

# Thomson Rogers launches online trauma resource directory

BY JUDY VAN RHIJN  
For Law Times

In response to concerns that almost half of the victims of serious trauma accidents are discharged from hospital without appropriate support, law firm Thomson Rogers has launched a new resource site to allow lawyers, insurance adjusters, health professionals, and accident victims to access vital information on health practitioners.

The new offering at [traumaresourcedirectory.com](http://traumaresourcedirectory.com) is intended to be a free comprehensive listing of all qualified service providers throughout Ontario. It allows health practitioners to upload information about them, including their area of specialization, years of experience, the area of the province they service, and the languages they speak. The directory is publicly accessible at no cost and with no restrictions.

Darcy Merkur, a partner at Thomson Rogers, explains the impetus behind the new service.

"Over the last few years, we would repeatedly get phone calls from caseworkers in motor vehicle accidents, social workers, and discharge planners at hospitals asking if we knew of anyone who speaks a certain language or practises in a particular area," he says. "For example, if you have a French-speaking patient who needs to be discharged in Wasaga Beach, you need someone to inspect the home and give physiotherapy. That's pretty obscure."

Merkur believes people called his firm out of hopes that it could help because there was no other way to figure things out. "There was nowhere to turn and no on-line option. If you do a Google search, you get the Yellow Pages. It might have the address but it doesn't tell you anything."

Merkur's usual response was to circulate an e-mail internally to the roughly 25 personal injury lawyers within the firm. "It's a large internal network," he says. "I would also post e-mails on the Ontario trial lawyers web site. I eventually decided that what would really help was a directory that health professionals could put their information on."

The Thomson Rogers marketing department then took up the idea and set up a Facebook site for the rehabilitation community. The site is searchable in a number of ways, including by location, language, treatment needs, area of specialization, and the age of the patient. There's also a keyword search.

"In developing the project, we recognized that we were not primarily doing it for us," says Merkur. "It's for the health community and hospital workers. It can also be used by insurance companies, other law firms, and family at the hospitals."

Given the wide application,

the firm consulted with a focus group of half a dozen health workers who gave guidance on the information they needed and how the site should look and work. One member of the focus group was Nick Gurevich, executive director of Function-Ability Occupational Therapy Services in Vaughan, Ont. He believes the project is an interesting and innovative concept that he hopes health-care providers will embrace.

"After Thomson Rogers came up with the concept of the directory, I was asked to provide some thought as to how it would operate, who would use it, and who would benefit," says Gurevich. "We brainstormed some ideas and made some revisions to the original concept."

He believes the site can now generate proper referrals from



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community health-care workers. "There is community care after service, but there are significant delays and uncertainties. This

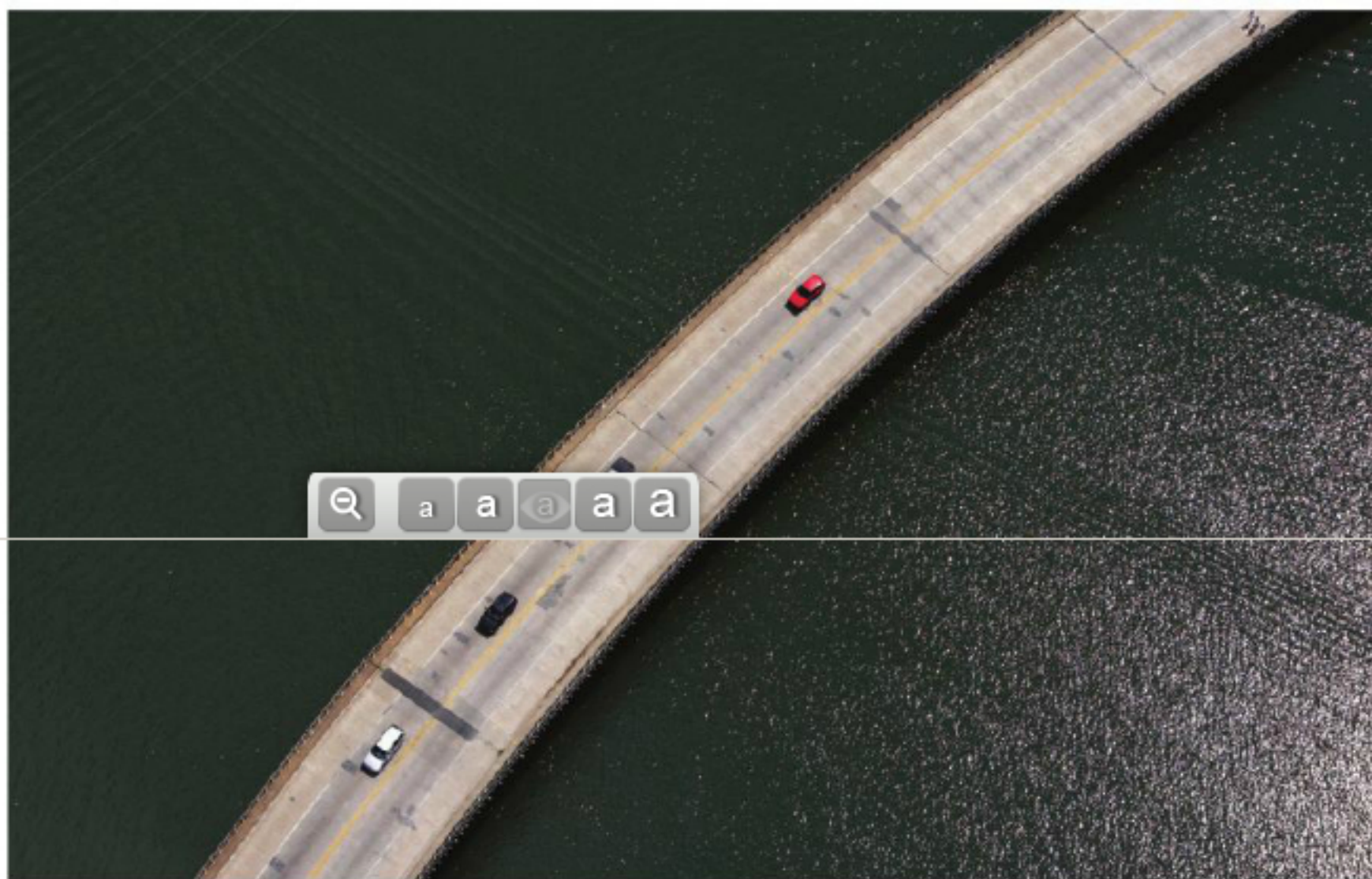
service takes the guessing game out of it. You can co-ordinate the services required before discharge."

Gurevich is aware that social workers, discharge workers, and nurses have very little time and resources to make sure discharges go according to plan. "They are often concerned that they don't know what happens to the patient after discharge. This concept should make their lives much easier. It provides a really good tool to hook up with proper resources and proper care."

Those involved already consider the web site a big success. "Well over 300 people have signed up since the launch," says Merkur. "I've had a number of calls and e-mails from people who have had success finding someone with it and I have found it useful myself. I had a call from

someone looking for a Punjabi-speaking occupational therapist. Normally, it takes a long time to e-mail inside and outside the firm, review the responses, and verify the information. With this tool, I did it in two seconds. The person who got the new client was very grateful and the person looking for the help was very grateful, too."

So far, the firm has concentrated on marketing the web site to health workers. "Until it has scale, it is useless," says Merkur. "But with well over 300 names, it is beginning to build up. We are just starting to bring to the attention of the personal injury bar that there is access to the free service. It will be a valuable tool for all personal injury lawyers and for insurance companies who are looking to assist the insured." **LT**



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