

# Healthy Aging in Place

Winter 2014

## Healthy Aging in Place

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

### Healthy Aging Grant Successful

In December 2013, SPHERU's Healthy Aging team received exciting news that the recent grant application to the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation was successful. Led by SPHERU researchers Bonnie Jeffery at the University of Regina and Nazeem Muhajarine at the University of Saskatchewan, this three-year grant will continue to support rural and northern healthy aging research. Jeffery notes that, "Population aging is one of the most critical issues facing Canada and beyond...this study aims to identify, develop and assess interventions to support healthy aging in rural and northern communities."

The research program entitled, *Healthy Aging in Place: Improving Rural and Northern Aboriginal Seniors' Health through Policy and Community Level Interventions*, will focus on improving rural and northern Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal seniors' equity in health outcomes and service access. Community partners on the study include: Dennis Fjestad, Noreen Johns, Murray Westby, Bev Bertram and Richard Dow. The research will start on April 1, 2014 and will take place in several rural and northern Saskatchewan communities in four health regions through collaboration with community partners, health professionals and policy makers.



Dr. Marc Viger, Liz Gordon, Juanita Bacsu, Dr. Bonnie Jeffery, Tara Todd and Dr. Nuelle Novik in Prince George.

### Rural Healthy Aging Framework Receives Award

Researchers from the Healthy Aging in Place study presented findings at the Canadian Rural Health Research Society Conference in Prince George on November 13-15, 2013. The team delivered three presentations, a presentation on rural senior's perceptions of healthy aging in place, a poster on rural healthy aging in Cuba, and a presentation on the *Rural Healthy Aging Framework*. The framework presentation won a People's Choice Award at the conference. The *Rural Healthy Aging Framework* highlights the direct perspectives of rural seniors themselves and was created to assess the impact of interventions on rural seniors' ability to age in place. The conference was well attended by 178 delegates including healthcare professionals, academics, community leaders and policy makers from across Canada.

## Article Highlights Rural Seniors' Perspectives and Importance of Local Collaboration

The team recently published a journal article entitled, "Healthy Aging in Place: Perceptions of Rural Older Adults" in *Educational Gerontology* which highlights study findings and the importance of collaborating with rural older adults in developing policies to support healthy aging in rural communities. The study found that rural seniors' perceptions of healthy aging in place consisted of factors that policy makers and health professionals would not necessarily consider, ranging from social interaction to maintaining an optimistic mental outlook. The article concludes that, "If policy-makers and researchers are to develop more effective interventions to support rural healthy aging in place, then the importance of rural seniors' knowledge, experiences and understandings must be acknowledged."



### SPHERU's Juanita Bacsu Receives Doctoral Scholarship

SPHERU researcher and PhD student Juanita Bacsu recently received three year funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research- Saskatchewan Regional Partnership Program to support her research on rural seniors' perceptions of cognitive health and dementia. This research builds on findings from the Healthy Aging study and aims to examine rural seniors' perceptions of cognitive health to facilitate culturally acceptable interventions to support early diagnosis and awareness of dementia. Bacsu is a PhD student in the department of Community Health and Epidemiology at the University of Saskatchewan and is working under the guidance of Drs. Sylvia Abonyi and Bonnie Jeffery.

#### Contact Us

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### Saskatoon SPHERU Office: New Location

SPHERU has moved its Saskatoon office. After several years at Innovation Place, we're back on the main campus at the University of Saskatchewan inside the new Royal University Hospital building. The address is 3rd Floor, E Wing, Health Sciences Building, 104 Clinic Place.

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