

**VISION LOSS
REHABILITATION™**
CANADA

Our Year. Our Impact.

Annual Report
2020/21



Delivering & Reimagining Rehabilitation

Letter from the Board Chair and President & CEO

This has truly been a momentous year – and despite the challenges we’ve faced together, we have achieved so many incredible milestones. Most importantly – we helped to ensure the safety and wellbeing of Canadians with vision loss.

Our incredible staff and leadership team have gone above and beyond every single day. Together, we modified our services to ensure that our clients could continue access to vision loss rehabilitation. We developed agile and adaptive practices to provide virtual care, emotional support, and essential emergency services – and in the process we have reshaped the way we provide care forever.

We developed innovative programs and formed partnerships with organizations across the country, helping us ensure that access to care continues to be expanded, and improving the overall health outcomes of our clients. Our focus on inclusiveness, diversity, equity, and accessibility have propelled us towards an open and positive culture for all.

We would like to take this moment to extend our deepest thanks to our incredible staff.

Their passion, dedication, and commitment to service excellence will continue to set the standard for vision loss rehabilitation now and into the future.

We also thank the Board of Directors, several of whom are clients, for their extra efforts this year in governance and in support of staff. In addition to everything else their special efforts included the appointment of Vision Loss Rehabilitation Canada’s (VLRC) first President and CEO – marking a new era for our organization.

As we look to the future, we will continue to build upon the vision of past leaders and key values to further transform our services to best support the diverse communities we serve.

Together, we will continue to lead the way towards accessible, integrated rehabilitation, and healthcare services.

John Magill
Board Chair

Patrick Levesque
President & CEO

By the Numbers

Vision Loss Rehabilitation Canada proudly serves people with vision loss from coast to coast. Here's a snapshot of our impact last year:

Reach and impact	Clients by age
Total clients served 49,000+	Children and youth 3,200+
New clients referred 6,000+	Working age 13,800+
Total service hours delivered 212,000+	Seniors 32,000+

Service hours delivered



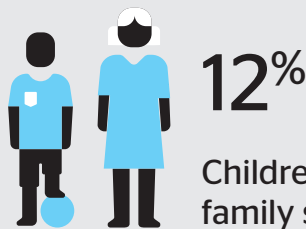
Low vision and assistive technology services



Essential skills for daily living



Client navigation, emotional support, and other services



Children and family services



Intake and assessment

Highlights



Reflecting on a year of innovation and resilience

Working together to establish best-in-class virtual care

Throughout the early stages of the pandemic, we worked diligently to rapidly transform our rehabilitation service delivery models and establish best practices. During this development, we worked closely with international partners and colleagues to adapt our services, while also sharing our own resources in a global effort to establish high-quality models of virtual care.

Fostering seamless client pathways and integrative care

This year, VLRC was proud to congratulate our first cohort of client navigators who completed their training through the York University Health Leadership and Learning Network. This included modules in patient navigation, focusing on patient navigators' role in community health care, advanced patient navigation, focusing on patient-centred care, seamless pathways, legal and ethical issues, motivational interviewing, and cultural safety.

Developing innovative and critical virtual rehabilitation programs

- The daily living skill program offered instruction on everything from kitchen safety to pantry organization to support clients in their journeys towards safe and healthy lifestyles.



- The **fall prevention program** provided clients with tips and strategies to ensure safe and independent travel both indoors and out during the pandemic.
- The **low vision therapy program** sent countless “low vision kits” to clients across the country in response to the volume of requests doubling over the last year. With these new tools, our low vision therapists were able to assess clients’ functional needs from the comfort of their own homes, reaching more clients than ever before.

Providing urgent response in times of crisis

In the past year, we saw a drastic increase in emergency response cases. Our dedicated team was able to work quickly to provide in-person vision rehabilitation service. This service helps to ensure that clients who are considered a priority can access rehabilitation during this important stage of their care.

After accessing these services, clients are referred to virtual care to ensure that they continue to build on the foundational skills they learned during in-person sessions. Throughout this time, we continued to offer access to counselling services to help combat the impacts of vision loss and isolation.



A New Era of Service Delivery

Creating an adaptive, agile, and accessible model of care

Last year, the world faced the global ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While the changes in our service delivery were initially made in response to restrictions put in place across the country, we quickly recognized that many of these modifications would impact the way we deliver services forever.

From the introduction of essential emergency services to virtual care, we were focused on providing outstanding care to support our clients through every step of their vision loss journey – especially during a truly challenging time.

The pandemic further highlighted the need for specialized mental health supports for people who are blind or partially sighted. This is an area that cannot be neglected and continues to be critical in the success of lasting outcomes.

These changes in our services have forced us to rethink the way that we support our clients.



This includes teaching a toddler and their parent how to use a white cane over video call or using Google Street View to give a virtual orientation and mobility lesson to a client who has just moved into a new neighbourhood.

Virtual programs have allowed us to be more cost efficient and have helped to eliminate transportation and geographic barriers. By adapting our services to create a hybrid model, we're now able to reach and support more clients than ever before – no matter where they reside.



