



over **30 years** of touching lives
and rebuilding conversation

Aphasia Institute

STRATEGIC PLAN 2014 -17

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Aphasia Institute Strategic Plan 2014 – 2017

This Strategic Plan is based on a scan of the internal and external environment done in the summer and fall of 2013. This plan reflects our understanding of current trends in the health system and the needs of people with aphasia, their families, and people who work with them. It follows and updates certain fundamentals set out in the previous Strategic Plan. It affirms our continuing vision and mission, and rededicates the Aphasia Institute to its basic activities of direct service, research and development, and education and training.

While this Plan will guide our work over the next three years, it is dynamic and will evolve in response to changes in the broader health system and in our Central LHIN community.

Aphasia and the Aphasia Institute

Aphasia is a language problem that masks inherent competence and that most dramatically affects conversational interaction (talking and understanding), as well as the ability to read and write. Aphasia is caused by an injury to the brain -- usually the lasting result of a stroke or brain injury. It can also be caused by other neurological conditions such as brain tumors, head trauma or dementia. Without the ability to participate in conversation, every relationship, every life role and almost every life activity is at risk. With any difficulty in reading and writing, the impact can be devastating. Individuals will likely face barriers in accessing stroke/health-care services and information, and may experience a loss of self-esteem and a profound sense of social isolation.

Unfortunately, there is little public awareness of aphasia. Yet, approximately one in three stroke survivors are diagnosed with aphasia and there are over 100,000 Canadians living with aphasia today. The number of people with this disorder is expected to increase significantly as the population ages. While the risk of aphasia rises significantly with age, more young people are suffering a stroke with aphasia.

The Aphasia Institute is dedicated to serving people with aphasia and their families. Its structure includes:

- **A Board of Directors** that sets direction (mission and vision), establishes values, stewards assets, monitors the effective achievement of goals, and ensures efficient utilization of resources. The Board ensures the plans and obligations of the Aphasia Institute are appropriately carried out through the Executive Director. Committees support the work of the Board

- **Staff with an Executive Director** reporting to the Board
- **Volunteers:** individuals active in program and administration

The Aphasia Institute relies on different sources of funding with the primary support to operating costs being a Multi-Sector Accountability Agreement (M-SAA) with the Central Local Health Integration Network (Central LHIN) to provide direct services.¹ Other sources are the Trillium Foundation for a special project, research grants, the City of Toronto, donations, and earned revenue through training.

The Context of our Plan

As part of our strategic planning process, we conducted a review of issues that will influence our clients, our partners, and our organization in the future. The most salient developments include:

Health Care System Trends

Ontario is in health system transformation. In January 2012 the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care announced its [Action Plan for Health Care](#) to transform the health care system and deal with the demographic challenges as well as the province's deficit. The Plan involved providing new measures to prevent illness, giving Ontarians better access to family doctors and nurse practitioners, and striving to have individuals receiving care in the most appropriate setting. In addition, it put more focus on seniors.

In March 2013 the Ontario government released its report led by the Provincial Seniors Strategy Expert Lead, Dr. Samir Sinha, for creating a health care strategy for Ontario's seniors. The report, [Living Longer, Living Well](#) called for better coordination of services, a patient-focused approach and specific measures to address problems for seniors in their interaction with the formal health care system.

The Central LHIN has developed an Integrated Health Service Plan (IHSP) for 2013-2016 – [Creating Caring Communities: Advancing Excellence in Local Health Care Together](#). Four system directions frame the strategy, goals and measures. These directions are appropriateness of care, access, integration, and person-centeredness. Enablers for these directions are health system funding reform and strategic investments, information technology and information management, health human resources management, and

¹ The current 2011-14 M-SAA is a three-year agreement, which is set to expire on March 31, 2014. As a result, the agreement must be replaced with a new one for a three-year period effective April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2017.

community-based quality improvement plans/performance measurement and public reporting. These latter elements are tools to effect local system changes.

In the IHSP, there is continued emphasis on the 'priorities of impact' which are emergency department and alternate level of care, chronic disease management and prevention, mental health and addictions, and health equity. Health care integration is an increasing expectation for all providers of service with the ultimate goal of improving patient access, coordination and continuity of care.

