

Healthy Aging in Place

Summer 2012

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Improving Rural and Northern Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Seniors' Health through Policy and Community-Level Interventions

Wolseley Historical Health & Aging Presentation

SPHERU and Wolseley Mayor Dennis Fjestad recently joined together to host the Historical Health and Aging event at the Wolseley Town hall on May 31, 2012. It was well attended by community members and representatives from Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region. The Honourable Don Toth, MLA for the constituency of Moosomin, was also in attendance.

The event featured the presentations, Historical Health in Wolseley and Healthy Aging in Place. The presentations highlighted the influence of past events on current health outcomes in Wolseley, and shared progress updates from the Healthy Aging in Place study.

Earlier in the day, SPHERU researchers visited grade 5 and 6 students at Dr. Isman Elementary School to share entertaining tidbits of past healthcare. The presentation included stories from retired nurses Lucie Lemcke and Evelyn Smith, school principal Tim Taylor and the mayor.



Rural Caregivers: Study sheds light on rural care giving

Rural communities are facing increasing challenges in meeting the care needs of an aging population. Approximately 15% of the rural population are over 65 years of age and older, and this number is projected to increase over the next 25 years. A significant issue for caregivers in rural areas is limited formal supports and access to health services.

Amanda Kirby-May, a University of Regina Masters of Social Work student, is conducting interviews with caregivers in the communities of Watrous and Preeceville. Kirby-May is working with the Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit (SPHERU) to examine how different relationships between caregiver and receiver impacts the needs of rural caregivers.

"I began working in a care home when I was 18, and have been interested in the issues facing rural seniors ever since," says Kirby-May. "I grew up in a rural area, and watched my family provide care to both of my grandmothers and felt that there was a need for research on rural care giving."

Researchers examine healthy aging in Cuba

In April 2012, SPHERU researcher Juanita Bacsu and community partner Dr. Marc Viger (M.D.) traveled to Havana to study healthy aging in Cuba. Over seven days, a group of nine participants organized by the Medical Education Cooperation with Cuba (MEDICC) met with leaders from the Cuban Ministry of Public Health, the National School of Public Health, and the Centre for the Study of Longevity, Aging and Health.

Cubans live long lives and share many similarities with Canada in regards to the aging demographic, increasing health needs and the organization of the healthcare system. Over 17% of the Cuban population is sixty years and older and by 2025, this number is projected to increase to 25%. Cuba has taken an active role in addressing the aging demographic through community involvement and government support for an effective long-term care strategy. Innovative healthy aging strategies in Cuba range from a Healthy Aging Risk Assessment, Grandparents Clubs, 120 Club, to a University for Older Adults.

“Many of the programs in Cuba focus on prevention and providing local support to help older adults remain active and improve their quality of life within their communities,” says Bacsu. Bacsu and Viger hope to share some of their findings in upcoming conferences and community events.



Researchers present findings at SSAI Convention

Juanita Bacsu and Nuelle Novik attended the Saskatchewan Seniors Association Incorporated (SSAI) Convention on June 6, 2012 to share findings from the Healthy Aging in Place study. At the event, Bacsu and Novik had the opportunity to meet with several delegates and the SSAI President, Len Fallows. The SSAI has membership from across the province and works to bring seniors together in



one strong, non-partisan, non-racial, non-sectarian organization that works for the welfare of all seniors in Saskatchewan. Following the Healthy Aging in Place presentation, many SSAI delegates commented that the study's findings resonated with their experiences and the work of their organization. SPHERU's Healthy Aging in Place team looks forward to future collaborations with the SSAI.

Upcoming events: Watrous, SK

The Historical Health and Aging community presentation in Watrous, SK is scheduled at 2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. in the Heritage Room at the Civic Centre on June 28, 2012. The event is free to attend and is open to the public.

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