Partnerships in Our Communities



Launching the Diabetic Retinopathy Screening program

This year, VLRC launched its first Diabetic Retinopathy Screening program.

This innovative program, developed in partnership with community organizations, including the Indigenous Diabetes Health Circle (IDHC), features increased access points to screening, coordination, and vision rehabilitation for individuals with Diabetic Retinopathy.

Due to various health inequities, type 2 diabetes and its complications are significantly higher in Indigenous communities and access to screening is often limited, creating missed opportunities for preventative care. The Diabetic Retinopathy Screening initiative will take a proactive approach to reducing wait times, while increasing access to screening.

“What [this program] really means [is that] individuals in the community will have access to possible early detection of diabetes, which we know is key,” says Roslynn Baird, Executive Director for IDHC. “If we can catch diabetes early, have an intervention...then we have a better chance of reducing complications - and improving health outcomes.”

Early detection can prevent the physical impact of vision loss caused by diabetes, as well as the mental, emotional, spiritual, and economic effects.

“This is a really positive step in the prevention of diabetes for Indigenous people,” Baird adds. “We’re exceptionally pleased to be involved in this partnership.”

Financials & Board of Directors

Vision Loss Rehabilitation
Canada takes pride in upholding the highest standard of ethics and accountability in stewarding the funding we receive from our provincial government partners.

Our financial statements for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021 were prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations and were audited by Deloitte LLP.

Our Board of Directors is comprised of industry leaders in a variety of fields across Canada, all of whom are dedicated to supporting our vital mission.

Board Chair

John Magill

Finance Committee Chair

Daniel Zbacnik

Service Quality Committee Chair

Betty Nobel

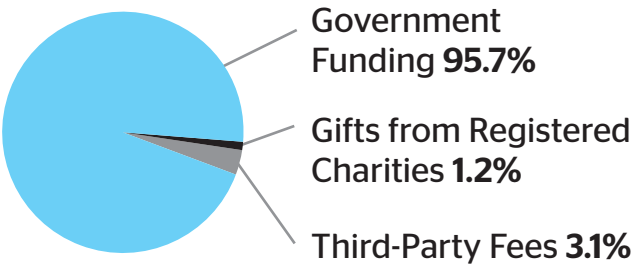
Governance Committee Chair

Ron Noble

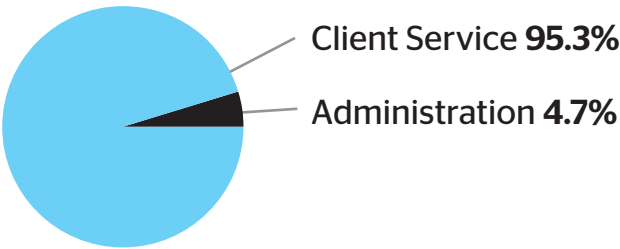
Foundation Member Representative

Ron Kruzeniski

Operating Revenue



Operating Expenses



Board Members 2020/21

Dr. Alina Gupta	Dr. Mark Bona
Bill Blight	Sam Fulton
Brian Hook	Shanti Gidwani
Delcy-Ann Selymes	Shelagh Maloney
Heather Mackenzie	Dr. Tanya Packer

Our Impact

Through the Eyes of Abby

10-year-old Abby Walz has a big heart and big dreams.

Over the past year, Abby has been working really hard at developing her orientation and mobility skills with support from her family and Vision Loss Rehabilitation Orientation and Mobility Specialist, Jeanette Dudley – and Abby’s hard work has really paid off! Her confidence and independence have skyrocketed.

“My favourite thing [about Orientation and Mobility] is just hanging out with Jeanette.

We get to go on so many adventures,” says Abby. “We learn how to cross streets, navigate sidewalks. All sorts of things. We have a lot of adventures. One time we went out catching bugs.”

Inspired by what she learned during her O&M sessions, Abby decided to make a video about everything she’s learned so far – and share it on her YouTube channel.

“It’s been amazing to watch Abby evolve,” says Jeanette, as she reflects on the time that the pair have worked together. When she first saw Abby’s YouTube video about her cane skills, she was blown away. “When I saw [it] my heart just opened up,” she says. “I was teary-eyed the whole time, just knowing that she understood it...and it was relevant and meaningful to her.”

Abby’s YouTube channel is called **“Through the Eyes of Abby”** and over the last year, she’s already amassed more than 800 subscribers.

“I like to make YouTube videos because it helps bring awareness to people who are blind or visually impaired,” Abby explains. She wants people who watch her videos to stop and think about accessibility more often.

“I’m just trying to bring awareness to that and make a change.”



VISION LOSS REHABILITATION™

CANADA





Vision Loss Rehabilitation Canada (VLRC) is a not-for-profit national healthcare organization and the leading provider of rehabilitation therapy and healthcare services for individuals with vision loss.


Visit visionlossrehab.ca

Email info@vlrehab.ca

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