



AAGmag

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ALBERTA ASSOCIATION ON GERONTOLOGY

Improving the Lives of Older Albertans





TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE	2
FEATURE ARTICLE	5
NEWSFLASH	9
CONFERENCES	13
RESOURCES	13
RESEARCH READING	17
COMMITTEE REPORTS	17
ADVOCACY THINKING AND ACTION	21





In October and November, I attended Healthy Aging Alberta and the Alberta Association Gerontology's Healthy Aging Alberta Summit in Calgary. The 2023 Canadian Association on Gerontology (CAG2023) Community EngAGED Teaching, Research & Practice Conference in Toronto, and the Canadian Centre of Caregiving Excellence Canadian Caregiving Summit Working Together in Ottawa. The need to activate people in communities to improve the healthy aging experience of older Canadians and their family caregivers was a common theme across all these conferences and the new Healthy Aging Canada collaboration between the AGEWELL and the Canadian Frailty Network that was showcased at CAG2023.

I really realized how innovative the Alberta Association on Gerontology has been. Under the leadership of Vivien Lai and Linda Stanger, the AAG held the VISION 2030 for Seniors Services Symposium in November 2019. In 2022 Vivien Lai and Marlene Raasok led the Futures Policy Forum 2022-2024: Transforming Healthy Aging focused on Supporting Albertans to be healthy and active in their community, with an improved quality of life, and they are engaged, empowered, and enabled to live in inclusive communities with social connectedness and healthcare access. Vivien emphasized that moving from a focus on congregate care to policies that support healthy aging in communities is a culture shift that will take about 10 years of focused advocacy to ensure that the culture shift to Healthy Aging happens. In 2022 and early 2023 we held a series of eight webinars to raise awareness of the elements associated with quality of life. Then, in December 2022, we held an interdisciplinary Think-Tank on the Seniors Workforce: The Conditions of Work are the Conditions of Care and Service. The keynote by Dr. Carol Estabrooks on Creating a Positive Workforce Culture is well worth watching <https://albertaaging.ca/think-tanks/>.

Next steps include work on 1) Advancing technology as a game changer enabling care, services, and community capacity and 2) Revisiting the Workforce Think-Tank recommendations one year later. Fortunately, we are moving forward with Vivian Lai's vision.



Kelly Baskerville was awarded the Margery Boyce Bursary At the Canadian Association on Gerontology Community EngAGED Teaching, Research & Practice Conference in Toronto, Kelly is a member of the

Alberta Gerontological Nurses Association and the Alberta Association on Gerontology. Notably Dr. **Sherry Dahlke**, Kelly's Masters Supervisor also won this award. #CAG2023.

At the Canadian Centre of Caregiving Excellence Canadian Caregiving Summit, Working Together in Toronto our Alberta Association on Gerontology President Dr. Sharon Anderson and Dr. Jasneet Parmar Professor in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Alberta received the Research Excellence Award for their leadership in research that supports our national understanding of the impacts of care and caregiving. Their Caregiver-Centered Care Education for the Healthcare Workforce is available Free online at www.caregivercare.ca

Sharon Anderson
President, AAG



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Exploring Health Care Aides' Perspectives on Work Life in Long-Term Care

Heather A. Tomlinson, M.Sc.(A), CGeront., R.SLP
Master of Arts in Leadership candidate, Royal Roads University

An overview of the master's thesis research study Exploring Health Care Aides' Perspectives on Work Life in Long-Term Care is presented in this executive summary. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought much needed attention to the work-life conditions of health care aides (HCAs), who form the largest group of health care workers in long-term care in Canada (Chamberlain et al., 2019; Estabrooks et al., 2015; Estabrooks et al., 2020). Despite the significant role of HCAs, research on LTC often excludes HCAs' perspectives (Estabrooks et al., 2020; Hewko et al., 2015), thus highlighting the need for this study.

Aims: This study sought to address the gap in research and promote positive change in work life for HCAs. By collaboratively investigating HCAs' work life and ways to enhance it, a by-product of this study is the potential to positively impact the quality of resident care in the long-term care context.