Stroke and Aphasia

Aphasia is associated with stroke. When brain tissue is damaged by a stroke, aphasia can be the result. It is estimated that one in three stroke survivors are affected by aphasia.

The *Canadian Best Practice Recommendations for Stroke Care* provides up-to-date, evidence-based guidelines for the prevention and management of stroke. The goal is to reduce practice variations in the care of stroke patients across Canada and to reduce the gap between best evidence and practice. In the guidelines, it is stated that *all health care providers working with persons with stroke across the continuum of care should be trained about aphasia*, including the recognition of the impact of aphasia and methods to support communication.

Population and Diversity

Growth, aging and diversity are the population trends that will have significant impact on planning and delivery of health services. The Aphasia Institute is nested in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), the largest urban area in Canada.

- With a population of 1.8 million, the Central LHIN is the most populous and one of the fastest growing LHINs in Ontario. In the adjoining LHIN (Toronto Central) -- in which many Aphasia Institute clients reside -- there are 1.15 million people.
- In both LHIN communities, people over the age of 65 will increase dramatically as they will across Canada. By 2036, nearly one in four Canadians will be age 65 or older.
- Ontario has the most culturally diverse population in Canada -- more than one in four of our residents were born outside the country. Each year over 125,000 newcomers -- more than half of all Canada's immigrants -- come to the province. This leads to great diversity in languages and dialects.
- The area served by the Aphasia Institute hosts communities of people of many ethno-racial, social, linguistic and religious backgrounds. The need for culturally and linguistically appropriate community care services serving these populations will increase. This includes recognition of aboriginal communities, LGBT populations, and other often-underserved groups.

The Board of the Aphasia Institute, having scanned its environment for trends and developments, sets out the following Strategic Plan for 2014-2017:

Our Strategy

OUR VISION

Our vision is a statement about the impact we want to create:

There are no barriers to living successfully with aphasia

OUR MISSION

Our mission is what we do -- the business we're in:

Giving hope to people with aphasia and their families by developing and sharing innovative solutions that reduce language barriers to full life participation

OUR VALUES

Values are our foundation and govern our actions. We strive to reflect them daily. They shape our culture:

- *Respect:* Believing our clients, families, partners, volunteers and employees have capability and competence; recognizing that people with aphasia and their families know the most about living with aphasia; listening to learn; valuing diversity of background and perspective; acting with honesty, candour and in ethical relationships with others
- *Compassion:* Creating a welcoming environment; acknowledging clients' needs and aspirations; demonstrating empathy; striving to empower individuals and families; seeing and appreciating the whole person to better help them to develop their potential and resourcefulness
- *Collaboration:* Working internally and externally towards shared goals knowing results are better when we work together; recognizing that because we are privileged to learn, we are obligated to share; believing that a diversity of perspectives leads to a deeper understanding of issues and enriched knowledge for decision-making
- *Creativity:* Not settling for the status quo; always looking for new ideas; open to trying new solutions; enthusiastic about the creative process to bring value to our clients and to apply our knowledge
- *Excellence:* Believing and demonstrating that "being okay" is not good enough when we have the resources and means to be better and even the very best; creating an excellent organization that inspires trust, a sense of community, personal responsibility, and well-being.

