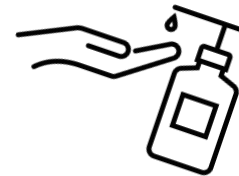




ALBERTA ASSOCIATION ON GERONTOLOGY

Improving the Lives of Older Albertans



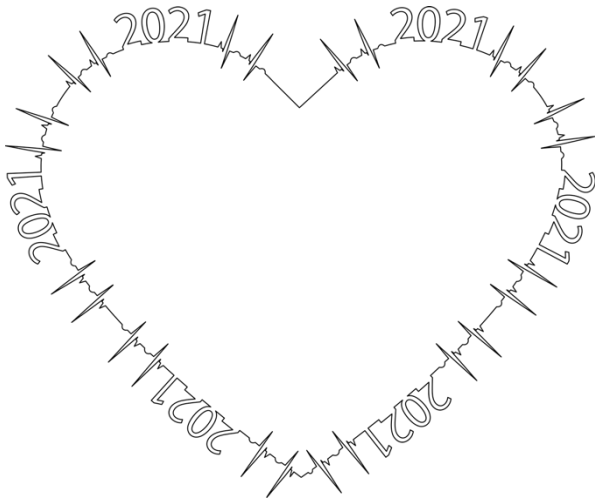
AAGmag

Winter 2021

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The new year is off to a great start with the introduction of a Speaker Series, *Living Well: Enhancing Seniors' Care & Services*, focused on the [Call for Action paper](#) authored by AAG in 2020. These ongoing sessions have been well attended with an average of 175 participants registering for each. Thank you to our speakers for sharing your expertise. More information on the [Speaker Series](#) is available within this newsletter.

Alberta Health is undertaking a review of Facility Based Continuing Care and is working with MNP, a consulting firm to conduct the review. A major initiative by MNP was to host a series of surveys for different categories of stakeholder groups. AAG Board established a working group to complete and submit the organization survey. In addition, we were invited to participate in an interview with MNP providing another great opportunity to share AAG perspective.

Responses were rooted in the [2020 Call for Action paper](#) and could be categorized into two broad areas including the need for investment in infrastructure and human resources and the need for systemic culture change including policy that is truly person centred. Person by extension includes family/caregivers of persons in our Facility Based Continuing Care system.

An email was sent from AAG to all members sharing the link for the survey. We sincerely hope each of you took the opportunity to make your voice heard.

Thank you for your continued support of AAG and the work we undertake in the pursuit of quality care and services for aging Albertans.

Sincerely,

Linda Stanger
President AAG



FEATURE ARTICLE

Sandra P. Hirst RN, PhD, Carole Lynne LeNavenec RN, PhD

“Randy retired from an accounting job that he loved several months ago. He was wondering how to fill some of his spare time, a goal that he found his wife was well able to do. He was fairly good using the computer and certainly knew how to search the World Wide Web. One day, during a random search for gardening ideas, what he called a fun search, he found a site describing lifelong learning. It caught his interest. He wondered, ‘What’s in it for me?’ ”

According to the World Health Organization’s (2020) *Decade of Healthy Aging, 2021-2030*, **active aging** or “*healthy aging is about creating the opportunities that enable people to be and do what they value throughout their lives*” (p. 158). Engaging in meaningful activities has yielded positive health benefits for older adults, which include the expression of creativity, a sense of achievement and/or pleasure, and a feeling of competence (Narushim a& Diestelkamp, 2018; Obhi, et al., 2020). These feelings can be generated by older adults taking advantage of lifelong learning opportunities. Attending school was traditionally perceived as age-based, the intention being to prepare children and adolescents to become knowledgeable adults and begin a career. However, that view has been expanded by a belief in *active aging through lifelong learning* , not only to achieve new career goals, but also as “*a process in which older adults , individually and in association with others, engage in direct encounter and then purposefully reflect upon, validate, transform, give personal meaning to and seek to integrate their ways of*

knowing” (Formosa, 2019, p.3). Instead of ending formal education at a specific age, individuals are encouraged to continue learning throughout their lifetime, whether on their own through self-directed learning, or in adult education courses, continuing education environments, or sociocultural centres referred to as University of the Third Age (U3A or UTA) , or via online teaching-learning groups (e.g., U3A Online: <https://www.u3aonline.org.au/>; Cyber-Seniors: <https://cyberseniors.org/>).

Merriam and Kee (2014) discussed the benefits of lifelong learning from a social capital perspective. They wrote that formal, non-formal, and informal learning activities of older adults promote an active and engaged lifestyle that helps create and preserve community. Asongu and Nwachukwu (2016) described the contribution of lifelong learning to political stability. They identified that continuing education is a useful weapon in the fight against political instability. Similar benefits to lifelong learning have been described by other authors



including (Findsen (2016) and Hafford-Letchfield and Formosa (2016).

