Healthy Aging in Place

Environmental Scan
Watrous, Saskatchewan

June 2013
The Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit (www.spheru.ca) is a multidisciplinary research unit affiliated with the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina. SPHERU engages in population health research, which is the study of social factors that contribute to the well-being of various groups within a population.

Utilizing the social determinants of health, SPHERU takes action to address social inequities. SPHERU’s focus is on population health intervention research where we examine the influence of changes to policies, programs or other actions on the determinants of health. SPHERU is committed to conducting leading edge policy-relevant research, done in collaboration with policy makers and communities across Saskatchewan, Canada.

Our population health researchers come from a range of disciplines and have conducted research throughout Saskatchewan. Our research is conducted at our offices in Regina (University of Regina), Saskatoon (University of Saskatchewan) and at the Prince Albert Campus of University of Regina.
Acknowledgements

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This research is part of the *Healthy Aging in Place* (Jeffery, et al., 2011) project, which was initiated in 2010 by the Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit (SPHERU). *Healthy Aging in Place* is a longitudinal study that examines the supports and barriers of healthy aging for rural and northern Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal seniors. The research currently focuses on the rural communities of Watrous, Wolseley, and Young and the northern community of Île-à-la-Crosse, Saskatchewan.

Canada’s population is aging rapidly, and the number of older adults is expected to increase exponentially over the next few decades. In the 1920s and 1930s, seniors accounted for only 5% of the Canadian population but by 2005 this proportion increased to 13.1% (Turcotte & Schellenberg, 2006). In 2036, the senior population of Canada is expected to reach 24.5% of the total population; currently 22.6% of seniors are living in rural areas (Turcotte & Schellenberg, 2006).

Aboriginal populations are also experiencing increasing trends towards aging as life expectancy has been increasing and as fertility rates have been decreasing (Statistics Canada, 2003a; Wilson, Rosenberg, & Abonyi, 2011). Between 2001 and 2006 there was a 43% increase in the number of Aboriginal adults aged 65 years and older (Statistics Canada, 2008). Aboriginal seniors aged 65 years and older are projected to more than double between 2001 and 2017 to almost 7% of the total Aboriginal population. Currently Aboriginal seniors make up less than 5% of the overall Aboriginal population (Statistics Canada, 2003b).

In Canada, Saskatchewan has the highest rate of centenarians born in 1911 or earlier compared to other provinces at 320 individuals or 0.03% of the total population (Statistics Canada, 2012a). It is important to note that older adults living in remote and northern communities experience unique health challenges compared to older adults residing in urban communities.

The information in this report is guided by a population health approach which recognizes that a range of factors influence healthy aging. These include, for example, socioeconomic status, social support, physical environment, access to services, health practices and coping skills, gender, and culture (PHAC, 2011).
Gender plays a significant role in health outcomes in rural communities. Recent studies indicate that in comparison to urban seniors and rural senior women, rural senior men are often disadvantaged in terms of having shorter life expectancies (DesMeules & Pong, 2006) higher suicide rates (Alston, 2012; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001), higher injury rates (Amshoff & Reed, 2005), experience poorer health (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2010), allow illness to progress longer, and take fewer preventative measures (Denner, 2009). Elderly rural women report an increased prevalence of arthritis/rheumatism, hypertension (Statistics Canada, 1999), diabetes (DesMeules & Pong, 2006), and skin cancer (Brown, Young, & Byles, 1999) compared to elderly urban women.

Women often play an important role in supporting the healthy aging of seniors, especially in terms of caregiving. In Canada, it is estimated that 70% of all caregivers are female (Bedard, Koivuranla, & Stuckey, 2004). In rural areas, it is estimated that informal caregivers provide 80-90% of care for seniors (Fast, Keating, Otfinowski, & Derksen, 2004). Even with a network of friends and family, the care of an elder is usually undertaken by one person, most often a female family member (Armstrong, et al., 2003; Fast, et al., 2004) who is a daughter (Bedard, et al., 2004). Previous reports indicate that Aboriginal people aged 50 years or older have higher overall care requirements when compared to the general Canadian population and often rely more on informal care provisions to address their health concerns (Buchignani & Armstrong-Esther, 1994; Wilson, et al., 2011). Older Aboriginal women are more likely than Aboriginal men and non-Aboriginal older adults to provide care for another senior as well as for two or more children (Wilson, et al., 2011). Many of these Aboriginal caregivers spend more than 30 hours on unpaid childcare when compared with non-Aboriginal caregivers (Wilson, et al., 2011).