OUR GUIDING FRAMEWORK

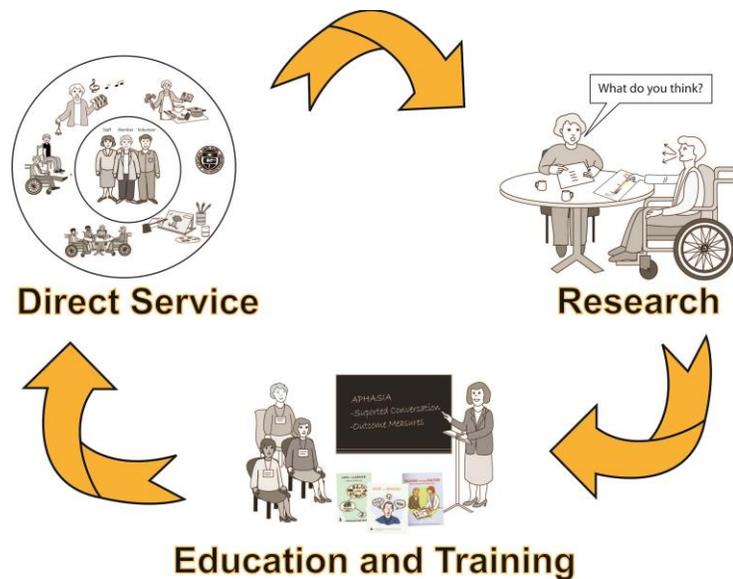
The Institute has a framework, which guides our professional work in supporting people with aphasia, Living with Aphasia: Framework for Outcome Measurement (A-FROM).² We recognize that the client is the most appropriate person for judging “meaningful” life change. We seek to understand the important outcomes of interventions that make a difference to the everyday lived experience of individuals with aphasia and their families.

THE PEOPLE WE SERVE

The Institute serves people living with or impacted by aphasia. We are a source of support to these individuals, their families, the professionals who work with them, and to the wider community. Our work is local, provincial, national and international because the Institute is a recognized source of expertise on communication and aphasia.

WHAT WE DO: The Synergy of Our Work

The Aphasia Institute affirms that there are three core activities in the Institute, which together constitute our fundamental strategy. These aspects of our work create a “virtuous cycle,”³ as each element builds upon and reinforces another.



The core activities are:

Direct service: Funded by Ontario’s health care system, the needs of local clients with aphasia and their families are served by the Institute. We provide an exceptional

² Kagan, A., Simmons-Mackie, N., Rowland, A., Huijbregts, M., Shumway, E., McEwen, S., Threats, T., & Sharp, S. (2007). Counting what counts: A framework for capturing real-life outcomes of aphasia intervention. *Aphasiology*, 22(3), 258-280.

³ A virtuous cycle is a sequence of events that continually reinforces itself through a feedback loop.

client experience through person-centred care. Beginning with initial assessment and then communication support and training, we help individuals with aphasia achieve their "life participation" goals emphasizing re-engagement in life by strengthening daily participation in activities of choice.

Research and Development: Our research projects advance understanding of what is effective in aphasia communication support. We pursue our own research initiatives and conduct research and consultation with others. Research projects test new approaches, tools and products and allow us to evaluate our own programs. The Institute is committed to using evidence in our direct service work and organizational decision-making.

Education and Training: We train families, health professionals, and others in how to work with people with aphasia and to help them overcome communication barriers. We show health care professionals how to apply training techniques in clinical situations such as assessment, counselling, group therapy, and working with clients and their communication partners. Resources, materials and manuals are provided in many of the workshops. All sessions are accredited courses as approved by the Continuing Education Board of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).

These three activities together enable the Institute to make the broadest impact. Direct service, education and training, and research and development are in synergistic relationship with one another.

STRATEGIC GOALS 2014 - 2017

Strategic goals are over-arching and reflect the key focus needed to fulfill our mission and vision.

