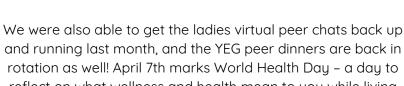


SCI-AB | April 2025 Peer Newsletter Intro + Last Month's Recap

It's not an April Fool's joke: April 2025 marks the return of the peer newsletter!



reflect on what wellness and health mean to you while living with an SCI. We know that health isn't just about doctor visits it's about movement, community, and access to the right support. Whether it's staying active with adaptive equipment, connecting with peers for mental well-being, or advocating for accessible healthcare, SCI-AB is here with you all the way! April 11 marks National Pet Day, a purr-fect way to celebrate our furry family members. Earth Day is marked on April 22, and this year is the 55th anniversary of the movement, this year's theme is "Our Power, Our Planet" ; it is an opportunity to





Finally, April 28th marks National Superhero Day! This is a fun way to celebrate the superheroes in our lives, whether that is doctors, nurses, health professionals, family, friends, volunteers, or anyone else who is making the world a better place one day at a time!

reflect and take action.

Spring is in the air and it means that one of the most anticipated events of the year is just around the corner - the Servus Calgary Marathon! You can create your own team, join an existing one, or donate to support. Once again, peer mentor

and powerhouse Shamel Elsayed, is racing and fundraising on behalf of SCI-AB and his co-workers at Cenovus.

Thank you for everyone for your support, and we hope to see you on race day! The event can be done in person, or

province!



virtually as well, so it can be done from anywhere in the



Bonnie Doon Bowling Alley

Sign up here: https://raceroster.com/events/2025/88010/servus-calgarymarathon-2025/pledge/team/737999

April 8 - Virtual Ladies Chat April 15 - YEG Coffee + Peers at the Glenrose April 16 - Online Peer Chat with Terry April 17 - <u>YEG Peer Dinner</u> April 18 - Good Friday (Offices Closed) April 21 – Easter Monday (Offices Closed)

April 24 - SCI Education Day (Virtual Event)

Be sure to check out our <u>online events calendar</u> or our social media channels to keep up to

April 23 - YYC Peer Dinner

April 22 – <u>Virtual Ladies C</u>hat

April 3 - YEG Pizza + Peers at the Glenrose

Join the conversation on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month from noon-1pm Contact

SCI Canada Scholarships Available There are several scholarships available to those with SCIs in Alberta, but the

• Copnick Hilliard Scholarship (\$1,500) – For Canadian students with a spinal cord injury. from corporate member required). leadership, honoring William Kirby Rowe's legacy.

date on upcoming events!

deadlines are coming up quick!

• Sun Life Financial Scholarship (\$1,500) - For peer support volunteers (letter • Kirby Rowe Scholarship (\$1,000) – For students in management and • Thomas O. Parker Scholarship (\$1,500) - For students pursuing career development after high school. Apply today and take your next step toward success!

out to watch the exciting game, and check out the try it opportunity event on Saturday from 11:15am-12:30pm to give it a go yourself!

In the Community + Across the Province:

In celebration of Reyu's 8th birthday they will be hosting an open house this year! It will take place on Thursday, April 3rd, 2025 from 8:45am-4:45pm at the ReYu Paralysis Recovery Centre. This will be a day to celebrate ReYu and explore their programs and offerings, be sure to check it out! For more information about their organization, check out their website at: https://www.reyu.ca/

Rocky Mountain Adaptive (RMA) has their annual Shredability camp on April 12, for more

information or to register, visit: https://rockymountainadaptive.com/event/shredability/

Great news that boccia programming will be returning to Edmonton this month. Boccia is a fun, challenging, and inclusive sport that is open to all ages. Check out the poster or contact ACPSA at edmonton@acpsa.ca for details.

Here is a link to the tournament facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/share/14fp5NNwCL/?mibextid=wwXlfr

deals!

