New videos help COPD patients Move into Health

A newly released series of research-based videos by Interior Health and the UBC Okanagan Centre for Heart, Lung and Vascular Health offers safe exercise options for people with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder (COPD).

“Breath is something most of us take for granted, but for those living with COPD-related illness, such as bronchitis and emphysema, breathing is a challenge.” says Health Minister Terry Lake. “I have seen firsthand the impact of COPD on my family members and know that the prospect of exercise can be daunting. Activity can make a difference in a patient’s wellness and it is great that these videos will raise awareness and help those living with COPD exercise safely.”

COPD slowly damages and blocks the airways of the lungs, making it difficult to breathe. People with COPD often experience a long-lasting cough and serious shortness of breath, and many are reluctant to exercise for fear of making their symptoms worse.

The Canadian Thoracic Society recommends COPD patients participate in pulmonary rehabilitation within one month after an acute episode or “flare-up” of COPD. Pulmonary rehab introduces exercise, education and support for COPD patients. Research shows this improves symptom control and health-related quality of life, and reduces hospital admissions and mortality compared with care that does not include such rehab.

These new videos are a useful resource for rural and remote patients who may not have access to a formal pulmonary rehabilitation program, but can work with community rehab respiratory therapists and physiotherapists.

“We are committed to enhancing programs and services for patients with chronic disease,” said Interior Health Board Chair Erwin Malzer. “These videos are a great example of how we can leverage technology to provide support to patients living in communities where access to these programs may be a challenge.”

There are eight videos in the Moving into Health series. The videos are posted on Interior Health’s YouTube channel.

Interior Health’s Breathe Well program worked with professor Neil Eves and Jinelle Gelinas at UBC Okanagan’s Centre for Heart, Lung and Vascular Health to create the videos.

“The overall goal of the Centre’s research is to ultimately improve health and quality of life, and this valuable partnership ensures that the knowledge is reaching the people who will benefit directly from our work,” said Eves, Co-Director of the Centre for Heart, Lung and Vascular Health and Associate Professor in the Faculty of Health and Social Development.

While the videos are designed specifically for people with COPD, they are suitable for people with other chronic illnesses and seniors who might benefit from a safe and effective exercise program developed with a clinical, evidence-based perspective.
COPD is the third leading cause of death in the world and the fourth in Canada. Within Interior Health, close to 10 per cent of residents have COPD, and it is largely underdiagnosed.

The unpredictable and serious nature of flare-ups – when symptoms such as shortness of breath, coughing, and mucous become severe – means COPD patients often must use hospital emergency departments. In fact, COPD is the No. 1 reason a person with chronic disease will be admitted into hospital – in B.C. and across Canada.

This year Nov. 18 marks World COPD Day. To learn more about COPD, visit the Canadian Lung Association.

Interior Health is committed to promoting healthy lifestyles and providing a wide range of quality health-care services to more than 742,000 people living across B.C.’s vast interior. For more information, visit www.interiorhealth.ca, follow us on Twitter @Interior_Health, or like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/InteriorHealth.