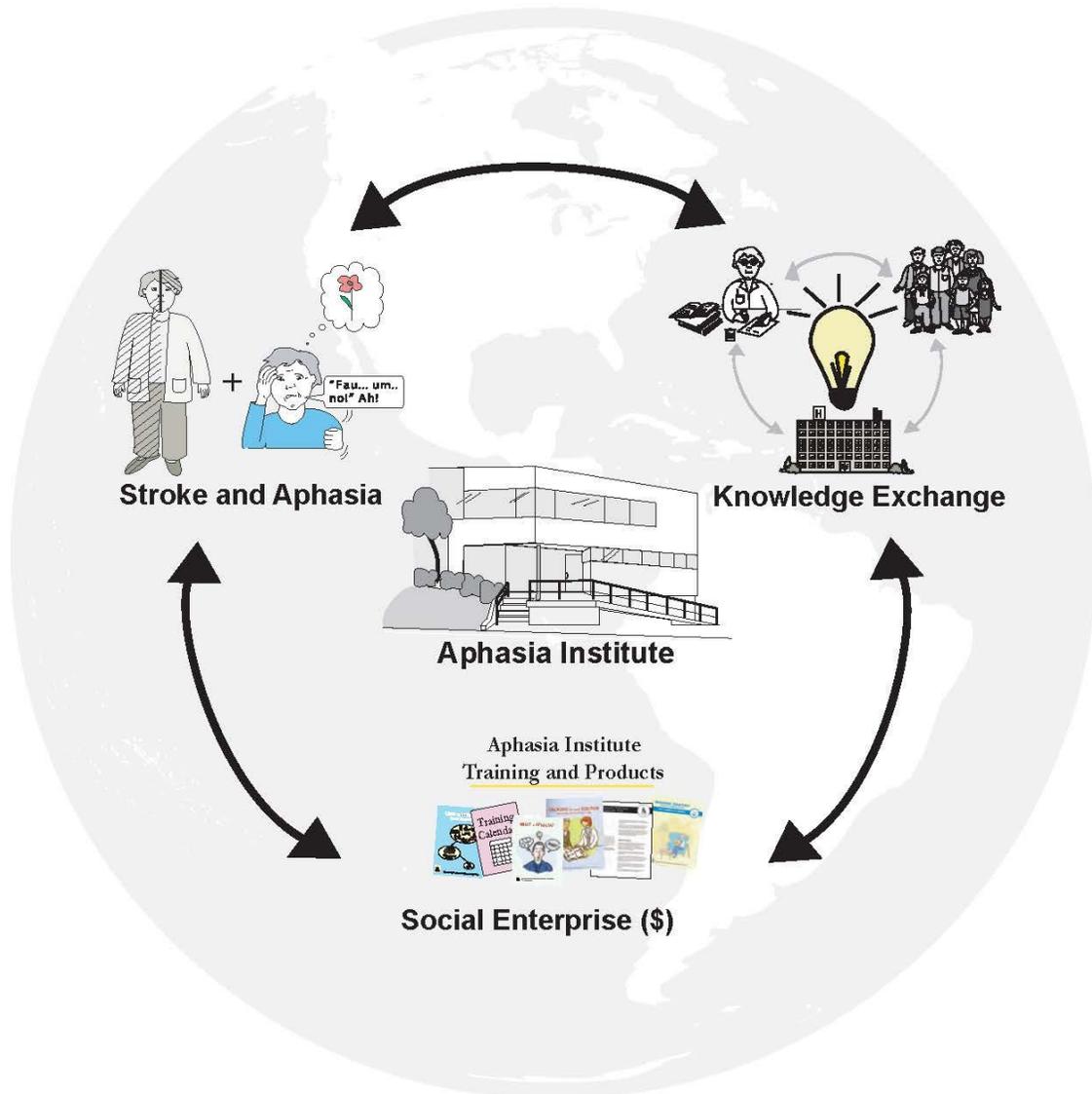
Within the range of possible activities in direct service, research and development, and education and training, we seek to concentrate on what is both responsive to opportunities and challenges and what is requiring "over and beyond" effort to accomplish.⁴

Over the next three years, we will align activities to focus on stroke issues, build knowledge exchange capacity, activities and networks (locally, provincially, nationally and internationally), strengthen our sustainability, and develop social enterprise activities. Each one of these strategic themes is cross-cutting offering opportunities in direct service, education, and research.

⁴ N.B. Focus on strategic goals does not mean that we do not do other things. Rather, these strategic goals provide direction and focus on certain key shifts that must be integrated into our activities for us to be successful in our vision.

Our strategic goals are:

Aphasia Institute Strategic Goals 2014 - 2017



1. Engage with the Stroke Community to Improve Stroke and Aphasia Services

The *Canadian Best Practice Recommendations for Stroke Care* state that all health care providers working with persons with stroke across the continuum of care should be trained about aphasia, including the recognition of the impact of aphasia and methods to support communication. This, along with the focus on families and recognition of ‘conversation’ as a valid intervention target, are pivotal developments in the recognition of aphasia and the need for treatment. The Aphasia Institute will seek to play a pivotal role in disseminating and implementing these recommendations. We will also link to the stroke community locally and regionally so that communication support for people with aphasia is built into the care pathway in the Central LHIN and other LHINs across Ontario.

