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**American Jewish
Joint Distribution
Committee**



COMMUNITY BASED REHABILITATION CENTERS FOR OLDER ADULTS IN ISRAEL



CONCEPT PAPER | ISRAEL

"... older adults are a solid investment and the shift from acute, disease focus to functionality a possibility; one which reaps rewards in a short time frame because functional impairment in older adults is costly in the short term."

PUBLIC POLICY & AGING REPORT, 2016, VOL. 26, NO. 3, 106–110

REHABILITATION FOR OLDER ADULTS

25% of Israel's 65+ population report experiencing a significant problem with their physical functional ability, which has lasted more than six months, and which affects their daily activity. When considering that 7,900 older adult Israelis 65+ break their femur each year, it is no surprise that 1-in-6 older adults 65+, and 1-in-4 from age 75+, have broken a part of their body that affects their daily functioning. Coupled with that, 3.3% of Israeli older adults are diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, and 85% of Israelis aged 70+ live with some degree of arthritis.

When an older adult has a stroke or another type of chronic life event, they will likely face a lengthy road to recovery once they are released from the hospital. Typically, an older adult may be required to enter into a long-term rehabilitative care residence, to regain their ability to function, before they return home. However, the added days and weeks in residential care exposes the older adult to illness, which can complicate his or her recovery. It may also undermine his confidence in his ability to return to living independently at home in the community. Moreover, this strategy is costly to the government, in particular since life expectancy is increasing in Israel.

COST OF CARE

The cost to the individual or (where they cannot afford it,) to the State, of caring for an older adult in a nursing institution, is **\$111,000** per year.

In comparison, for an individual living at home and benefiting from a State funded caregiver through Israel's Nursing Law, the *annual* cost (to the State of Israel) ranges from **\$5,500** (9 hours of personal caregiving weekly) to a maximum of **\$27,700** (30 hours of caregiving per week). In terms of the financial benefit to the State, living at home in the community is 5%-25% of the cost of caring for an individual in a nursing institution.

Community-based Rehabilitation Centers enables a more cost-effective solution for the Government of Israel. The Center provides rehabilitative services on an outpatient basis, allowing the older adult to live independently at home, and ensure that they are suitably rehabilitated to prevent physical and cognitive deterioration and continue living independently at home.

SUPPLY OF REHABILITATION SERVICES

As of January 2019, there were 28 rehabilitation centers (for all ages!) in Israel of which 16 (57%) were in the center of the country (TLV and the surrounding areas). Of the 28 centers, 19 are private facilities. The remaining 9 are split between Israel's four HMOs.

Effectively, an Israeli citizen, who by law is connected with one of the HMOs, will have access to two rehabilitation centers affiliated with his/her HMO. Those in the peripheral areas who are unable or unwilling to pay private fees will not have a rehab center affiliated with their HMO in reasonable distance of their home.

And these rehab centers are not multidisciplinary – they generally only have a physio and possibly an occupational therapist available. Waiting times extend to months, the therapy is limited to a set amount of sessions (10-12).

The current centers are all operating without supervision of the Ministry of Health and without any standards of practice. This situation jeopardizes the welfare of older adults, who may be receiving treatment for serious injuries from a provider that does not follow medical standards.

Notably, none of the centers are specifically for older adults.

It is therefore no surprise that 50% of patients who have had a stroke do not receive any form of rehabilitation – with the other fifty percentage receiving limited therapy.

In response, **JDC-ESHEL is developing the first-of-its-kind rehabilitation centers that will offer, under one roof, a multitude of services and disciplines for older adults who have experienced neurological damage and are in need of physical and cognitive rehabilitation.**

AN INNOVATIVE SOLUTION

In 2019, JDC-ESHEL commenced piloting its newly developed MISGAV model - rehabilitation centers for older adults - in eight locations throughout Israel – seven of which are in the social and geographical periphery (Beersheba, Kiryat Gat, Ashdod, Ramle, Jerusalem, Shfaram and Natzrat Illit), and the eighth in the center of the country (Ramat Gan). The expectation is that following the pilot phase of the MISGAV model, it will be disseminated further throughout the country.