Lifelong learning enables older adults to develop their talents to the full, to achieve personal goals, and to obtain enjoyment. Participation in a lifelong learning program has been demonstrated to enhance cognitive performance (Fernández-Ballesteros, Molina, Schettini, & del Rey, 2012). Thang et al. (2019) argued that lifelong learning is becoming more pertinent for older adults as a strategy to help them to adapt to the changes and challenges at their life stage, as well as contributing to their general well-being.

The promotion of lifelong learning among older adults can significantly contribute to positive intergeneration relationships for older adults (Lawton & LaPorte, 2013). Lifelong learning can enhance one's social network and community and, consequently social capital is developed (Boulton-Lewis, 2010). Botner (2018) reported that live webinars provided opportunities for lifelong learning opportunities, such as webinars, had the potential to reduce social isolation for older adults.

The question then arises as to how to promote the interrelationship of lifelong learning and older adults. To create optimal conditions conducive to lifelong learning for older adults, retirement associations and educators need to ask: Why do older adults learn? Where and in

what contexts do they learn? What is conducive to their learning? What are the barriers to lifelong learning? These are only some of the important questions that require answers.

Lifelong learning is both a social and a cognitive process. It can help older adults build in the knowledge, skills, and abilities that they have developed throughout their lifetime. Thus, lifelong learning in older adulthood deserves increased attention in the current discourse of active aging policies.

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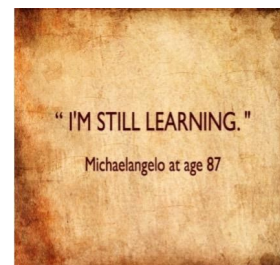
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SCHOLARSHIPS/AWARDS

Don't miss the deadline of **Feb 28th, 2021** to apply for any of our Awards including:

- AAG Bursary for Care Worker
- Alberta Association on Gerontology Student Award (2)
- Edmonton Chapter Student Award
- Calgary Chapter Student Award
- Mary Morrison Davis Award of Excellence



<https://www.albertaaging.ca/awards/>

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

1st Annual Fit Cities Fit Towns Canada Conference (Virtual)

February 24, 2021

This is a reminder that the 1st Annual Fit Cities Fit Towns Canada Conference (Virtual) will be occurring on Wednesday, February 24, 2021.

[Register Now!](#)

On behalf of [Dr. Karen Lee](#) and [Housing for Health](#) in the Division of Preventive Medicine, Department of Medicine, University of Alberta, are pleased to invite you to participate in our **1st Annual Fit Cities Fit Towns Canada Conference (Virtual) on Wednesday, February 24, 2021 at 8:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M. MST.**

Learn about the impact of community environments on health and wellbeing, and innovative strategies to improve our buildings, streets, neighbourhoods and their amenities for health. Presentations and discussions will enhance knowledge and skills for healthier planning, development, design, and construction in our towns and cities provincially and nationally.

The Conference Will Feature

Opening Remarks by Minister, Mayors and Councillors, Alberta Health Services, University of Alberta, and Other Invited Guests.



Two international/national keynotes, and discussion panels:

Keynote 1 - Improving Social Connections in our Communities - Nadha Hassen, MPH, HBSc (Architectural Design), Vanier Canada Graduate Scholar, Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change, York University; formerly at Wellesley Institute, Public Health Ontario, and Urban Health Solutions at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto

Keynote 2 - Improving the Public Realm for Health and Well-being - Jeffrey Shumaker, AICP, Director of Urban Planning at Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG); former Chief Urban Designer, City of New York

Networking Opportunities with participants from different fields including planning, architecture, development, health, academia, non-profit, private sector, government, and community.

Professional Development Credits:

- 4.00 Professional Development Credits (PDC) from the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA)
- 3.00 Professional Development Hours (PDH) from the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors towards the Continuing Professional Competencies Program (CPC) using the CPC Code CPC-2021-002
- For other professional development credits/continuing education credits, such as for Planners, Architects, Physicians, Other Health Professionals, etc., please check with your respective associations/accrediting bodies about counting Conference attendance as Self-Directed or Unstructured Learning Hours.

Should you have additional inquiries please contact us at: hforh@ualberta.ca

LIVING WELL: ENHANCING SENIORS' CARE & SERVICES" SPEAKER SERIES

Last session - February 25, 2021

Featured speakers will offer an overview of the core areas of the AAG's 2020 policy report, "[Older Albertans Living Well](#)". An exciting opportunity to hear from Seniors' wellness thought leaders from across the province. Sessions will be held via Zoom from 12:30 pm-1:00 pm for 7 weeks on Thursdays starting January 14th, 2021.

[Register](#) for the next part of the Speaker Series on Thursday, Feb 25th.