Note that this Strategic Goal specifically targeting stroke and aphasia is a significant refocusing of our more general strategic goal in the 2010-2013 Plan. In that Plan, we recognized our contribution to the continuum of care and how we can offer communication solutions to local health care providers. In this Plan, we continue to support key communication junctures or essential conversations along the continuum of care and increasingly *in particular with persons affected by stroke*. As through the past period, we will engage with health providers in their settings.

Moreover, we will document what we learn and transfer this knowledge more widely. Others in the health care system face similar issues helping people with aphasia and their families. We expect that specialized tools and training will evolve as a result.

Objectives:

- 1.1 Promote best practice guidelines for aphasia, working with key partners including the Heart and Stroke Foundation and other leading organizations in the stroke community
- 1.2 Liaise locally with lead organizations in stroke care to influence the care pathway, connecting local clients affected by stroke to service (service integration)
- 1.3 Connect stroke care providers to education and training and resources
- 1.4 Develop knowledge and tools from these interventions for wider dissemination
- 1.5 Focus our research on aphasia and stroke.

2. Expand Knowledge Exchange to Promote Quality and Accelerate Learning, Reach, and Impact

The Institute is already an organization fostering knowledge exchange both internally and externally. We already contribute to quality improvement by developing and sharing the practices that lead to best outcomes for the person with aphasia.

We will intensify and profile this aspect of our work to make a greater impact -- capturing and codifying this knowledge, and then ensuring knowledge transfer.

To reach people with aphasia, their communication partners, and the professionals who work with them, we will increase our knowledge exchange through different channels locally, provincially, nationally and internationally.

Objectives:

- 2.1 Develop our quality improvement culture
- 2.2 Build a network of trained contacts in provider organizations in the LHIN
- 2.3 Strengthen linkages amongst caregivers and researchers and others so new models and procedures for living successfully with aphasia are developed and evaluated
- 2.4 Develop networks of organizational partners as channels for Aphasia Institute content locally, regionally, provincially, nationally and internationally
- 2.5 Create more on-line education and training solutions for health care providers, people with aphasia and their families.

3. Develop a Mission-Related Social Enterprise Program to Contribute to Sustainability and Growth

“Social enterprise” involves revenue-generating business-like activities towards a social good. Although we engage in some social-enterprise activities now, we will push this area further. We believe we can generate sustainable revenue based on the value of our products and services in the Aphasia Institute – supplementing traditional fund raising.

We will explore and develop social enterprise through new networks and markets. This may include co-creation of tools and materials with our network of providers and clients. It also may entail developing partnerships with application developers and creating attractive customer subscription packages.

This priority is not without risk, so we will invest in this wisely. Sound business plans will be developed to further advance our social enterprise program.

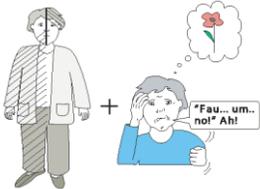
We will be careful to ensure separation of our social enterprise activity from that which is supported by Central LHIN funding, or from activities restricted in any grantor agreement.

Our goal is to achieve financial sustainability and fuel the Institute’s growth so that we can have wider impact. We will continue to seek cost-savings and ways to stretch resources. We will continue to ensure that new programs and initiatives generate -- or are supported with -- sufficient revenues to cover their costs.

Objectives:

- 3.1 Create processes and capacity for innovative solutions, which generate value to meet the needs of people with aphasia and their families, providers, and other organizations. For example, technology-related supports
- 3.2 Learn from other organizations who have been successful in related social enterprise activities
- 3.3 Explore commercial partnerships/collaborations and crowd-sourcing solutions when appropriate
- 3.4 Develop and market training programs and communication tools and products, ParticiPics in particular.