Research Questions: The study focused on the following questions:

***Main Inquiry Question:** How can we improve health care aides' work life from their perspective?

***Subquestions:**

1. What do health care aides envision as their ideal work life?
2. What are the current realities of health care aides' work life?
3. How can the work life of health care aides align better with their ideal vision?

Partnering Organization: The research was completed at a large long-term care facility in British Columbia that provides essential continuing care services for adults with a variety of medical conditions.



Methodology: A participatory action research methodology (Reason & Bradbury, 2008) was used. HCAs played an active role in identifying recommendations. As well, an appreciative inquiry stance (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005; Lipmanowicz & McCandless, 2014; Stavros et al., 2018) informed the development of the focus group questions. A virtual focus group of 10 HCAs participated and shared diverse insights. Thematic analysis of HCA responses was completed to derive key findings and inform the conclusions. Ethical considerations ensured participant well-being and privacy. I undertook this inquiry as an outside researcher; therefore, there were no power-over issues with the HCA participants.

Findings and Insights: The findings of this study encompass demographics, including participant gender, age, cultural background, and work tenure. Thematic analysis revealed five key themes: (a) medically complex resident care, (b) personal safety at work, (c) communication with leadership, (d) staffing concerns, and (e) training needs.

Conclusions: The research conclusions highlight the need to enhance supports for providing care to medically complex residents, prioritizing personal safety in the workplace, improving communication with leadership, refining staffing allocation strategies, tailoring training for HCAs, and promoting continuing education.

Recommendations: It is recommended that the partnering organization consider implementing initiatives to enhance HCAs' work life, such as strengthening supports for delivering complex resident care, prioritizing employee safety on the job, enhancing communication channels with leadership, improving staffing, customizing training, supporting employee well-being and work-life balance, and establishing a feedback mechanism.

Implications and Next Steps: Implementing several of these recommendations requires advocating for additional funding,



especially as long-term care (LTC) in Canada faces historic and chronic underfunding. This summary, along with recommendations, was shared with the leadership of the organizational sponsor and the Office of the Seniors' Advocate for BC. The partnering organization may also wish to share this summary with the Executive Director of Operations as well as the Director of Building Services given that focus group participants expressed concerns about their personal safety coming to and leaving their workplace as well as within the workplace.

With additional funding, many of these recommendations could significantly improve HCAs' work-life experiences, care quality, and facility performance. Collaborative efforts with policymakers are crucial to realizing these improvements and enhancing both HCAs' well-being and resident care.

These recommendations serve as a guide for HCA participants, leaders in LTC, and the organizational partners aiming for meaningful change within the LTC sector. Implementation of these recommendations will contribute to creating a more supportive and fulfilling work environment for HCAs and demonstrate a commitment to ensuring a high-quality work life. The application of this research extends beyond the immediate organizational context. The findings and recommendations can be shared with other LTC facilities and policymakers and can be used for promoting evidence-based decision-making and potentially influencing policy development in the broader health care sector. By addressing work-life concerns and enhancing the well-being of HCAs, this research contributes to the creation of a more sustainable and person-centred LTC system. Ultimately, if implemented, these recommendations will also positively impact the quality of care and residents' well-being. It is virtually impossible to have one without the other!

"The conditions of work are the conditions of care"
(Armstrong et al., 2020, p. 7)

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- Reason, P., & Bradbury, H. (2008). *The SAGE Handbook of Action Research* (2nd ed.). <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781848607934>

Research Excellence Award – goes to leaders in research whose academic achievements have supported our national understanding of the impacts of care.



WINNERS!



Drs Jasneet Parmar & Sharon Anderson.

Dr. Parmar is a professor of family medicine at the University of Alberta, with 30+ years of expertise in seniors' care. Dr. Anderson is a family caregiver and the research coordinator at the University of Alberta's family medicine department and the president of the Alberta Association on Gerontology.



On December 10th, Human Rights Day, the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People (GAROP) launched a petition - 'IT'S TIME to Age With Rights.' They are on a mission to rally support around the world and urge the United Nations and its Member States to start drafting a convention on the rights of older people.