View the AAG Living Well Speaker Series Videos:

- [Living Well in the Community](#)
- [Living Well in Supportive Housing](#)
- [Living Well in Long Term Care Centres](#)
- [Living Well with Restorative Care](#)
- [Living Well with Dementia](#)

Upcoming Webinars Hosted by Early Onset Dementia Alberta Foundation

March 11, 2021

EODAF is excited to host the upcoming Webinars in the next 6 weeks.

- Mar 11th Ambiguous Loss - Sarah Kares Pilgrims Hospice

Please view attached the poster with Information for Feb's Webinars. Contact rep@eodaf.com to register.

50th Anniversary Annual Conference of the British Society of Gerontology

July 7–9, 2021

Ageing Past, Present and Future: Innovation and Change. Following the continuing uncertainty of the pandemic development, the BSG 50th anniversary annual conference is going online.

Registration is now open, for more information please visit the [website](#).

CAG2021, *Hindsight 20/20: Looking Back for a Vision Forward in Gerontology.*

October 21-23, 2021

Toronto, Ontario (or virtually if necessary!), to celebrate 50 years of the Canadian Association on Gerontology. Call for Abstracts in January 2021!

[CAG2021](#)

CAGP-CCSMH Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) October 29-30, 2021

The Canadian Academy of Geriatric Psychiatry (CAGP) and the Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health (CCSMH) are pleased to announce that the Call for Abstracts for the CAGP-CCSMH Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) is now open!

The theme of this year's meeting is: *Geriatric Psychiatry in Challenging Times: Embracing Opportunities for Advocacy, Inclusion and Innovation.*

More Information: <http://www.cagp.ca/2021-ASM>

IFA 15TH GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON AGEING WILL BE HELD VIRTUALLY AND IN PERSON. November 9-12, 2021

[Register now](#) to join together – in person or virtually – with industry leaders, speakers and engage in one-on-one interaction with other industry peers in Niagara Falls, Canada or from the comfort of a home office.

I'm going, are you?

- [Conference from 10 to 12 November 2021](#)
- [Pre-Conference on 9 November 2021](#)





COMMITTEE REPORTS

Alberta Association on Gerontology's (AAG) three-year strategic plan for 2020 -2023 identifies three major goals and numerous priority activities under each goal.

GOAL 1: Further Refine Governance and Operational Infrastructure of the Association.

We continue to meet via Zoom or email on a monthly basis and it is a strategy that enables us to meet our identified deliverables for this current year. We have received Board approval for three policy documents: Terms of Reference for the Executive Committee, Orientation to the Board, and Confidentiality. Currently we are completing two draft policies (Document Retention and Permission to Record) for later submission to the full Board.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sandi Hirst, Committee Chair

GOAL 2: To support the creation of forums and opportunities for policy discussion and development to improve the quality of life of older adults by collaborating with other stakeholders and the community at large.

AAG Speaker Series Underway

One of AAG's Goal 2 strategies for 2020/21 was to hold a series of 7 rapid noon hour presentations on themes from the report *Older Adults Living Well: A Call to Action to Enhance Care and Services*. Our objective is to share AAG's key policy directions and recommendations with members and others who may be interested and begin a dialogue on priorities. Some of our sessions so far have also included experts who provided highlights of the innovations and progress since the report was published in September 2020.

Please join us for the remaining session on February 25th!

Respectfully Submitted,
Lynne Mansell, Committee Chair



GOAL 3: Increase the Visibility and Profile of AAG.

This is a friendly reminder that your Alberta Association on Gerontology (AAG) Membership is due for renewal as of **April 1, 2021**.

AAG is a province-wide multi-disciplinary association that seeks to improve the lives of older Albertans. In the spirit of collaboration and open communication, AAG enhances the lives of older adults in Alberta by supporting research, influencing policy and promoting the exchange of knowledge and best practice among the public, experts, service providers and government. In 2020/2021 there will be opportunities to attend networking, policy panel and educational events.

You can also download the membership form from our website at:

<http://www.albertaaging.ca/membership/>

RESOURCES

The Decade of Healthy Ageing: A UN initiative

The “announcement of the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing sends a clear signal that it is only by working as one, within the United Nations system and with governments, civil society and the private sector, that we will be able to not only add years to life, but also life to years,” said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization. WHO and UN partners are seeking inputs from all interested stakeholders to help build a collaborative platform where all knowledge on ageing can be accessed, shared, and produced in one place by anyone, anywhere in the world.

Gerontechnology, 19, (4) has been published.

The issue contains six original research papers, one review paper, and one case study.