Check out: https://sci-can.ca/application-scholarship for more

information or to apply!

presentation topics and link to register below! 4th Annual SCI Education Day - April 24th

Finally, there will also be a virtual SCI Education Day event on April 25th, more details on

Canadian Disability Benefit Update and Alberta Disability Program Cuts In the past few months, the disability community has faced some significant challenges. In addition, the new Alberta Disability Assistance Program (ADAP) was introduced with few details and zero consultation, and will push people off of AISH into workplaces that are not accessible and cutting employment supports and programs to help those with

More Information www.sci-can.ca/scholarshi Sledge hockey Westerns will take place in Calgary at Winsport, from April 4-6th and will feature 24 teams from all over Western Canada at both the Jr and adult level! Check it This will have up to date schedules and results. There will also be a large silent auction BOCCIA and raffle taking place over the tournament. So be sure to check it out for some sweet EDMONTON

April 9 - June 18

OPEN

HOUSE

The 4th annual SCI Education Day will take place on

ARE YOU LIVING WITH A SPINAL CORD INJURY?

Help start a peer swim group in

Edmonton by filling out this survey!

SCI AB Edmonton Peer Swimming Group

SCI Research



Registration is free can be found here: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/4th-annual-spinal-cord-injury-education-day- 2025-tickets-1237985480899

disabilities find employment. and now the Alberta Government has reduced the 2025-26 AISH budget by \$49 million, with another \$22 million in 2026-27 and a further \$6 million in 2027-28. Furthermore, they have chosen to make the Canada Disability Benefit (CDB) non-exempt income, so AISH recipients who qualify for the CDB will have the benefit clawed back. The Alberta government has once again made it clear that disabled Albertans are not a priority, this is a direct attack on the financial future and security for many Albertans. Zachary Weeks says it best: "This isn't about supporting disabled Albertans—it's about pushing them off social assistance while removing the very safety nets that help them succeed. This

isn't just a policy shift—it's a disability rights crisis." As Albertan's we need to raise awareness about the cuts and the potential harm they will do to vulnerable people. Contact your MLA and ask why AISH and disability employment

The Canada Disability Benefit will come into effect on May 15, 2025, with the first payments being issued in July. The payment is touted as a step forward to improve Canada's social safety net. It is meant to supplement existing federal, provincial, and territorial income support measures. Starting in June 2025, residents between 18 and 64 years old can qualify for the benefit if they have been approved for the Disability Tax Credit (DTC) and meet the benefit's other

eligibility requirements. The Canada Disability Benefit is a key commitment and is the cornerstone of Canada's Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP), which is a blueprint for change to make Canada more inclusive for persons with disabilities.

2025, and it is expected that payments will begin in July 2025. They also need to have filed their income tax return, as

single or \$32,500 if the beneficiary is married or has a common-law partner. A certain amount of income from employment or self-employment will be exempted from (not counted in) the calculation of a person's income. If the beneficiary is single, the maximum amount that will be exempted is \$10,000. If the beneficiary is married or has a

The maximum amount of the benefit for the July 2025 to June 2026 payment period will be \$2,400 (\$200 per month). The amount a person can receive will depend on their income and the income of their spouse or common-law partner, if they have one. The benefit will be reduced by 20 cents for every dollar of income that is above: \$23,000 if the beneficiary is

common-law partner, the maximum amount of the couple's combined employment or self-employment income that will

The Canada Disability Benefit will be a new income-tested benefit providing low- and modest-income working-age persons with disabilities up to \$200 per month in financial support. The first month of eligibility for the benefit will be June

does their spouse or common-law partner if they have one.

Technology Spotlight: SpineAlly App is now live!

Your secure online health connection

the program rolling. Or <u>fill the form here</u>

template!)

Leanne, SpeediCath®

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There are several facets to our peer program.

may not be aware of these changes.

width vary by container.

additional charge.

releases-first-accessibility-plan-progress-re).

SCI-AB Peer Program New Mentor + Mentee Shoutout

The peer program is the basis of how SCI-AB came to be. Peers

supporting peers and the invaluable lived experience perspective.

Learning the ropes from someone who has been there and gets it.

From educational sessions, peer social meetings, one on one peer

New Upcoming Peer Program Offerings

We are happy to announce a new member of our peer team in the Edmonton office - Tristan Kowal! Tristan will be taking the lead on several new exciting peer initiatives.

These programs are still in the works, but here is a sneak preview of what to expect:

• Peer Led Bowling Program at Bonnie Doon Lanes on Tuesday Evening with Guy for \$7/person (see poster in the events section of the newsletter! above!)