Join in advocating for change! Sign and share the petition, and let the world know that older people should no longer be invisible, and that Member States need to take action now. Here's the link to sign <https://www.change.org/AgeWithRights>. Spread the word, rally your networks, and let's collect as many signatures as possible!

Margaret Young - www.ageknowble.com

There are changes to the AAG Scholarships and Awards this year as a result of our organizational structure changes approved at the last AGM as well as recommendations from the AAG Culture Change project! Deadline for applications and nominations will be the end of March, successful scholarship/bursary applicants and award nominees will be announced at the AGM June 2024. *Watch the AAG website in early in the new year for further information and details on applications and nominations.*

Scholarships/Bursary

Changed this year!

Provincial Graduate Student Awards

This year the Alberta Association on Gerontology Provincial Board is pleased to sponsor two awards to be given to graduate students in Alberta who have an interest in any aspect of aging. The award is to assist with costs associated with coursework, research or attendance at a workshop/conference. One will be for students enrolled in a Master's program, the second for a student enrolled in a PhD program. Each scholarship will be \$1000.00.

Health Care Aide Student Bursary

The Alberta Association on Gerontology Provincial Board is pleased to announce that we will offer our Health Care Aide Student Bursary for a second year. We will be awarding one bursary of \$1000.00 to an individual currently enrolled in or accepted to a licensed Health Care Aide certificate program in Alberta.

Awards

Mary Morrison Davis Award

Mary Morrison Davis was born in Alberta and lived and worked in the province for most of her life. She was a professional social worker with veterans in Edmonton and is recognized as a pioneer in gerontological services. After her death, the AAG Board decided to rename its Award of Excellence the Mary Morrison Davis Award in recognition of this exemplary champion of aging and older people. The purpose of this award is to recognize an individual who has made

an outstanding contribution to the Alberta Association on Gerontology (AAG) or to the field of gerontology. The recipient receives a certificate and Honourary Life Membership in the AAG.

Vivien Lai Change Maker Awards

New this year!

New this year are the Vivian Lai Change Maker Awards, one of the recommendations from the Alberta Association on Gerontology's (AAG) Future Policy Forum/Culture Change Project and Stakeholder Collaborative Committee. Vivian Lai had a long career with the Alberta Government in planning and policy development that shaped the continuing care system. She worked to ensure that Alberta's Continuing Care System focused on quality of life for staff and Albertans needing care. She was a committed and influential member of AAG, having served as President of the Edmonton Chapter and the Alberta Board. Vivien was a visionary leader on the Alberta Association on Gerontology's (AAG) Future Policy Forum/Culture Change Project and Stakeholder Collaborative Committee initiatives where she sought to foster a culture and community conducive to change. Her contributions will have influence on the evolution of continuing care and health aging in Alberta, as well as on those individuals who had the honor of working along side her on many projects and initiatives.

There will be two change maker awards open for nominations of individuals or teams to recognize merit in support of Alberta's transformative journey. The awards are focused on priority themes for transformation

Award 1: Service Delivery Innovation Innovations should address one or both of the following:

- Implementing Culture Change for person-centered practice or delivery, focused on meaningful engagement with older Albertans making a difference in the individual's quality of lived experience, appreciating differences, and creating an

- age positive culture including integrating family caregivers into practice
- Developing new staffing or education models that create both quality of life for individuals & family care partners and work with meaning for staff and/or expand education programming closer to students in collaboration between educators and providers

Award 2: Community Focused Engagement & Service

Development Initiatives should address one or both of the following:

- Movement from a focus on inputs (e.g. health system, payers, buildings and clinicians) to a focus on people in communities
- Embrace cross-sectoral actions as key to integrated community systems and connections that enhance access to community services

Other award criteria in both categories:

- Demonstrate collaborative engagement—cross-sectoral initiative; multi-party implementation; citizen engagement
- Development based on knowledge mobilization as well as integration of evidence and experiential insights
- Clarity of intent and impact measures
- Nominees should be front-line transformational leaders or service and support/service development teams, rather than senior organization administrators
- Nominees from rural as well as urban settings, small organizations as well as large are encouraged

