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NEW ONLINE RESOURCES HELP PEOPLE WITH SPINAL CORD INJURY MANAGE BOWEL FUNCTION

WASHINGTON, DC—Free online resources to help people with spinal cord injury (SCI) manage bowel function are now available on the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center (MSKTC) website.

The *Spinal Cord Injury and Bowel Function* hot topic module consists of a suite of free resources—videos, a factsheet, and a narrated slideshow—to explain how a bowel program can help people with SCI control bowel movements and avoid surgery. It is available to the public from MSKTC.

“Problems with bowel function that result from a spinal cord injury can be extremely disruptive, but it’s a topic that can be hard to talk about,” said Cynthia Overton, PhD, co-project director of the MSKTC and principal researcher with American Institutes for Research (AIR). “These resources help and encourage people to be more open about these issues.”

A featured video introduces viewers to bowel management issues after SCI via discussions with SCI participants and professionals at the University of Michigan Spinal Cord Injury Model System (UM-SCIMS). A bowel program can retrain one’s body to have regular bowel movements. The featured video also shares the experiences of three individuals who used bowel programs to improve their quality of life after experiencing SCI. The hot topic module also consists of short clips of Model Systems researchers and individuals with SCI discussing the details of bowel function programs. Videos are accompanied by a factsheet and slideshow. Each of these resources is grounded in Spinal Cord Injury Model Systems (SCIMS) clinical practice and offers insight on bowel programs after SCI. The factsheet is available in both English and Spanish.

“Improving bowel function is rated as one of the highest priorities for people with SCI. It can affect so many aspects of their lives, such as relationships, employment, and sexuality, and it negatively impacts quality of life,” said Denise Tate, PhD, and principal investigator of the UM-SCIMS. “There is no single bowel management program that works for all, but a health care professional can help customize one based on a person’s health, personal history, and a physical examination.”

The SCIMS program is funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR). SCIMS centers provide the highest level of comprehensive and multidisciplinary care, including emergency medical, acute medical, and post-acute

services. In addition to providing direct services, SCIMS centers play a pivotal role in building a national capacity for high-quality treatment and research that serve people with SCI, their families, and their communities.

The MSKTC, which developed the *Spinal Cord Injury and Bowel Function* hot topic module, is operated by AIR in collaboration with WETA/BrainLine and George Mason University under a grant from NIDILRR.

Visit http://www.msktc.org/sci/Hot-Topics/Bowel_Function to learn more.

About the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center

The Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center (MSKTC) is a national Center that supports the Model Systems programs in meeting the information needs of individuals with spinal cord injury (SCI), traumatic brain injury (TBI), and burn injury by summarizing research, identifying health information needs, and developing and disseminating information resources. The MSKTC is funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR). Model Systems are funded by NIDILRR to conduct innovative and high-quality research, provide patient care, and offer services to improve the health and overall quality of life of individuals with SCI, TBI, and burn injury. For more information, visit www.MSKTC.org.