

**Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago  
d/b/a Shirley Ryan AbilityLab**

**2019 Community Health Needs Assessment  
Implementation Strategy for Fiscal Years 2020-2022**

Shirley Ryan AbilityLab (“SRALab”) completed its most recent three-year Community Health Needs Assessment (“Assessment”) during Fiscal Year 2019. As a result of the input it received from various sources, five (5) 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 needs identified, including the programs and resources that will be committed; (ii) describes the anticipated impact of its programs and resources on the need; and, (iii) where appropriate, describes planned collaborations with related organizations to meet the need.

Four of the five Priority Areas from the 2016 assessment continue as Priority Areas in 2019; specifically, Rehabilitation Health, Research, Improved Access to Information about Existing Resources, and Support Programs. The fifth 2016 Priority Area, Education and Training, has been replaced with a focus on Business Relationships.

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

The organization's scientific approach – Advancing Human Ability® – was fully implemented in 2017 with the opening of our new translational research hospital, the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab.

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 new 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 our search for new and more promising treatments.

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, our biologics lab is housed within our hospital and contains specialized facilities to perform cell culture, biochemical, biophysical, molecular and genetic studies of tissues (blood, saliva, joint fluid, muscle) obtained from our patients.

In the next three years, we 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. This latter point is based on the observation that isolated and infrequent clinician visits do not always provide a reliable view of patient function or progress. We currently have a major grant submitted to become the National Center to lead this initiative.

### 3. Improved Access to Information about Existing Resources

The Assessment identified a continued need for increasing the awareness of patients, visitors, and the community regarding Shirley Ryan AbilityLab's LIFE Center, as well as additional programs and resources, such as Pathways.

SRAIab'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 **L**earning, **I**nnovation, **F**amily, and **E**mpowerment for the populations we serve, their families, and the community.

In connection with opening the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab, the LIFE website<sup>1</sup> was redesigned and the redesign was completed in August 2019.

- Recreation & Leisure
- Finance & Law
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\_\_\_\_\_ . In 2012, SRALab moved its Adaptive Sports & Fitness Center (“Center”) into a newly designed and expanded, state-of-the-art accessible fitness center. The 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 Center developed a Functional Fitness program to transition patients from inpatient hospitalization to customized exercised programs, allowing them to continue building towards health and fitness goals following discharge. Additional fitness programs have been added to the Center’s offerings and have been extended to the communities at SRALab’s suburban DayRehab locations.

To ensure ongoing support of all community members, membership is open to any person with a disability at a very low cost. In addition, the Center provides adaptive recreation and competitive sports programming at no cost to participants. The 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 Center requires a written membership application that includes medical approval from a physician.

\_\_\_\_\_ . SRALab Military Sports Camp is designed for injured military personnel with a primary physical disability. Introductory level athletes are invited to learn from elite level coaches while enjoying all that Chicago has to offer. There is no cost for the program.



navigating the community via public transportation, asking questions at medical appointments, identifying potential areas of career interest, and creating a resume.

\_\_\_\_\_. SRALab sponsors weekly programming for community members with aphasia. Participants are charged a nominal fee of \$5-10 per class per week, with alternate arrangements available if a participant cannot afford the fee. Programming is offered to about 50 community members per week and includes conversation groups, book clubs, and topic-specific sessions that focus on a variety of themes including the creative arts, health and fitness, and other recreational activities. The annual “Aphasia Day,” held in June,

position provides assistance to discharged patients in areas such as nursing home placement, DME follow up, management of transportation issues, medication management, homemaker 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.

## **5. Business Relationships**

Participants in the Focus Group identified a continued need to increase hiring of persons with disabilities. Shirley Ryan AbilityLab will continue to be cognizant of, and continue to assist with, meeting these needs. This will include ensuring that the LIFE Center is aware of available resources specifically designed to help connect people with disabilities to potential employment opportunities.

As a result of the 2019 Assessment, the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab will develop a multi-year disability inclusion program for continued focus on these identified community needs. The formalized, structured program, championed by an SRALab Disability Business Resource Group (“BRG”), will be tasked with identifying and engaging internal and external community partners and supporting disability and inclusion hiring programs. The BRG will meet on a reoccurring ll meempi a re3ulpi a re6ulxinueiTdre am

disseminating its quarterly newsletter, which reaches approximately 4,000 people; (2) providing education to employers and the community at large on issues relating to the employment of individuals with disabilities; and (3) maintaining relevant resources and materials on the RRTC website.<sup>2</sup>

## **Conclusion**

In accord with the foregoing, Shirley Ryan AbilityLab looks forward to continued implementation of the above strategies to assist in addressing the five identified Priority Areas; Rehabilitation Health, Research, Improved Access to Information about Existing Resources, Support Programs, and Business Relationships. Specifically,

- We 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 our patients.
- We will continue our focus on translational medicine, both for our 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