Award recipients will receive a plaque and be featured in the AAG Website “News and Views”. Nominees who are not recipients will receive a certificate of recognition.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen Hunter, Chair AAG Scholarship Committee

CONFERENCES



36th Global Conference of Alzheimer's Disease International (hybrid)
Dementia: Insights, Innovations, Inspirations.
Krakow, Poland
April 24-26, 2024

The Congress on Gerontology and Geriatrics of the IAGG-ER 2024
June 20-21, 2024
Prague, Czeck Republic

International Conference on Aging & Technology Fair
www.engagingprague.com
June 26 – 28, 2024
Malaga, Spain
iaggersegg2024.com

CAG2024
October 24-26, 2024
Edmonton, Alberta
Call for Abstracts in January 2024



RESOURCES

Edmonton Police Service developed a PSA they released during Family Violence Prevention month here in Alberta about theft by Power of Attorney. <https://www.edmontonpolice.ca/powerofattorney>

Report: UN Decade of Healthy Ageing Progress Report, 2021-2023

National Institute on Ageing

Read their Report: Understanding the Factors Driving the Epidemic of Social Isolation and Loneliness among Older Canadians
- <https://www.niageing.ca/reports>

Behavioural and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia



The CCSMH is developing new guidelines on the [Assessment and Management of Behavioural and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia \(BPSD\)](#). The guidelines will provide people living with dementia, caregivers, and health care professionals with evidence-based recommendations and resources for the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of BPSD.

Tackling all forms of sexual misconduct

WHO's goal is to keep Member States, civil society partners, and all other stakeholders fully informed on the status of WHO's work on the [prevention of and response to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment](#).



Alzheimer Disease International

On November 7, Alzheimer Disease International launched a special online event: Risk reduction and influencing behaviour change; delving into the World Alzheimer Report 2023. This was the second webinar in the World Alzheimer Report series, during which global experts discussed risk reduction and how to implement these strategies through lifestyle changes and in wider governance and policy. Watch the [webinar](#).

Elder Abuse Movement for Change | Elder Abuse Group & Alberta Elder Abuse Awareness Council (AEAAC) | November 14 Webinar recordings - In Case You Missed It:



In summer 2021, the Government of Canada held a series of consultation activities inviting Canadians to share their thoughts on a



federal policy definition of the mistreatment of older persons (also known as elder abuse or senior abuse). The Government heard different perspectives from stakeholders, experts,

Indigenous communities and organizations, and Canadians. Their publication of the [What We Heard Report](#), detailing the input received through these consultations.

Through the analysis of various definitions and following the Government of Canada's consultations, a federal policy definition of [Mistreatment of Older Persons](#) has been developed.

The Government recognizes that there is no single accepted definition and the definitions and terms relating to the mistreatment of older persons may vary across jurisdictions. The federal policy definition will not replace these jurisdictional definitions. Furthermore, the policy definition will not be a legal definition and will neither be included in nor inform any Criminal Code amendments.

Cybersafety factsheet by Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario. Advice to better protect your devices and our personal information. [Read and download here](#)

Research Project Report: Older Adults on the Move: Global Age-Friendly Transportation Innovations conducted by Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness.

Service Canada launched the [Retirement Hub](#)— a new, user-friendly, online tool that provides a simple and improved experience for Canadians planning their retirement. It will help Canadians with planning, applying for and receiving retirement income benefits like the Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income A feature of this online tool is the [Retirement Ready Quiz](#). By



answering a series of questions, the quiz gives users a personalized checklist to help them prepare for retirement.

The **AGEWELL APPTA** policy report on elder abuse is [available here](#). CNPEA was a key partner of this work for the past year. Other collaborators included: P/T elder abuse prevention networks in BC, AB, Ontario, and NL, Can Age, Caregiving Matters, the Canadian Centre for Elder Law / BC Law Institute, and the Offices of Seniors' Advocates in BC and NB. The report provides an overview of the current situation (elder abuse in Canada, existing strategies and systems in place), as well as recommendations for moving forward, featuring front and centre the need for proper funding to support networks.



