

balance

What it's all about.

BC Association for Individualized Technology and Supports for People with Disabilities

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An Open Letter to TIL and PROP Members



I'd like to encourage everyone to participate in the TIL and PROP surveys that you'll be receiving soon by mail.

My name is Roger B. Jones and I've been using the services of BCITS since it was formed—and even before then! There are very few organizations I am aware of that are as dedicated to their membership as TIL and PROP.

I'm sure every one of us has a story about the time our equipment broke down and a technician dropped everything to come fix it. We all want to be self-reliant, but living with a disability often means that we are dependent on technology. It could be environmental controls, a BiPAP machine or a ventilator.

Everything is great when the equipment works, but life can be hell

when it doesn't. It is very reassuring to know that the folks at BCITS are around to provide support.

One of the unique things about TIL and PROP is their sincere desire to engage their users. BCITS may deliver services, but they do so based on our feedback.

Recently I was expressing my frustration about my inability to turn my BiPAP off and on without help. I had a few ideas about what could be done and, before I knew it, the BCITS crew came up with a solution. This is just one example of how BCITS views our relationship as a partnership.

If we all want to consider ourselves as partners in these programs, we need to contribute in a manner that not only helps us fulfill our needs, but also helps the organization to meet those needs and provide support. One of the ways to do this is to participate in a BCITS survey.

From time to time, BCITS conducts a survey that is distributed to all of the membership. The surveys help the organization to understand the needs of TIL and PROP users. They are also important because they help demonstrate to funders that the organization is fulfilling its mandate. In these tenuous economic

times, that's critical for community-based organizations.

I would like to encourage everyone to participate in the TIL and PROP surveys that you'll be receiving soon by mail. They don't take very long, they are anonymous and your participation benefits everyone.

Let's all give a big round of applause to BCITS for their great work and continue to help them help us. ●

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Your Participation Counts



Dear Clients:

Soon you'll be receiving our annual PROP and TIL client surveys in the mail. We're asking new and long-term clients to take a few minutes to "mark" us on our work this past year.

And, we want to let you know we listen. In the articles on these two pages, we give you a few examples of how your feedback from past surveys has helped us to plan services to our clients in both the PROP and TIL programs.

Once we notice a trend in the survey (for example, "we need more RT services"), we can evaluate it as a potential goal and work from there.

The articles also contain some new questions that will help us identify how we can make more improvements.

If you can answer any of these questions, we would appreciate it. And please don't forget to fill out the annual survey as well.

Simon Cox, BCITS Executive Director

1 Questions for PROP Clients

Hello to all our clients and we hope that you have had a good summer.

As "Simon says" in the column to the left, you'll soon be receiving our annual client survey and it's very important to us to hear from you.

These surveys help us to make sure we're meeting your needs and bringing you the best services possible.

We read all the surveys carefully and act accordingly to make changes, institute your ideas and to meet our goal of a client-focused program.

Here are a few examples of changes we've made to PROP services based on your input.

- We have started following up with new clients one week after their initial setup. If you come across a problem after a Respiratory Therapist visit, please give us a call. We are more than happy to help you use your equipment to its fullest capacity.
- New masks have been reviewed and brought into stock, and some masks are being deleted from our inventory
- Students at UBC participated in a project to see how we could enhance our after hours PROP call system. Clients wanted easier access to therapists to resolve issues.

Because of some funding limitations, it is a little more difficult for PROP to operate within our present budget. So, we are seeking your help. We want to find solutions to better manage our assets and supplies, while maintaining our service to you.

We would like to ask you a few questions, listed below, in addition to our annual survey. These questions are aimed specifically at helping us to become more cost-efficient.

Please feel free to offer any suggestions, solutions or advice on these issues.

1. Do you have any suggestions on how we can reduce the cost of our supplies and shipping? Would you agree to having a recommended quantity of supplies allocated to each client based on their needs?
2. As you are all aware, our Respiratory Therapists try to visit every client at least once a year. Do you feel an annual visit is necessary? Would you prefer to call the therapists when you feel you need a visit?
3. Is there a service that you wish PROP provided that it doesn't provide or does not spend enough time on?
4. Is there a service that we do provide, that you feel could be replaced by a more helpful service? ●

IF YOU ARE ALSO A TIL CLIENT, PLEASE ANSWER THE QUESTIONS ON THE OPPOSITE PAGE, TOO.

PLEASE SEE RETURN BOX ON NEXT PAGE

2 Questions for TIL Clients

As a TIL client, your input is of utmost importance to us. The program is here for you, so whether it's input about our day-to-day operations or the future of the program, we need to hear from you.