There are a number of social aspects of peoples’ lives that can influence their health including housing and income (Halfon, Larson, & Russ, 2010). Rural seniors often experience challenges in terms of adequate housing in comparison to urban seniors (CMHC, 2003). In addition, Aboriginal people were much more likely to live in dwellings requiring major repair and more likely to live in dwellings requiring major repair in comparison to non-Aboriginal populations (Statistics Canada, 2003b).
Background to the Study

Lower levels of income can impact healthy eating, it can influence access to uninsured health care and also play a role in self-reported health status (Statistics Canada, 1999). The Public Health Agency of Canada (2004) reported that seniors in the very poor income group are more likely to report fair or poor health compared to those in a high income group. Aboriginal people living in Canada experience lower employment rates and higher unemployment rates than non-Aboriginals (Smylie, 2008; Statistics Canada, 2003b) both of which further influence health and health outcomes. Education is also an influence on health as it can affect subsequent levels of employment and income (National Rural Health Alliance, 2011) and further influence health and health outcomes across the lifespan and into older adulthood (Prus, 2007). Food security and access to affordable health promotion programming are all affected by education, employment and income (Halfon, et al., 2010).

Objectives

The objectives of the environmental scan include:

1) provide baseline information on service, resource and program availability for seniors;
2) assess current aging demographic trends;
3) contribute to understanding the healthy aging strengths, challenges and needs for rural and northern Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal seniors.
Executive Summary

The *Healthy Aging in Place: Watrous Environmental Scan* provides an overview of the demographic profile, services and supports available to seniors living in the rural town of Watrous, Saskatchewan, Canada. More specifically, the goal of this environmental scan is to help identify the existing supports and service gaps for older adults living within the community.

This environmental scan is part of a larger study being conducted by SPHERU entitled, *Healthy Aging in Place: Improving Rural and Northern Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Seniors’ Health through Policy and Community-level Interventions*. The study looks at the family, community and policy supports that enable rural and northern seniors to remain within their homes and communities to age. Through interviews and consultations, this study is being conducted over three years to track the changing health needs of seniors over the aging process.

Data in this environmental scan was compiled from the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health, Statistics Canada Census information, and other available information sources such as the Town of Watrous website. Where possible, information was included from the 2011 Statistics Canada census, however, not all community specific census data was available during the preparation of this report. Ministry of Health (2012) data was used in addition to census data as it provides population information about individuals who have registered health cards in the community of Watrous.

Key Findings

- Since 2006, the Watrous population has increased by 1.5% which is less than the provincial growth of 8.7%
- The percentage of seniors (22%) in Watrous is considerably higher than the provincial percentage (14%)
- The percentage of homes in need of major repairs is lower than for the province
- The Watrous household income was lower compared to provincial household income
- Overall, men earn a higher income than women and the wage gap is higher than for the province
- More than one-quarter of Watrous residents reported providing unpaid care for seniors
- Overall, Watrous residents have completed a lower level of education than for the province
- A higher percentage of Watrous residents have completed apprenticeship or trades education than for the province
Watrous is known for its agricultural economy and the nearby mineral waters at Manitou Lake (Town of Watrous, 2007). The community is located in north-central Saskatchewan and is situated between highway # 1 and highway #16 (Town of Watrous, 2007). There are approximately 2,095 people residing in the town of Watrous (Ministry of Health, 2012).

The Town of Watrous was established in 1906 and became incorporated as town in 1909 (Town of Watrous, 2007). Since Watrous was known as a thriving community on the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway (GTPR), the town was named after the general manager of GTPR, Frank Watrous Morse (Town of Watrous, 2007).
Introduction to Watrous

**Location and Geography**

Watrous is located in north-central Saskatchewan (Town of Watrous, 2007). The town is situated on highway #2 and highway #365, which connects to two major highways, the Trans Canada Highway (Hwy #1) and the Yellowhead Highway (Hwy #16) (Town of Watrous, 2007). Watrous is located near the communities of Manitou Beach, Young and Lanigan and is 110 km south-east of Saskatoon and 180 kilometers north of Regina (Town of Watrous, 2007).

Watrous belongs to the rural municipality of Morris (R.M. of Morris), which spans 847.16 square kilometers of land (Statistics Canada, 2012b). The town itself covers 11.17 square kilometers of land (Statistics Canada, 2012c).

Town of Watrous, 2012
Demographic Overview

Population Overview

Watrous has approximately 2,095 residents (Ministry of Health, 2012). The number of residents in Watrous has increased by about 1.5% compared to the population in 2006, which was 2,063 (Ministry of Health, 2006). This growth is less than the 8.7% increase in the Saskatchewan population from 2006 to 2012. The community’s population density is 166.2 people per square kilometer (Statistics Canada, 2012c).