NICE

National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly
Initiative nationale pour le soin des personnes âgées

Caregiver self-care tool

Navigating caregiving role functions to achieve benefits for both caregiver and care receiver requires the implementation of Healthy Lifestyle Behaviors. Available [here](#)



RESEARCH READING

Arya, N., & Tong, C. E. (2023). How do South Asian seniors in a large Canadian city perceive long-term care?. *Canadian Family Physician*, 69(9), e181-e188.

Objective To understand how community-dwelling South Asian older adults understand and envision long-term care (LTC).

Design Descriptive qualitative study. Setting The Region of Waterloo in Ontario.

Participants included 3 key informants (geriatrician, social worker, and

medical translator, all South Asian), 1 family caregiver, and 15 community dwelling South Asian adults aged 65 and older. Methods In-depth interviews and focus groups were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed using a framework analysis approach.

Main findings High-level themes included the emotional impacts of failure to provide culturally competent care, such as fear and isolation; a desire for a model of culturally competent care with an emphasis on food and language; and the need for LTC to be more integrated with the broader community and connected to families.

Conclusion As the delivery of LTC is rethought in this country, there is the potential to deliver on the promise of culturally competent care for this growing population. These findings are among the first to communicate the LTC care needs of South Asian older adults in their own words.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

The **Membership and Communications Committee** is planning to hold two hybrid events that will be appealing to members. We expect the first event to be in February and the second in April in Calgary. The Annual general meeting will be in June in Edmonton.

Submitted by Sharon Anderson, Chair

Policy Committee



ACCA CONFERENCE OCTOBER 4TH, 2023



Marlene Raasok, AAG Board Member, shared insights from AAG's Webinar series with panelists Josephine McMurray (AGE-WELL), Tim Murphy (Alberta Innovates), Steve Kovacic & Feisal Keshavjee (ACCA) with Panel Chair Daniel Fontaine (ACCA)

Participants in AAG's webinar series (close to 700 different people across 8 webinars) are keen to see transformation of services and programs for older Albertans for greater accessibility/choice, quality, and person-centered care with increased opportunities to age well in community. Holding us back are long-standing funding issues, serious workforce issues, regulatory barriers, and a risk averse culture.



The panel and audience participation spoke to the need to mobilize technology innovation across community and continuing care services and address the above barriers. Audience participation called for multi-year investment to transform IM/IT funding and for investment in technology development to support development of new models of service delivery and community supports for individual wellbeing and team effectiveness. A collaborative approach is top of mind to enable system-wide learning from innovation initiatives.

This input, plus discussion at AAG's Stakeholder Collaborative Committee, is now being used by AAG, ACCA and Alberta Innovates to advocate for a strategy to mobilize innovation in funding for IM/IT and for technology innovations that will advance the transformation agenda for community and continuing care.

REMEMBER to check AAG's website for **WEBINAR** information—reports, speaker slides and You Tube Videos—great information to support your work.
<https://albertaaging.ca/futures-policy-forum-webinars/>



THOUGHT LEADERSHIP FOR HEALTHY AGING IN A WORLD OF LONGEVITY

REIMAGINING AGING: LEADING THE WAY FOR AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

AAG & Healthy Aging Alberta Collaborate to Sponsor the Healthy Aging Summit October 10-12, 2023



Left: Citizens on the Move: Laura Tamblyn Watts, Facilitator with Marjorie Zingle, Rossbina Nathoo, Elders Dr. Reg & Rose Crowhshoe



Right: Marlene Raasok (AAG) joins HAA Team for updates.

The Deerfoot Inn & Casino Conference Center in Calgary was filled with energy, exemplary practices, and enthusiasm for moving forward together—with over 300 people on site and a further 200 + on-line! The Summit featured a unique mix of facts, attitudes, and practices to support the transformation journey.

