The two aims of this Charter are:

i. to bring together national associations from around the world, to harmonize efforts in promoting cardiovascular prevention and rehabilitation; and

ii. to document, for the first time, consensus among national associations globally, regarding the internationally-common core elements and benefits of cardiovascular disease prevention and rehabilitation.

The focus of this Charter is on secondary prevention, which has well-established models supported by a robust evidence base. This Charter is visualised to fit within a continuum of care from primary prevention in public health initiatives, through to secondary prevention.
The only proven chronic disease care process that significantly and substantially reduces the mortality and the morbidity (physical and psychological) associated with this disease is cardiovascular prevention and rehabilitation. Despite the proven clinical and economic benefits of cardiovascular prevention and rehabilitation, it remains a chronically-underutilized resource (Candido et al., 2011; Suaya et al., 2007).

The strong evidence base for cardiovascular prevention and rehabilitation is such that any person diagnosed with cardiovascular disease should be offered a comprehensive program, which is respected in equal importance to the medical or surgical interventions they receive following such a diagnosis. For these reasons, proven mechanisms to facilitate universal access for indicated and eligible patients across sexes, age, ethnocultural and socioeconomic diversity should be instituted, such as systematic referral strategies (Grace et al., 2011). Referral to cardiovascular prevention and rehabilitation as a performance measure provides a major step to help facilitate accountability for implementing this quality indicator within processes of care (Thomas et al., 2010).
ACTIONS

Both government and private organizations responsible for the provision of patient care services can no longer deny patients with cardiovascular disease access to cardiovascular prevention and rehabilitation.

We call to action cardiovascular prevention and rehabilitation organizations and established associations around the world to partner and collaborate with those responsible for administering patient care:

1. To establish cardiovascular prevention and rehabilitation as an obligatory, not optional service
2. To support both low-to-middle and high-income countries to establish and augment, respectively, programs of cardiovascular prevention and rehabilitation (adapted to local needs and conditions) to ensure broader access to these proven services

We aim to maintain and grow this consortium through partnership with international organizations, to consider and communicate on-going consensus on evidence-based standards for cardiovascular prevention and rehabilitation.
ORIGINATING ADVISORY GROUP

*T Briffa (AUS), S Bredin (CA), L Carlyle (CA), C Chessex (CA), A Clark (CA), A Contractor (India), P Doherty (UK), G Melo-Ghisi (Brazil), J Harris (CA), S Hinton (UK), A Jones (China), AC Kentner (CA), R Munoz-Sandoval (Mexico), N Oldridge (US), B O’Neill (CA), J Redfern (AUS), S Shanmugasegaram (CA), C Terzic (US) & R Thomas (US).

Primary Writing Panel: J.A. Stone1,2; J.P. Buckley3,4; D.E.R. Warburton1,5; B. Sanderson6,7; S.L. Grace1,8

1 Canadian Association for Cardiac Rehabilitation
2 Libin Cardiovascular Institute of Alberta & University of Calgary, Canada
3 British Association for Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation
4 Department of Clinical Sciences, University of Chester, United Kingdom
5 Physical Activity Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Unit, University of British Columbia, Canada
6 American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation
7 School of Nursing, Auburn University, United States
8 York University, University Health Network & York Central Hospital, Canada

Funding source: Canadian Institutes of Health Research

Peer Reviewed Publication of Charter:
Endorsed by the following organizations:

- American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation
- American Society for Preventive Cardiology
- Australian Cardiovascular Health and Rehabilitation Association
- The Brazilian Group of Cardiopulmonary and Metabolic Rehabilitation of the Brazilian Society of Cardiology
- British Association for Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation
- Canadian Association of Cardiac Rehabilitation
- Canadian Cardiovascular Society
- Cardiac Rehabilitation Association of New Zealand
- Centre for East-meets-West in Rehabilitation Sciences, Department of Rehabilitation Sciences, Hong Kong Polytechnic University
- Chinese Society of Cardiac Rehabilitation
- Iranian Heart Foundation
- Irish Association of Cardiac Rehabilitation
- National Society for the Prevention of Heart Disease and Rehabilitation (India)
- The Saudi Group for CardioVascular Prevention and Rehabilitation
- Sociedad Cubana de Cardiología