Age

Approximately 78% of the population in Watrous are adults and seniors which is slightly higher than 74% for the provincial population (Ministry of Health, 2012). The median age in Watrous is 45.5 years which is seven years higher than the provincial median age of 38.2 years (Statistics Canada, 2012c).
Almost one-fifth of the population are children age 0-14. Children make up 17% of the total population in Watrous; a slight increase from 2006 when children represented 16% of the population (Ministry of Health, 2012, 2006). This is slightly lower than the population of Saskatchewan children age 0-14 (19%).

Youth (age 15-19) represent 5% of the total community’s population (Ministry of Health, 2012). This age group has declined from 2006 when youth accounted for 7% of the population (Ministry of Health, 2006). This is comparable to the proportion of youth (7%) in the overall Saskatchewan population. When children and youth populations are combined, they account for approximately 22% of the total population in Watrous (Ministry of Health, 2012).
Demographic Overview

Adults (20-65 years)
Over one half (55%) of the community’s population is comprised of adults between the ages of 20 and 64; slightly lower than the 60% of the Saskatchewan population in this age category. This is a small increase from 2006 where adults made up 53% of the Watrous population (Ministry of Health, 2012, 2006).

Seniors (65 years and over)
Seniors account for approximately 22% of the community’s total population (Ministry of Health, 2012). This is a slight decline from 2006 when seniors represented 24% of the population of Watrous (Ministry of Health, 2006). The percentage of seniors living in Watrous is considerably higher than the provincial percentage for this age category (14%).

In 2012, the dependency ratio for Watrous was 80% which is a considerable decline from the 87% dependency ratio in 2006. The 2012 ratio, however, is still considerably higher than the 67% dependency ratio for the province overall. This is a crude measure of the percentage of the child, youth and senior population that is most likely to be socially or economically dependent on the working age population (aged 20 to 64).

A higher dependency ratio may put additional demands on the health and other support services in the community and therefore may influence availability and accessibility of these services (Irvine, Quinn, & Stockdale, 2011).
The number of females and males in Watrous is relatively similar. For example, females represent 51% of the total population and males make up 49% of the population (Ministry of Health, 2012). This has changed slightly from 2006 when approximately 52% of the total population was female and 48% of the total population was male (Ministry of Health, 2006).

In Watrous, there are slightly more male children than female children (ages 0-14) and more female youth than male youth (ages 15-19) (Ministry of Health, 2012). There are more female seniors than male seniors as the population in Watrous ages (Ministry of Health, 2012).

Overall, women in Watrous are slightly older than men; a situation similar to the provincial distribution. The median age for women living in Watrous is about 47 years compared to the provincial median age of 39 years. For men in Watrous the median age is about 44 years old compared to 37 years old for the province as a whole (Statistics Canada, 2012c).
Demographic Overview

Marital Status

The majority (62%) of those 15 years and older in Watrous are married or living common law; a higher percentage than the 58% of the overall Saskatchewan population who are married or living common law (Statistics Canada, 2012c). Those who are single represent 20% of the population compared to the provincial percentage of 28% (Statistics Canada, 2012c). Approximately 7% of Watrous residents are separated or divorced and 11% are widowed (Statistics Canada, 2012c). The percentage of those who are separated or divorced is the same for the province; however, there is a higher percentage of widowed persons in Watrous than in the overall Saskatchewan population (6%).
In 2006, Watrous had almost four and a half times more owned homes than rented homes (Statistics Canada, 2007). For example, 620 homes were owned and only 140 homes were rented in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2007).

In 2011, single detached homes made up the majority of housing in Watrous representing approximately 76% of occupied private dwellings (Statistics Canada, 2012c). Watrous residents were less likely to live in the following types of housing: semi-detached house (8%), apartment buildings with less than five storeys (8%), row housing (4%), moveable housing (2%), and apartment duplex (2%) (Statistics Canada, 2012c).

A large portion of housing in Watrous is at least a quarter century old (Statistics Canada, 2007). Approximately 655 houses in Watrous were built before 1985 in contrast to the 110 houses built between 1986 and 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2007). In Watrous, occupied housing is well maintained and in 2006, only 9.2% of homes required major repairs compared to the 10.5% of provincial homes in need of major repairs (Statistics Canada, 2007).
In 2006, approximately 21% of the labour force 15 years and older worked in retail trade (Statistics Canada, 2007). The second largest industry was other services (19%) which included services related to: repair and maintenance of appliances and vehicles; personal care services; and organizational work that promotes social and political causes (Canadian Industry Statistics, 2011). The third largest industry in Watrous was agriculture (17%), followed by construction, manufacturing and wholesale trade (13%), business services (11%), health care and social services (9%), educational services (5%), and finance and real estate (4%) (Statistics Canada, 2007).
Employment

Unpaid Work

The proportion of Watrous residents over the age of 15 who reported looking after children without pay was slightly less than the Saskatchewan percentage (39% compared to 41%). Those reporting unpaid care or assistance to seniors, however, was higher for Watrous residents than for Saskatchewan residents overall (27% compared to 22%). Furthermore, a much higher percentage of women in Watrous than in Saskatchewan reported these unpaid caregiving responsibilities (68% compared to 58%).

