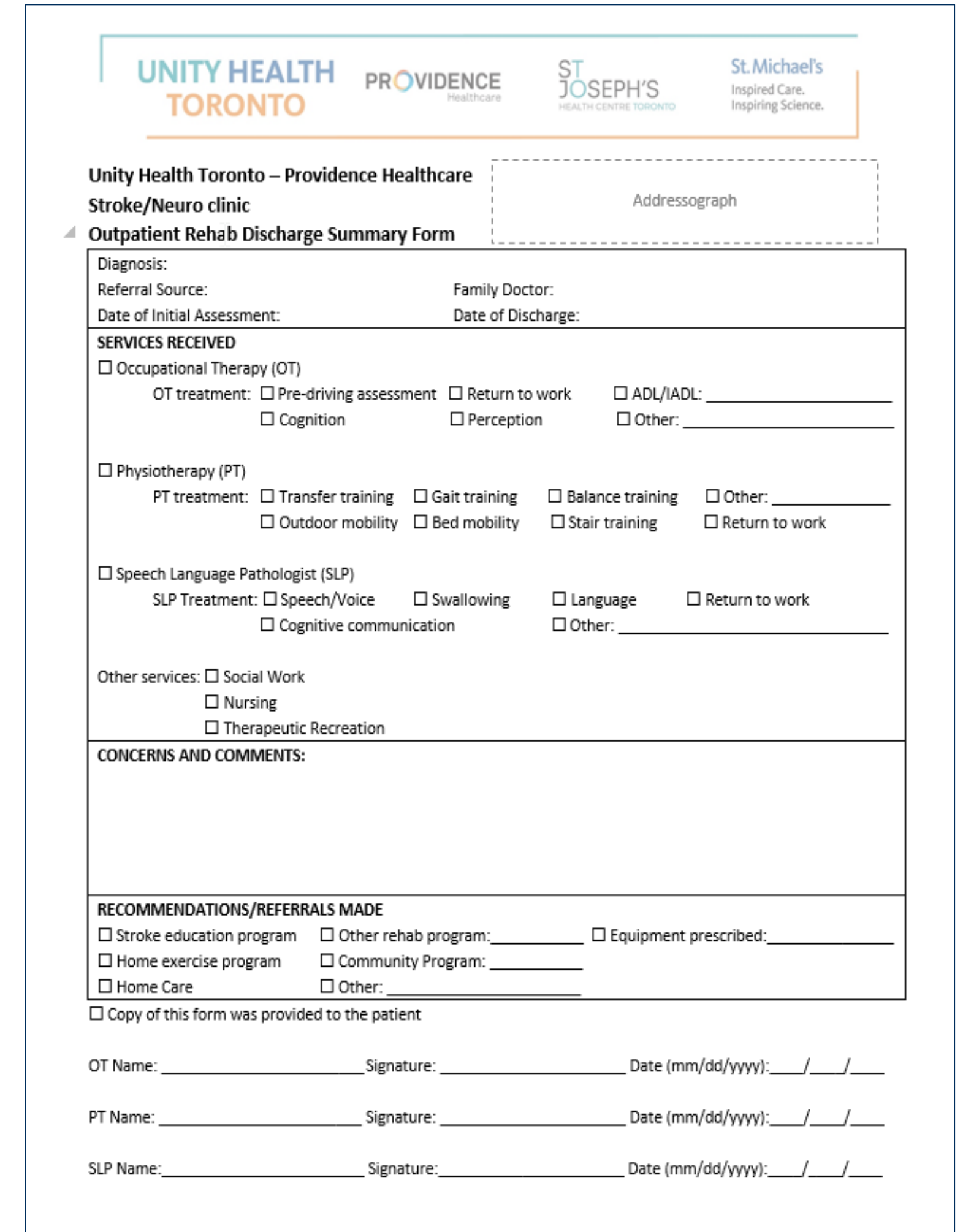
% of staff and physicians who felt a formal discharge letter would be beneficial	% of staff who have trialed implementation of the discharge letter
100 %	100%

Staff provided recommendations regarding format and content of the letter. Patients and caregivers identified the need for the letter but were unable to identify what the content of the letter should be. Post implementation, staff were surveyed about their satisfaction with the current discharge letter. Feedback collected has resulted in further modification to the letter.

% of staff satisfied with the discharge letter process	% of staff satisfied with the contents of the discharge letter
100%	88%

## Discussion

Implementation of the discharge letter ensures that patients are provided with timely information about the care they have received and any recommendations the team has made. Improving the effectiveness of our communication with primary care physicians contributes to best practice, to improve continuity of care for our patients and limit breakdowns in accountability by providing consistent handover.



The form is titled "Unity Health Toronto – Providence Healthcare Stroke/Neuro clinic Outpatient Rehab Discharge Summary Form". It includes logos for Unity Health Toronto, Providence Healthcare, St. Joseph's Health Centre Toronto, and St. Michael's. A dashed box labeled "Addressograph" is in the top right. The form contains several sections: "Diagnosis:", "Referral Source:", "Date of Initial Assessment:", "Family Doctor:", and "Date of Discharge:". The "SERVICES RECEIVED" section includes checkboxes for Occupational Therapy (OT), Physiotherapy (PT), and Speech Language Pathologist (SLP), with sub-sections for specific treatments. The "Other services" section includes checkboxes for Social Work, Nursing, and Therapeutic Recreation. The "CONCERNS AND COMMENTS:" section is a large text area. The "RECOMMENDATIONS/REFERRALS MADE" section includes checkboxes for Stroke education program, Home exercise program, Home Care, and other rehab programs. At the bottom, there are signature lines for OT, PT, and SLP, each with fields for Name, Signature, and Date (mm/dd/yyyy).

**Fig.1 Interprofessional Outpatient Discharge Letter**

## Future directions

The Discharge Letter will be provided to all patients attending the Outpatient Stroke and Neuro Clinic and faxed to their primary care physicians.

Ongoing feedback from patients, caregivers, primary care physicians and staff will be collected to evaluate ongoing effectiveness of this communication tool and potential for future improvements.