Every year we send you the TIL survey and, although you don't often see sweeping changes to the program, we do make changes based on your suggestions! Your feedback from last year's survey has helped shape the program in the following ways.

You asked for...more information and manuals on the use and maintenance of your equipment.

We've...included user manuals and information with all new setups. We also have manuals available if you would like us to send or email them for your particular equipment. If you need manuals or information on your equipment, please call us at 604-326-0175.

You asked for...more staff availability and shorter wait times for equipment installation and repair.

We've...cross-trained most of our technicians so they are now able to do repairs for both TIL and PROP equipment. This means that if TIL technicians are busy and a PROP technician is available, they would be able to help you with your equipment service needs.

As you can see, your feedback makes a difference in how we run the program. With that established, it's that time of the year again...TIL survey time! This year's survey is a little different.

Like our PROP survey, we're asking you to put your thinking cap on and answer some questions that will help shape our program over the next few years.

So, in addition to the annual survey you will receive in the mail shortly, we would really appreciate your input on the following questions.

1. When we set up new equipment for you, does TIL do a good job preparing you to use it? If not, how can we improve on preparing or training you (e.g. 1-on-1 instruction)?
2. Like adapting Bluetooth headsets for cell phone access 2 years ago, TIL is always looking for new technologies that we can help our clients access. Are there any devices or technologies that you think TIL should look at including in our services?
3. Since TIL is a province-wide program, do you think it would be helpful for clients if we expanded to include web-based services for equipment troubleshooting? If so, what type of services would you take advantage of (e.g. Skype)?
4. We are also looking for ways to increase efficiencies and conserve spending. One concrete example we have identified is the need to reuse as much equipment as possible. Do you

have access to old equipment that would be useful to other clients? If so, would you consider returning the equipment so that we could prepare it for use with another client? Or are you keeping it as a backup? What type of equipment would you be able to return?

5. If you could get one device or service from TIL that you don't currently have—even if you don't know how possible it is...something really fantastic that would make a big change in your life—what would it be? ●

IF YOU ARE ALSO A PROP CLIENT, PLEASE ANSWER THE QUESTIONS ON THE OPPOSITE PAGE, TOO.

Please send your answers to BCITS by e-mail, fax or regular mail.

Thank you for your feedback!

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balance

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New Vent Circuit

Dear ventilator clients: We have recently introduced a new ventilator circuit to some of you that is a single client use circuit.

As you can see from the picture on this page, it uses a much lighter material for the main circuit line and has a lower profile exhalation manifold than some of you may be used to.

The only line that needs to be cleaned in this circuit is the main circuit line. And, as always, you need to clean your flex hoses and trach adapters which are not shown in the picture.

These circuits can be used for about 6 months or perhaps longer. Because it's a new circuit, we don't know how long they will continue to work for you.

As with any circuit, when you are cleaning please inspect them to

make sure that there are no cracks, pin holes, etc.

For clients that already have these circuits, the feedback has been very positive. They report less pull on the trach because of the lighter material, less conspicuous exhalation manifold, and, in some cases, less noise from the manifold.

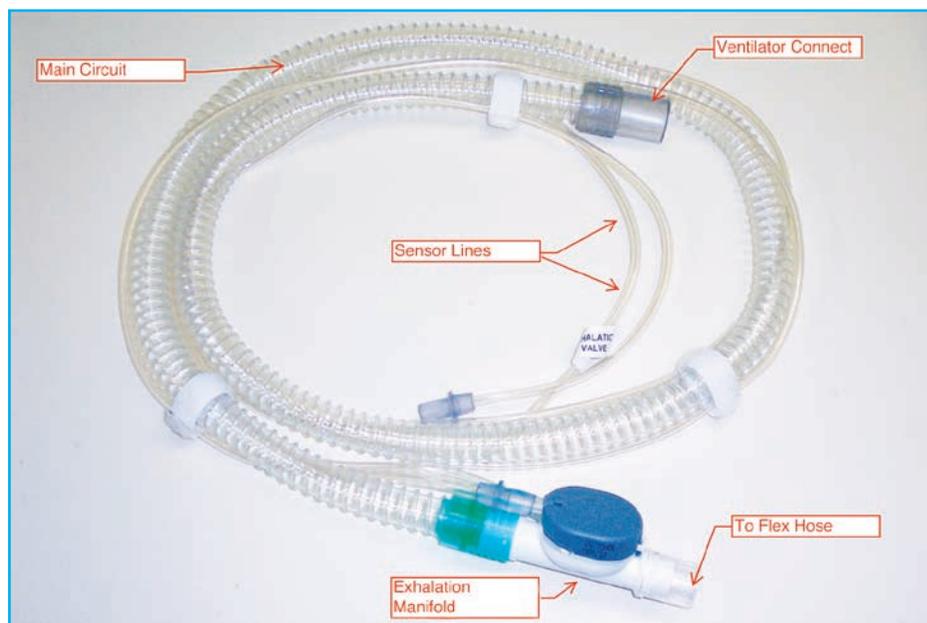
We will be providing these circuits to all our ventilator clients as replacements for the current circuit.