• Swimming program for those with SCIs or related physical disabilities. This is a great opportunity to gain confidence and skills in the water in a safe and

Monthly wheelchair skills program providing support to learn and practice wheelchair skills, to maximize your independence to go where you want to go,

wheelchairs, as well as power chairs and potentially scooters as well. However, we are seeking volunteers to help support the program as spotters (no previous experience is needed). For an idea about what to expect for the wheelchair skills program check out Dalhousie University's wheelchair skills program website: https://wheelchairskillsprogram.ca/en/ (We hope to use this program as a

Alberta SCI Research Updates | Recruitment Database

Spinal Cord Injury Research Participant Recruitment Database A new

and building the confidence to try. There will be component for manual

controlled setting. Complete the form via QR code or link on swim poster to get

The SpineAlly app has been in development over the last few years by the Restore Network team at the University of Calgary. The app allows users to track specific

services are being slashed.

be exempted is \$14,000.

health wellness markers that are important to them, such as catheterization schedule or volumes, mental health tracking, bowel routine tracking, mobility equipment renewals, and much more. The app also has built in educational resources and links to current research studies to enroll in. Another cool feature is the built in chat bot that can help answer questions and direct to resources. More information or to download check out: https://spineally.ca/ Did You Know? My Chart App Another cool app that can help simplify health management for Albertans is the "My Chart App" this allows users to have access to test results, past visit summaries, appointment information, and a chat function to contact

> clinicians and health care providers. This is a great way to have all health information secure and in one place. Find out more information here:

https://myahsconnect.albertahealthservices.ca/MyChartPRD/Authentication

database to assist in informing individuals with SCI about potential **Database** research studies that are currently recruiting is now live at https://redcap.link/SCIdatabase. Individuals who are interested in having researchers contact them about trials in Alberta that are of interest to them should please enroll using the link provided. You may indicate what types of studies interest you. If you have any questions about this database, please A new database to assist in informing individuals contact Dr. Jessica D'Amico at the Glenrose Rehabilitation with SCI about potential research studies that are Hospital/University of Alberta at damico1@ualberta.ca. currently recruiting is now live at: https://redcap.link/SCIdatabase

Check out the all of the current research study opportunities here!

For more information about either of these programs or to inquire about volunteering, reach out to Tristan at Tristan.Kowal@sci-ab.ca

connections, and much more. We are always looking for more peer mentors to add to the roster to help to connect with those who are newly injured, or those who have new questions as they move into a new stage of life. SCI AB Peer Support Program The peer mentor training consists of an online course that can be completed on your own time, as well as a peer mentor profile that will help make matches with those in the community who have requested support. For more information on becoming a peer mentor, contact kendra.erhardt@sci-ab.ca To sign up to be a mentor or mentee, complete this form: https://forms.office.com/r/Vm4AMuLMHC lédullaires Alberta

Changes to Airline Weight Restrictions for Travellers with Wheelchairs

and alternative routings or, in some cases, an inability to carry the individual and their mobility aid.

applicable size limits while upright and cannot be turned on its side, it cannot be accepted for transport.

Airlines can modify their accessibility policies and practices which may have an impact on passengers with disabilities who

For example, in June 2024, WestJet updated its mobility aid weight and size, and handling policy and updated its size and weight limits for all wheelchairs and similar mobility aids (https://www.westjet.com/en-ca/news/2024/-the-westjet-group-

Passengers are encouraged to check airlines' policies each time they travel as these can change. Passengers who will be travelling with mobility aids should inform airlines of this fact when they book their flights, and whenever possible, at least 48 hours in advance of travel. The practical consequences for failure to be informed of airlines' policies will vary depending on, for example, the type of aircraft and the size of the airline's fleet. They could potentially include significant flight disruptions

It is essential to verify that WestJet can accommodate your mobility aid before booking your travel, even if you have

If you plan to transport your mobility aid in the aircraft's cargo compartment, it must fit through the cargo door and be

If you are travelling with another airline, including one of WestJet's partner airlines, you will be required to contact all carriers on your itinerary to confirm this process, their notification and reservation requirements, and acceptance of your

There has also been significant pushback from airline carriers in the states to the new legislation in place to protect travelers with disabilities. These changes came into place December 2024 under the Department of Transportation of the Biden administration. The legislation went through a long overdue update and implemented the following changes: higher standards for how airlines handle mobility devices; better training for employees assisting disabled travelers; safe and dignified assistance; accountability for damage; passenger notifications; cargo info transparency; ground transportation reimbursement; fare difference + flight rebooking protections. However, there are now several airlines pushing back on these changes. They are stating that these new protections for disabled passengers, are unfairly targeting them and they

Non-Powered Devices: Depending on the aircraft operating your flight, the cargo configuration may require non-powered mobility aids to be turned onto their side to fit into the cargo compartment. If your non-powered mobility aid exceeds the

West Jet has introduced the new restrictions. https://www.westjet.com/en-ca/special-needs/wheelchairs-mobility-aids Rights on Flights Movement Pushback

mobility aid. We do not transfer or arrange transfer of mobility aids to other airlines.