Access at Gerontechnology.org



Action Plan: Building a healthier future for First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples

CIHR and IIPH highlight the progress accomplished on the [Building a healthier future for First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples Action Plan](#) over the past year, while recognizing that much remains to be done. See the [Progress Update](#)

Women's College Research Institute launches Intersectionality Module

In [The Health Researcher's Toolkit](#) a series of seven interactive e-learning modules, focuses on the integration of sex and gender in health research. The modules are designed to benefit both experienced and emerging researchers across a range of disciplines, from medical sciences to social sciences and everything in between. A new eighth module, [Intersectionality as a Research Lens: A Pathway to Better Science](#), was launched, which explores what intersectionality means, how it shapes a person's lived identity and why it's relevant.

CHAIN - Contact, Help, Advice and Information Network

An online international network for people working in health and social care. For more information on CHAIN and joining the network please visit website: <http://www.chain-network.org.uk/>. Their collection brings together [NIHR research relating to dementia](#). The Alerts included in this collection are:

- Informal dementia carers had to make difficult decisions about paid care during COVID-19
 - People with dementia from ethnic minority backgrounds face extra barriers in accessing care
 - Careful phrasing of requests by hospital staff could help people with dementia accept care
 - Loneliness in people with dementia is linked to social isolation and depression
 - People with mild memory problems are left in limbo between health and dementia, and need help to make lifestyle changes
 - Most people caring for relatives with dementia experience loneliness
 - Occupational therapy at home may benefit people with dementia and their careers
 - Working may improve quality of life for carers of people with dementia
 - Loneliness, but not social isolation, predicts development of dementia in older people
 - Training programme to improve communication between staff and patients with dementia in hospital shows promise
 - A less healthy lifestyle increases the risk of dementia
 - Goal setting can help people with early-stage dementia improve function
 - Dementia Care Mapping: Care home managers and staff need more support to improve care
-



Deaf & Hear Alberta

The Step Ahead program connects isolated deaf and hard of hearing seniors with volunteers for friendly conversation and learning opportunities. Deaf & Hear Alberta also offers classes in: Peer-to-Hear, Lipreading from A to Z, American Sign Language classes, and Sound Advice workshops/webinars. For further details, please visit their [website](#).

What is GBA+?

GBA+ (Gender-Based Analysis Plus) is an analytical process used to assess how diverse groups of women, men, and gender diverse people may experience policies, programs, and initiatives. We all have multiple characteristics that intersect and contribute to who we are. GBA+ considers many other identity factors such as race, ethnicity, religion, age, and mental or physical disability and how the interaction between these factors influences the way we might experience government policies and initiatives.

The course is designed as a basic introduction to GBA+. You will learn to define the key concepts of GBA+ and recognize how various identity factors can influence the experience of federal government initiatives. You will learn to identify how GBA+ can enhance the responsiveness, effectiveness, and outcomes of federal government initiatives while applying some foundational GBA+ concepts and processes.

For more Information: [GBA+](#)

Mental Health Commission Canada

In Canada, most of us are very well aware of the physical challenges of working through the winter. Some of us still shovel driveways or bundle up to go to work. We also need to consider the attention we rarely give our mental wellness.

The Mental Health Commission of Canada's (MHCC's) new [Mini-Guide to Help Employees' Mental Health Through Winter](#) offers employers a roadmap to wellness during the chilly season.



CHAPTER REPORTS

CALGARY REPORT

The Calgary Chapter AAG was pleased to host an event on January 11, 2021, titled “[Careers Working with Seniors: Diverse, Enriching, Meaningful](#).” There was an impressive response to our virtual discussion forum, with almost 30 student participants from diverse backgrounds such as social work, nursing, psychology, and medicine, among others. Trainees attended to explore the breadth of opportunities that await upon graduation from an aging-related area of study.

The panel comprised members of the Calgary AAG Chapter who are in different stages of their careers, and who offered personal career experiences and insights. The discussion generated enthusiasm as well as curiosity to learn more and to get involved, such as through volunteering or part-time employment to gain hands-on experience working with older adults.

AAG membership was promoted and following the event we received several inquiries about student representation on the Calgary Chapter Board. The night ended with virtual door prizes, and a buzz of excitement about a future that will make a difference in advocacy, health, and social well-being for this population.

Safia Khalfan

EDMONTON REPORT - no report submitted.



ADVOCACY THINKING AND ACTION

Steps to effective advocacy

1. Step one: Ask, don't assume.
 2. Step two: Check your emotions.
 3. Step three: Define the issue.
 4. Step four: Collaborate and listen.
-

Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG)

The 11th session of the OEWG, a UN working group that meets in New York regularly, is expected to take place from **March 29 to April 1, 2021**. Its mandate is to:

- examine existing international framework in relation to the human rights of older people,
- identify gaps and how best to address them, including through considering the possibility of new human rights instruments,
- consider and report on what should go into a new international legal instrument on older people's rights.

Visit the website: [OEWG](#)

You can also visit the website of the [Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People](#).