Each core activity of the Aphasia Institute has a role to play in relation to these strategic goals. This chart shows examples:

	Direct Service	Education and Training	Research and Development
<p>Engage with the Stroke Community to Improve Stroke and Aphasia Services</p> 	<p>Partner with local service providers at different stages of the stroke care pathway</p> <p>Include focus on younger population with stroke and aphasia</p> <p>Pursue service integration so Aphasia Institute approaches knit into care pathways utilized by other providers</p>	<p>Provide practical support to the stroke community to achieve best practice objectives locally, provincially and nationally</p>	<p>Continue to focus research on real life solutions for people living with stroke and aphasia</p> <p>In particular, undertake high-quality research on aphasia to provide evidence to support the enhancement of programs, services, policies and care</p>
<p>Expand Knowledge Exchange to Promote Quality and Accelerate Learning, Reach, and Impact</p>	<p>Ensure that input from our clients and others connected with our direct service is included in the solutions that we develop, share and evaluate. This</p>	<p>Continue our internal knowledge exchange program so that staff acquire and maintain ‘knowledge broker’ skills</p> <p>Disseminate Aphasia</p>	<p>Create ventures and partnerships for Knowledge Exchange</p> <p>Ensure better uptake of our research by involving all relevant stakeholders from</p>

	Direct Service	Education and Training	Research and Development
	<p>includes community engagement activities.</p>	<p>Institute knowledge through activities with other organizations and</p> <p>Continue to support and further develop our own practitioner and research networks and a community of practice to grow aphasia expertise in relation to our solutions.</p> <p>Link with other relevant networks to further the above</p>	<p>the start of the research process</p>
<p>Develop a Mission-Related Social Enterprise Program to Contribute to Sustainability and Growth</p> <p>Aphasia Institute Training and Products</p> 	<p>Engage our client and volunteer base in activities that will contribute to the sustainability of the organization – this may be participation in social enterprise or other activities</p>	<p>Pursue training for targeted groups e.g. possibly personal support workers, other Ministries, and private sector entities for earned income through services and training</p> <p>Promote through networks above</p> <p>Extend consulting opportunities – for example, conduct audit processes in settings observing and identifying opportunities for physical environment changes and adjustments to the process to make it easier for people</p>	<p>Contribute to sustainability by maintaining and enhancing our reputation for solutions grounded in lived experience and research</p>

	Direct Service	Education and Training	Research and Development
		with aphasia and the providers who serve them	

ENABLING GOALS 2014-2017

The following activities allow the pursuit of our strategic goals. They are the enabling and necessary supports and processes required *organizationally* to be successful. These ENABLING GOALS have been updated for the 2014-2017 Plan:

4. Develop our Quality Staff and Volunteers in a Team Learning Environment

Leadership in governance, management, program, and administrative functions, both staff and volunteer, moves our organization forward. We will integrate this strategy's components, as appropriate, into every job description along with accountability and necessary authorities.

The Institute will continue to strive to be a great place to work so that we attract and retain high quality staff. This means maintaining a strong team culture where staff can learn and contribute and be recognized.

We will continue to strengthen our volunteer program and the range of opportunities offered. Volunteers enhance many aspects of our programs and services. We will maximize the skills and experience that volunteers bring -- whether they are in positions of governance, program support or advising us on how to increase the professionalism and effectiveness of what we do. We value volunteers as team members and will seek to enhance and better recognize their contributions.

Objectives:

- 4.1 Incorporate components of our strategic plan into every job description with accountability and appropriate authority
- 4.2 Continue to develop opportunities for career growth and contribution for our staff
- 4.3 Develop social enterprise expertise (volunteer and staff) utilizing external experts as required
- 4.4 Further develop the Volunteer Program recruiting, securing a range of diverse volunteers who have the skills and experience to contribute towards our strategic goals.

5. Strategically Communicate and Market the Institute

In this busy environment, strong ongoing internal and external communications will be needed to present the Institute to the community with professionalism, transparency, consistent messaging, and branding.

Robust strategic marketing must support and advance our fundraising, programs, and social enterprise ventures. This involves setting goals and objectives regarding what needs to be accomplished, such as strengthening the Institute's relationship with key publics. Any strategy must effectively reach the target audience, such as using a mix of tactics, including interpersonal communication (face-to-face) and various media. Consideration must be given to:

- Client and market demographics, what their values are and what drives them
- Institute "offerings" and costs or "asks"
- Dissemination channels and what incents them
- Effective use of advertising and public relations which may include tools of blogs, micro blogs (tweets), social media platforms nationally and internationally (Facebook, etc.), videos, podcasts, etc.