Income

In 2005, the median income for all Watrous households was $41,752 (Statistics Canada, 2007). This was slightly lower than the provincial median income for all households, which was $46,705 (Statistics Canada, 2007).

In 2005, couple households with children had the largest median income in Watrous at $74,844 and couple households without children had the second largest median income at $51,150 (Statistics Canada, 2007). One person households had the lowest median income in Watrous at $18,667, which was lower than the provincial median of $23,122. Median incomes for couple households with and without children in Watrous also were lower than their comparable provincial median incomes ($76,494 and $57,994 for Saskatchewan respectively) (Statistics Canada, 2007).

The median income for all persons over the age of 15 in Watrous is only slightly less than the provincial median income ($23,005 compared to $23,755) but there are differences in the median incomes for women and men. Men living in Watrous earned a median income of $33,596 which is about twice as much as the $16,713 median income earned by women. For Saskatchewan overall, the median income for men is $29,589; approximately 49% higher than the $19,873 median income for women (Statistics Canada, 2007).
In 2006, the largest occupation in Watrous was sales and service, which made up 25% of all occupations in the town (Statistics Canada, 2007). The second largest occupations in the community included business, finance and administration (18%), and trades, transport and equipment (16%) (Statistics Canada, 2007). Other occupations in Watrous included: primary industry (11%); management (10%); social science, education, government and religion (8%); health (5%); natural and applied sciences (4%); processing, manufacturing and utilities (2%), and art, culture, recreation and sport (1%) (Statistics Canada, 2007).
In 2006, approximately 76% of Watrous residents 15 years and older had completed some level of education which is slightly higher than the provincial percentage of 70% (Statistics Canada, 2007). About one-third (31%) of Watrous residents had completed high school or equivalent education, 16% had trades or apprenticeship education, and 14% had college or non-university diploma education (Statistics Canada, 2007). A smaller percentage of individuals had completed university level education: 5% had university education below a bachelor level and 11% had university level education at or above a bachelor level (Statistics Canada, 2007).

Watrous has a higher percentage of those with either high school education or trades and apprenticeship education than the provincial population (27% and 11% for Saskatchewan respectively).

Less than one-third of Watrous residents between the ages of 35 and 64 had completed high school education (29%). Other educational levels included: apprenticeship, trade or diploma (17%), college certificate or non-university diploma (19%), university certificate below bachelor level (4%), and university certificate or degree (14%). This is a similar pattern for those individuals from 25 to 34 years old where 29% had completed high school education, 29% completed apprenticeship or trade certificate, 17% completed college certificate or non-university diploma, 6% completed university certificate below bachelor level, and 14% completed university certificate or degree (Statistics Canada, 2007).

Overall, there were slightly more females than males who had completed some level of education (Statistics Canada, 2007). A larger number of females than males had completed high school education, college certificate or non-university diploma, university certificate below bachelor level, and university certificate of degree (Statistics Canada, 2007). Males outnumbered females in apprenticeship or trades education (Statistics Canada, 2007).

More females than males between the ages of 35 and 64 years had completed high school education, college certificate or non-university diploma, or university certificate or degree. A higher number of males age 25 to 34 years had completed trades and apprenticeship education than their female counterparts (Statistics Canada, 2007).
There are several schools in Watrous. Children from the ages of three to four are able to go to Watrous Co-operative Nursery School (Town of Watrous, 2007). Watrous also has an elementary school and a secondary school, which belong to Horizon School Division #205 (2009a). Watrous Elementary School provides education for students in kindergarten to grade seven and has an enrollment of approximately 233 students (Horizon School Division #205, 2009a). The secondary school is Winston High School which provides grade eight to grade 12 education (Horizon School Division #205, 2009b). There are approximately 167 students attending Winston High School (Horizon School Division #205, 2009b). Lastly, residents may be able to attain post-secondary education at Carleton Trail Regional College which offers education in various areas such as nursing and electrician programs (Town of Watrous, 2007).