Please give us your feedback when you try them. It's very important to know how equipment and supplies work for you. ●



by Gillian Harney

For clients that already have these circuits, the feedback has been very positive.



Help us to Reduce, Reuse, Recycle & Save

As many of you are aware, economic pressures are affecting all facets of health care, including our finances and budget here at PROP. Because of these financial restrictions, we are asking for your help.

No, we don't want money from you! And your health or comfort is never something we will compromise. However, we would like you to help us by reducing, reusing and recycling your supplies wherever possible.

Here are some examples of ways you can help us conserve resources and save.

Reduce

Look at the current supplies you're using and the amount of supplies. See if there are ways you can make do with less.

Reuse

Please clean and reuse any supplies that you have so they will last as long as possible. Some examples are red rubber suction catheters, mask cushions and ventilator circuits.

Recycle

If you have any supplies that you have not opened or used, please return them to us so that we can recycle them.

Save

If all of our clients found some ways to reduce, reuse and recycle, it will go a long way to reduce our spending on supplies—which is one of our biggest budget items.

We would also love to hear any other tips you have. For example, one of our clients washes the filters for his bilevel unit and reuses them, rather than replacing them when they are dirty. Great reusing!

Let us know what you can do and we'll find some ways to conserve resources together. And we can share our ideas with other clients. Thanks everyone.



Emergency Preparedness During the Olympics

BCITS has always encouraged our clients to have an Emergency Preparedness plan. The goal is simply to "be prepared" in the event of an emergency, so you are not frantically trying to figure out what to do in the heat of the moment. Instead, you follow your pre-determined plan, so things go as smoothly as possible.

With the long-awaited Winter Olympics coming to us in 2010, we recommend that you think about how your Emergency Preparedness plan may need adjustment during the games. For example, has there been any indication that your neighborhood will be operating differently during the Olympics? Are there facilities nearby that will be used for the Olympics, so you will have more traffic flow? Will any roads be blocked off for a period of time?

Maybe you are lucky enough to have plans to attend some of the wonderful events taking place. For those of you with portable ventilators, have you checked your internal batteries to make sure they're operating at full capacity?

Let the Olympics be a good opportunity to review your Emergency Preparedness plan! ●

Roger Desmarais
Biomedical Engineering
Technologist



Q&A

Ask the BioMed

BY SAMIKO GUEST

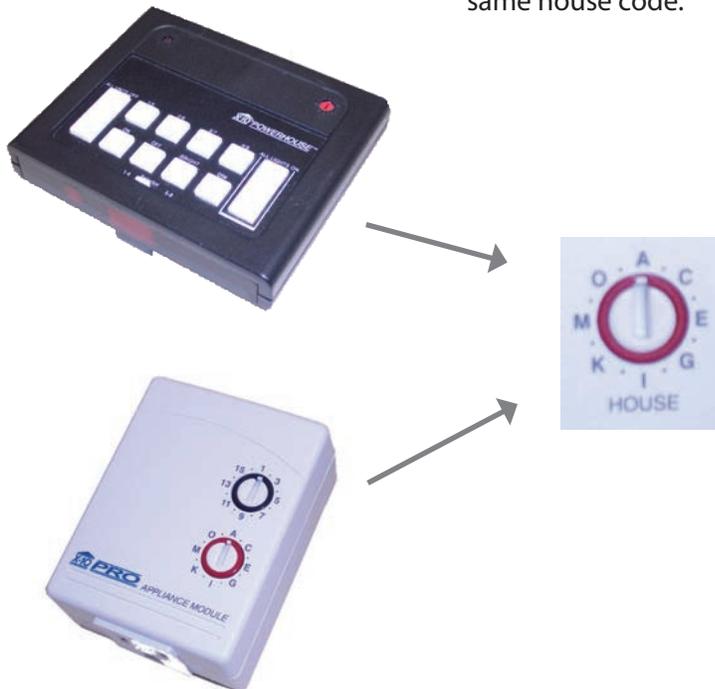


If you have access to control a lamp or a fan, for example, you are using a so called “x-10 technology controlling system.”

X-10 technology has been widely used in home automation systems. It is very easy to set up and can be integrated with the Environmental Control Systems (ECSs) we use at TIL. But it is also one of the most frequent troubleshooting problems our Biomed work with.