Objectives:

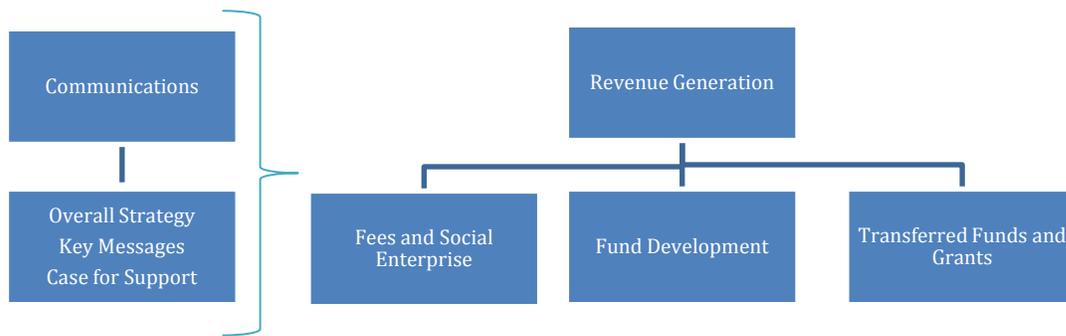
- 5.1 Develop a Strategic Communications and Marketing Plan including ongoing effective internal communications and external communications and marketing support to programs, enterprise activities and ventures, and fundraising. The plan must take into account budgetary considerations

6. Increase and Diversify Revenue

We will continue to prioritize the development of diversified revenue including non-traditional sources so as to build stability. While there is a strategic goal particularly around social enterprise, our efforts to increase our revenue are broader. Revenue sources will include:

- Fees for training and Social Enterprise revenue
- Donations and sponsorships from individuals, groups, companies, and foundations
- Transferred Funds and Grants

This approach can be depicted in its major elements as follows:



We recognize that fund development, in particular, requires a compelling case for support, teamwork to identify and encourage relationships with those who have capacity to give, disciplined implementation of cultivation, solicitation, recognition and stewardship strategies, and strong, dedicated leadership. Our continuing plan and execution includes all these elements.

Objectives:

- 6.1 Implement our integrated revenue development plan that links to our communications and marketing plan. To grow the fundraising net dollars per year, we commit to basic strategies (for example, planned gifts, annual gifts,) and key practices that identify, steward and recognize donors.
- 6.2 Continue to seek core funding from Central LHIN and other LHINs for projects
- 6.3 Pace the funding of Institute priorities to maintain financial sustainability.

7. Develop Efficient and Effective Information Management and Technology

Information management and technology must continue to be utilized and improved to support our vision. The website needs ever-increasing functionality. The site must be fresh and contemporary, consistent with our vision, user-friendly, and have improved search functionality and navigation.

Objectives:

- 7.1 Develop increased Website functionality
- 7.2 Train staff and volunteers in technology tools and information management
- 7.3 Integrate third party solutions such as on line learning and other cloud solutions.