In 2006, less than one half (45%) of Watrous residents had completed post-secondary education; slightly higher than the Saskatchewan percentage of 43% (Statistics Canada, 2007). Of those who had completed this level of education the major area of studies includes: architecture and engineering (22%); health, recreation and fitness (19%); education (15%); business, management and administration (11%); agriculture, natural resources and conservation (8%); personal, protective, and transportation services (9%); humanities (6%); social sciences and law (2%), visual and performing arts and communication (3%); mathematics, computer and information sciences (2%), and physical and life sciences (2%) (Statistics Canada, 2007).
Watrous District Health Complex is the community’s hub for health services (SHR, 2013a). The complex is home to Watrous Hospital and the Manitou Lodge long term care home, which was recently added to the hospital in 2012 (SHR, 2013a). Watrous Hospital provides outpatient services to the community’s residents which include: lab and x-ray services; dressing changes; public health; addiction services; and home care (SHR, 2013a). The hospital had been closed since August 2011 due to a physician shortage and residents requiring emergency or inpatient treatment were transported to other larger centres within SHR for care (Saskatoon Health Region, 2013a). Recently, the Watrous Hospital reopened on January 15, 2012 with emergency services and acute care beds (Saskatoon Health Region, 2013b). Watrous currently has four family physicians including Drs. Latakgomo, Aktar, Rysbergen and Smit (SHR, 2013b).

Other health services are available to Watrous residents. There is a medical clinic, and a dental clinic with two dentists (Town of Watrous, 2007). There are 62 housing units for seniors which are managed by the Watrous Housing Authority (Town of Watrous, 2007). Residents are able to access massage therapy, physiotherapy and chiropractic services in the community (Town of Watrous, 2007).
Leisure Time

Parks

There are four parks and two playgrounds in the community. Residents are able to access the Kinsmen Park and the Cenotaph Park, and children in the community can have fun at both the School Playground and the Beach Playground (Town of Watrous, 2007). There are also two parks located at Manitou Beach, the Manitou & District Regional Park Campgrounds and Wellington Park (Town of Watrous, 2007; Watrous Manitou Marketing Group, 2011).

Recreation, Sports & Fitness

There are various sport and fitness facilities in Watrous. The community has an arena, curling rink, swimming pool, golf, sports grounds and ball diamonds (Town of Watrous, 2007). Like other rural communities, the Watrous Centennial Arena is the hub for winter sport activities such as hockey and skating and the sports grounds are used for summer activities such as ball, football, and track and field (Town of Watrous, 2007). The local schools also offer sports activities for children and youth in Watrous (Horizon School Division #205, 2009a, 2009b).

There are other amenities residents can access including Manitou Beach, Danceland, bowling and mini-golf (Town of Watrous, 2007; Watrous Manitou Marketing Group, 2011). Local parks are also geocaching sites which are great for those who wish to view local attractions while walking or hiking (Watrous Manitou Marketing Group, 2011).

Arts & Culture

Tourism in Watrous has a wide variety of art and cultural attractions including: the Jubilees Choral Group; Watrous School of Dance; and the theatre group, Saltwater Players (Town of Watrous, 2007). The community takes pride in its local artists and their work can be viewed at Artist Gallery (Watrous Manitou Marketing Group, 2011). There are several activities in the community including: the annual FunRun Car Show; the movie drive in during the summer months; Last Mountain Lake Bird Sanctuary to view wildlife; or view the beautiful stained glass windows at All Saints Anglican Church (Watrous Manitou Marketing Group, 2011).
There a variety of community services available in Watrous. Vital services in town include: the Watrous Fire Department; R.C.M.P. services, and; Ambulance (Town of Watrous, 2007).

In addition to these services, residents are also able to access the: Watrous Housing Authority; municipal services; various churches; and numerous health services (Town of Watrous, 2007).

There are other clubs which cover different interests such as the: Catholic Women’s League; Anglican Church Women; Open Door Club; United Church Women; Watrous Wildlife Federation (gun club); and an exercise fitness group known as ZUMBA (Town of Watrous, 2007). Other community organizations in Watrous include the: Rotary Club; Watrous Kinsmen; and Watrous Kinettes (Town of Watrous, 2007).

Watrous has the Senior Citizen’s Club for older adults in the area (Town of Watrous, 2007). Activities at the seniors’ centre include card games, social interaction, music and other forms of entertainment.
References


## Appendices

### Table 1a
Watrous Population by Age Category
2006 & 2012

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### Table 1b
Watrous Population by Gender and Age Category
2006 & 2012

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Table 2a
Saskatchewan Population by Age Category
2006 & 2012

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Table 2b
Saskatchewan Population by Gender and Age Category
2006 & 2012

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