JDC-ESHEL is focused on making community-based rehabilitation for older adults more reliable, widespread and professional by creating multidisciplinary rehabilitation centers that will provide better coverage and by instituting standards and uniform practice.

The community-based rehabilitation centers are a central component in a comprehensive multi-faceted strategy based on supplying accessible, multi-disciplinary rehabilitation and reablement services for older adults in Israel.

The Centers' primary goal is to ensure older adults with neurological, orthopedic and other rehabilitation needs, maintain or improve their level of functional ability. This will enable the individual to improve or maintain their overall wellbeing and ability to live independently within the community.

This will be achieved by providing, within the community, a comprehensive set of person-centered physical and cognitive rehabilitation therapies that are customized in accordance with the needs of the client.

The Centers will serve as a vital link in the overall success of the rehabilitation treatment continuum. They will make it possible to reduce rehabilitative treatment in hospitals and offer optimal rehabilitation results within the older adults' natural environment. This will enable the older adults to return to physical, cognitive, social and professional activity.

When operating at full capacity, the Centers will enable:

- 30 patients to receive treatment at a Center each day
- 80 treatments will be provided each day at a Center (2.7 treatments per patient per day)
- Patients will attend the Centers (on average) twice per week
- 75-90 patients will receive treatment at a Center each week (400-500 per year).

SCOPE OF TREATMENT

Patients will have access to a wide range of comprehensive therapies and related services, including a rehabilitation doctor, speech pathologist, physical therapist, occupational therapist, nurse, geriatrician, nutritionist, and social worker.

The Centers will include space for individual and group therapy, exercise, social activities and medical offices. In the future, the Centers will provide satellite services to patients residing in the geographic periphery of the country.

The Centers will invest in a range of diverse equipment and technologies that may be used for the rehabilitation of older adults. These include innovative electrotherapy devices, virtual reality headsets, pilates beds, elliptical rehabilitation equipment, ultrasound machinery for rehabilitation, and technology for cognitive rehabilitation and for rehabilitating the upper body.

Within the first three years, the Centers will consider expanding the range professional services on offer beyond geriatric rehabilitation, to include:

- Pelvic floor rehabilitation
- Chronic pain treatment
- Offering geriatric and nutritional assessments
- Hosting workshops on healthy living
- Offering a range of activities designed for the prevention of falls.

A CONTINUUM OF SERVICES

The Centers will sign contracts with local HMOs which will ensure that the HMOs cover the cost of the older adults' rehabilitation. JDC-ESHEL has also convinced the Ministry of Health to allocate additional funds for rehabilitation for older adults to the HMOs as an incentive to the HMOs to cover the costs of the rehabilitation at the MISGAV centers.

The Centers will also strengthen ties with local hospitals - Soroka Hospital in Beersheba, and Tel Hashomer and Ichilov Hospital in Central Israel - to ensure that there is a continuum of services from the hospital to the community. Older adult patients that are discharged from the hospitals will be made aware of the services available at the Center in order to continue receiving their rehabilitation once they have returned home into the community. Efforts will also be made to make medical professionals in the region and local municipality health and welfare departments aware of the services of the Centers. This will enable them to direct suitable candidates towards the Centers for rehabilitation.

NATIONAL IMPACT

The successful piloting of this unique rehabilitation model in Israel will ultimately lead to its dissemination throughout Israel – greatly impacting the supply of comprehensive rehabilitation services for older adults in Israel. Enabling older adults to receive a comprehensive range of diverse rehabilitation services in the community will ensure they can live independently, with maximum wellbeing and with dignity, for longer. It also ensures that these individuals will not be dependent on others for their daily tasks – lifting the burden of caring for them from the state and family members.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE EMAIL MARCC@JDC.ORG