Powered Devices: Powered mobility aids must always remain in an upright position during handling, including when being moved into the cargo storage compartment of the aircraft. Therefore, the height and width dimensions of powered mobility aids are measured in an upright position to determine if they can be accepted for transport. For powered mobility aids which will have their batteries removed for travel, the weight of the mobility device with the batteries removed is used in respect of maximum weight limits. Note that WestJet preloads items into a container, then

previously traveled with the same mobility aid with WestJet or another airline.

within the maximum weight provided below for it to be accepted for transport.

Development of user-based recommendations to support air travel for people with SCI". They are looking for people with SCIs to share their air travel experiences. In addition to the flying experience, they would like to learn about accessibility needs, and the barriers you encounter when traveling, especially about interactions with personnel and how it could be improved. This knowledge will help to create recommendations for airline and airport personnel training, as well as informational resources to facilitate safe travel. Participation would include attending a 60-minute interview via

teleconferencing platform (e.g., Zoom). To be eligible for the study you must: have used air travel within the US and/or Canada, have a spinal cord injury/condition, be over 18 years old, understand and speak English and live in Canada.

"SpeediCath® Compact catheters give me the freedom to catheterize anywhere I go." SpeediCath® Compact catheters are designed with you in mind! These discreet and convenient catheters feature our Triple Action Coating Technology™. The unique hydrophilic coating provides smooth and comfortable insertion and withdrawal during catheterization. Compact Female

> To request a FREE* SpeediCath® sample with Triple Action Coating Technology $^{\rm TM}$ scan the QR Code or visit the link: visit.coloplast.ca/SampleSpeediCath Leanne has received compensation from Coloplast to share her information. Each person's situation is unique so your experience may not be the same. Talk to your healthcare provider about whether this product is right for you.
>
> SpeediCath® catheters may be prescribed for use by pediatric patients (children to age 21) and adults who require bladder draining due to chronic urine retention or post void residual volume (PVR). Before use, carefully read all of the instructions. Call your doctor if you think you have a UTI or can't pass the catheter into the bladder. For more information regarding risks, potential complication and product support, call Coloplast Corp. at 1 (866) 293-6349 and/or consult the company website at www.coloplast.co. Coloplast PIZZA WITH PEERS COFFEE WITH PEERS 4PM-6PM AT GLEHROSE REHABILITATION CENTRE
> UNIT 38 ATRIUM Upcoming Dates:

> > Sign-up

March 6th

Compact Female Plus

Compact Male

loads the container into the aircraft cargo compartment. Containers measure 64 in. (162.4 cm) in height, while depth and Please note, that due to operational circumstances, we may change the aircraft operating a specific flight without notice. We will do all we can to accommodate your mobility device, however, we may need to change your reservation to ensure your mobility aid can be accommodated. If your mobility aid does not fit or is too heavy, we will work with you to identify alternative arrangements. If you decide to travel on an alternative itinerary to the same destination, there will be no

Finally, for anyone interested in participating in a research study regarding accessible travel. Researchers at the University of British Columbia (UBC) and the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC), are running a research study called "Access to Fly:

refuse to take responsibility for improving their services. They are arguing that the DOT "exceeded it's authority" by implementing the rule. The legislation is now under the appeal process. The Airlines that are pushing back are banding together as the group "Airlines for America" and include: American Airlines, Delta, JetBlue, Southwest and United Airlines.

For more information about the 'Rights on Flights' movement check out: https://rightsonflights.com/

Community Shoutout - Mobility Equipment Services Huge congratulations to peer program supporters Mobility Equipment Services for being recognized as the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Business of the Year at this years Edmonton Chamber of Commerce awards. Also, congratulations to their very own Amanda

Emery on winning the "Young Business Leader of

Accessible Air Travel Research Study

If you are interested, please email: <u>access.tofly@ubc.ca</u>

Happy April! Spring is just around the corner!

the Year! Amazing work! Looking forward to what the future holds!

- Kendra + Terry + Tristan