Conclusion

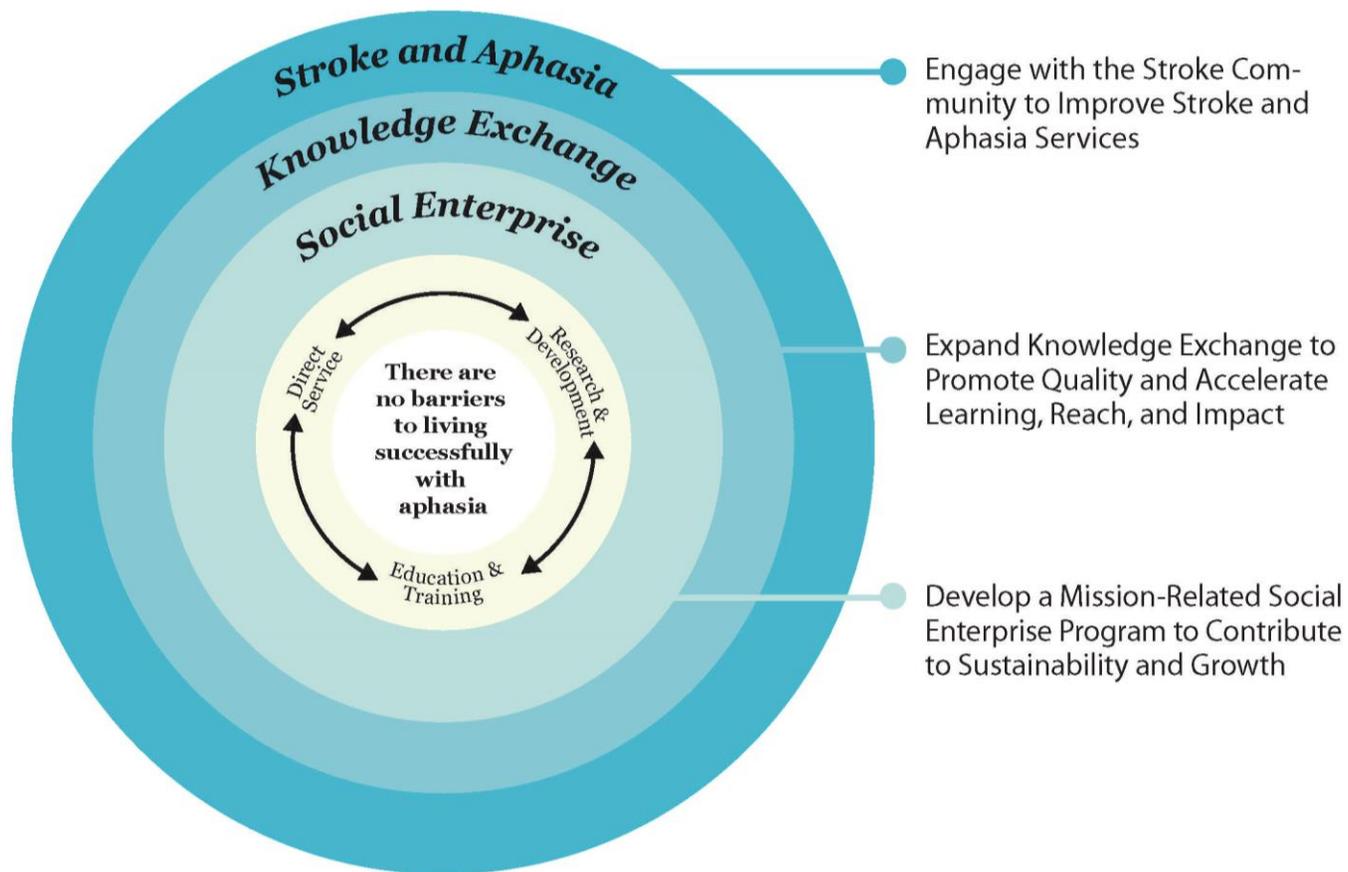
In 2010, we stated that the Strategic Plan would evolve as a result of achieving our goals and responding to new challenges. This refresh of the Strategic Plan builds from the previous Plan but it is focused on current and anticipated opportunities.

We challenge ourselves to increase the impact of the synergy of service, education and research. We will explore opportunities to support sustainability of the Institute.

We look forward to the next stage of our evolution, *giving hope to people with aphasia and their families by developing and sharing innovative solutions that reduce language barriers to full life participation.*

Strategic Goals in relation to Aphasia Institute Programs and Activities

Giving hope to people with aphasia and their families by developing and sharing innovative solutions that reduce language barriers to full life participation



Enabling Goals

- **Develop our Quality Staff and Volunteers in a Team Learning Environment**
- **Strategically Communicate and Market the Institute**
- **Increase and Diversify Revenue**
- **Develop Efficient and Effective Information Management and Technology**

Values

- **Respect**
- **Compassion**
- **Collaboration**
- **Creativity**
- **Excellence**