Here are two tips to troubleshoot your own system. You may be able to solve the problem yourself, before you call us.

1. The power on your appliance must be turned ON manually and left ON at all times. If the manual switch on your appliance is OFF, you cannot control it with your x-10.
2. The x-10 signal transmitter (black unit) and x-10 signal receiver (white unit) must have the same house code.



More Questions & Answers

Q: My x-10 controlled appliance does not respond at all!

A: Refer to the tips above and correct the set up if necessary. Then:

1. Check to see if all cables are plugged in properly.
2. Remove any objects in front of the transmitter which could obstruct the path of the signal.
3. Plug the transmitter into a different power outlet. It may be causing a phasing problem*.
4. Your appliance may be broken. Plug the device into other outlet to see if it works.
5. If you're testing a lamp, check to see if the light bulb is burnt out.

*Phasing Problem: A typical house carries two different phase electrical circuits. If an X-10 transmitter and receiver are plugged into a different phase electrical circuit, the signal from the transmitter doesn't pass from one circuit to the other circuit easily. X-10 devices work best when they share the same phase circuit.

Q: I have to send signals several times to turn ON/OFF my lamp.

A: It may be a “noise” problem. Some electrical devices may cause noise or static on a power line. Try turning off your devices one by one to see if there is any effect. Some usual noise suspects are your TV, vacuum cleaner, hair dryer, computer and fluorescent lights. You may need to use a different electrical outlet.

Q: My lamp turns ON/OFF by itself!

A: You can try to change the house code. Someone else in your building may be using x-10 devices. ●

On the Web



If you haven't already visited our website, we hope you will. Our site is a two-way vehicle to connect us with our clients: we provide information we hope will be helpful to you and we also want you to ask questions, share information with other clients and keep in touch with us.

On the site, you'll find:

- In-depth information on who we are, our vision for our clients, our services and more
- Resources, publications, and links for clients and family members
- Additional resources specifically for caregivers and health professionals
- Information on how to become a client
- Frequently Ask Questions answered by our Respiratory Therapists or Biomedical Engineers
- Forms to provide an easy way for you to request information from us or provide feedback
- The Client Cafe which is a gathering place where we publish client stories and a way to share information with other clients

Please visit us at www.bcits.org.

Bits & Pieces



We want your opinions—really! Your feedback and ideas, things you would like to see on these pages, questions for our RTs or BioMed Technicians or other staff—are all welcome.

Our goal is to make *BALANCE* as relevant to you as we possibly can, so please keep in touch at info@bcits.org or by calling 1-866-326-1245.

Your email address



Please send us your up to date email address.

We'd like to use email as much as possible to keep you on top of news, equipment bulletins and other updates between *BALANCE* editions. ●

Yes, I Accept Your Invitation To Join BCITS



The BC Association for Individualized Technology and Supports for People with Disabilities (BCITS)
Home of Provincial Respiratory Outreach Program (PROP) & Technology for Independent Living (TIL)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Prov: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Please Check One

Membership for registered BCITS clients

Please mail completed form to BCITS (the cost of postage constitutes your membership fee)

Non-client membership fee

Please mail completed form along with \$20.00 annual membership fee payable to BCITS.

Please mail this form along with any applicable membership fees to BCITS - The Home Of PROP and TIL, 9007 Shaughnessy Street, Vancouver BC V6P 6R9.

Legendair Connections and Your Wheelchair

When using your Legendair on a wheelchair:

Connect purple/black connector



Connect red/black connector



DC light will illuminate on Legendair



When not using your Legendair on a wheelchair:

Disconnect red/black connector



DC light will turn off on Legendair



Remember! Your wheelchair batteries won't recharge your Legendair batteries. You must plug your Legendair into an AC outlet to recharge. ●



Gadgets

BY SIMON COX

We had our Peer Support Show and Tell at George Pearson Centre in September. One of our clients asked about remote operation of lighting. Samiko Guest has a good article in this *BALANCE*. Don't forget to read it.

I decided we should also look at some devices that you can find in stores, such as lighting shops or hardware depots. Here's a profile of one and I hope you are "enlightened!"

One such device is a motion activated light switch. With one of these installed, lights will automatically be turned on and off when you enter and leave a room. And the time intervals are adjustable. This would be a good device for me because I'm

always in trouble for leaving the lights on!

These switches are made by Leviton and are available at Home Depot for under \$30. They require installation, so ask a maintenance person or electrician to help you with this. It's not a big job.

I found another device for turning on other electrical gizmos with a small hand remote. Stay tuned for more!



BCITS Show and Tell

On September 2nd, 2009 TIL and PROP clients, family members and staff met for the annual BCITS Show and Tell at George Pearson Centre. As always, this event was a great success.