Day One, Reimagining Aging: Keynote speaker Laura Tamblyn Watts of CANage, challenged everyone to **look inside the numbers of an aging demographic** to discover who is not being served well (unique populations, loneliness) and where there are opportunities (an older workforce, moving from life span to health span). Dr. Marvin Washington (of U of A) spoke to the importance of moving beyond labelling related to diversity to **appreciating differences** — it is about understanding individuals and their circumstances, realities and potential! Carl Honore (internationally renown speaker from London, England) challenged us to develop an **age positive culture**, changing the rhetoric and experiences of ageism. As an example, Jill Petrovic (from Alzheimer Calgary) shared data that people living with dementia in Calgary too often still experience stigma and invited attendees to join their **movement for inclusion of persons living with dementia**.



Further to that end, Len Frank from Alberta Blue Cross set out a vision for ***pursuing person-centered health and wellbeing service*** navigation! The day ended with a panel of citizens (above picture) sharing messages of promise and opportunity as we ***value older adults for their continuing engagement, involvement and community contributions.***

Days Two and Three, were filled with exemplary practices –take-aways as we move forward together with ***community engagement*** and community services including ***social prescribing, transportation, elder abuse, mental health programs*** and strategies to support caregivers. A panel of persons with lived experience built on Dr. Washington’s messages and challenged our thinking related to ***diversity and inclusion; it’s about understanding and respect for differences.*** Keynote speaker Dr. Cormac Russell (internationally renown speaker from Ireland)) spoke to the importance of asset-based community development, ***moving from strategies for services for/in community to services by/with community!***

Hon. Jason Nixon (Minister of Seniors, Community & Social Services) and Hon. Adriana LaGrange (Minister of Health) brought greetings, recognizing the fine work being done in communities across Alberta to enhance opportunity for healthy aging and quality of living for older Albertans. Minister Nixon announced funding for expanded community services and affordable housing.

The Summit was a unique gathering of providers, volunteers, leaders, and policy makers across health, social services, continuing and community care and municipal organizations. **Collaboration is the way forward—also a message at ACCA conference.**



Sociologists define social change as changes in human interactions and relationships that transform cultural and social institutions (Greenwood & Levin, 2006; Schatzki, 2019). These changes occur over time and often have deep long-term consequences for society. Well-known examples of such change have resulted from social movements in workers' rights, civil rights, women's rights and LGBTQIA+ rights. Relationships have changed, institutions have changed, and cultural norms have changed because of these social change movements.

While we accept that change is constant, we do not have to accept that we are powerless in its wake. It is the extent to which we care about the direction of social change that we can try to shape it and help to create the kind of change we wish to see in the world. "There is nothing permanent except change." — Heraclitus

One person's opinion about what is good or positive social change might well be another person's idea of bad or negative social change. For example, those who believe in a woman's right to choose whether or not to carry a fetus to term fight fervently for that right and believe wholeheartedly that it is a decision to be made between a woman and her doctor, while those who oppose abortion believe firmly in the righteousness of their cause, too, and have built a movement that can claim victory in the overturning of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Roe v. Wade*.

Institutions have changed, cultural and political norms have changed, and personal relationships have changed as a result of the collective power of people determined to make what they believe to be positive social change. Not all agree, but there can be no denying that it has been an activist movement powered by citizens working together to make change.



When we listen respectfully to others who have different opinions and life experiences than our own, we take the first step in listening; we accept that there are myriad perspectives and points of view on most issues of concern. If we truly want to be a participant in real change, we cannot stop at acceptance. We must have conversations that push and pull, that ask us to give and take. And if we are willing to do that, we can find those points of agreement and come together on them. We needn't concede those points that define our values but find ways to work together towards positive change that reflects our shared values. It is the art of principled compromise that has the power to create a more lasting change.

The conversation topics were often difficult, but listening and learning from others was not. Change begins this way. We must nurture civil discourse and work with intentionality to bring together people with different perspectives. Building those kinds of relationships, even when, no, especially when, it seems impossible, is the key to cultivating constructive social change. So, take the lead, start now and stay at it.

References

Greenwood, D. J., & Levin, M. (2006). *Introduction to action research: Social research for social change*. SAGE publications.

Schatzki, T. R. (2019). *Social change in a material world*. Routledge.

