



Centre on AGING

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World Health Organization Age-Friendly Cities Initiative

On October 1, 2007 the World Health Organization (WHO) released *Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide* (<http://www.who.int/ageing>). The Global Age-friendly Cities project was developed by Alexandre Kalache, PhD, Director, Ageing and Life Course Program, World Health Organization (WHO) and Louise Plouffe, PhD, at the WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. Focus groups were conducted in 33 cities world-wide, from both developed and developing countries. Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, was one of those cities. Older adults

were asked to comment on the positive and negative aspects of their cities and provide suggestions for improvements in each of eight domains. The following are excerpts from the checklist of essential features to make communities more age-friendly, based on the result of the research.

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Green spaces and outdoor seating are sufficient in number, well-maintained and safe.

Pedestrian crossings are sufficient in number and safe for people with different levels and types of disability, with non-slip markings, visual and audio cues and adequate crossing times.

Buildings are well-signed outside and inside, with sufficient seating and toilets, accessible elevators, ramps, railings and stairs, and non-slip floors.

Transportation

Public transportation costs are consistent, clearly displayed and affordable as well as reliable and frequent.

Drivers stop at designated stops

and beside the curb to facilitate boarding and wait for passengers to be seated before driving off.

Roads are well-maintained, with covered drains and good lighting.

Housing

Sufficient, affordable housing is available in areas that are safe and close to services and the rest of the community.

Interior spaces and level surfaces allow freedom of movement in all rooms and passageways.

Social Participation

Venues for events and activities are conveniently located, accessible, well-lit and easily reached by public transport.

There is consistent outreach to include people at risk of social isolation.

Respect and social inclusion

Older people are regularly consulted by public, voluntary and commercial services on how to serve them better.

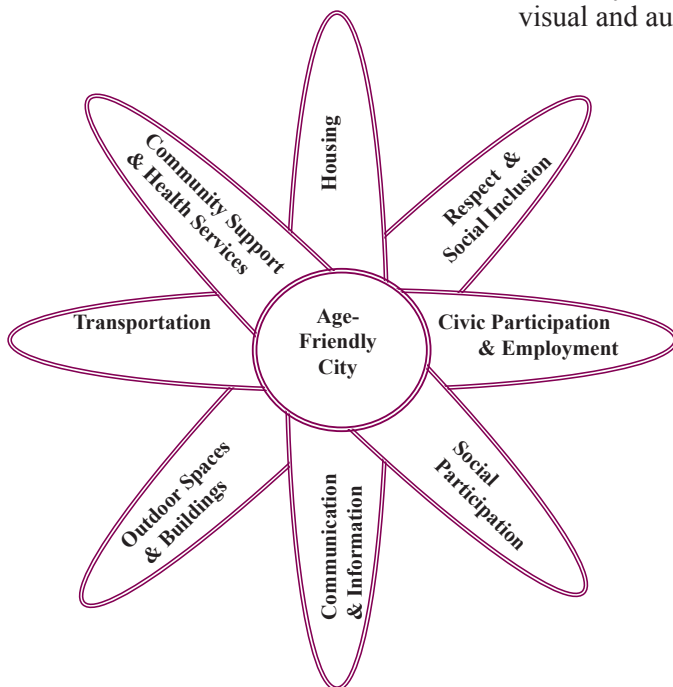
Older people are visible in the media, and are depicted positively and without stereotyping.

Civic participation and employment

A range of flexible options for older volunteers is available, with training, recognition, guidance and compensation for personal costs.

Discrimination on the basis of age alone is forbidden in the hiring,

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Innovation Award

The 2007 Canadian RAI Conference, Making the Health Care Connection – Sharing and Caring Beyond Borders, co-hosted by the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) and interRAI, was held in Ottawa in May. Over 400 participants from 19 countries came together to examine challenging issues in health care and determine how to connect with and support decision-makers across the continuum of care. The focus on clinical assessment instruments across health sectors allowed participants to investigate “care planning, resource allocation, improved outcomes and support best practices in delivery of health services”.

Lori Mitchell, Centre on Aging, University of Manitoba and Co-authors: **Verena Menec**, **Audrey Blandford**, and **Scott Nowicki** were awarded one of four Innovation Awards for their research entitled *Long Term Care Strategy: An Examination of Clients Across the Care Continuum*. Nominations for the Innovation Award were based on demonstration of excellence and creativity in supporting quality of care across the continuum.



Lori Mitchell, Centre on Aging, University of Manitoba (right), with Nancy White, CIHI Manager, Home and Continuing Care (left) and RCMP honour guard.

Vision in Long-Term Care Facilities: An Overlooked Need

Pamela Hawranik, PhD, Faculty of Nursing, And Research Affiliate, Centre on Aging, and **Alexandra Beel**, MN, Misericordia Health Centre, have recently published an article on vision in long-term care facilities. The article is based on a study they conducted to determine whether vision screening and treatment were provided by long-term care facilities.

Vision impairment is one of the leading causes of lost independence among older adults. Visual impairments interfere with the normal performance of daily activities and can lead to dependence on others, social isolation as they are unable to join in activities, and depression. Twenty to 50% of older adults have undetected reduced vision and the majority of those could be corrected.

Twenty-eight long-term care facilities in Winnipeg participated in the study. Only six of the twenty-eight facilities had a policy on vision care services. The study revealed that the long-term care staff appeared to be unaware of the impact of vision problems on the resident's ability to function, and on their quality of life. Visual deficits may lead to disruptive behaviours in cognitively impaired residents. The relationship between vision impairment and falls needs to be examined, as falls are a major source of death and injury in older adults.

In conclusion, results indicate a need to re-examine policies and services for the prevention and treatment of visual problems in long term care.

Dr. Hawranik's research interests include the use of community services by older adults and their informal caregivers; barriers and issues related to the use of community services in rural areas by older adults



and their informal caregivers; and, interventions to assist in improving the quality of life in people with advanced dementia. She focuses her clinical work on interventions and services that are appropriate for older adults, particularly those with cognitive impairment and their informal caregivers, and assessment of the differences between the changes due to the aging process and the manifestations of disease in the older adult.

Hawranik, P., & Beel, A. (2007). Vision Care in Long Term Care Facilities: An Overlooked Need. *Canadian Journal of Geriatrics*, 10(3), Suppl1,15-18.

Age-friendly (continued)

retention, promotion and training of employees

Communication and Information

A basic, effective communication system reaches community residents of all ages.

Printed information – including official forms, television captions and text on visual displays – has large lettering and the main ideas are shown by clear headings and bold-face type.

Community Support and Health Services

An adequate range of health and community support services is offered for promoting, maintaining and restoring health.

Health and social services are conveniently located and accessible by all means of transport.

25th Anniversary Celebration

The Centre on Aging, University of Manitoba, was established on July 1, 1982 with funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). To celebrate its 25 years of research excellence, the Centre hosted a very successful two-day conference, *Looking Back to See the Future: What Have We Learned? Where Do We Go From Here?* in October. The President of SSHRC, **Chad Gaffield**, brought greetings on behalf of SSHRC. Distinguished visitors, world renowned for their research and teaching excellence in gerontology and geriatrics, and either directly or indirectly involved in the Centre on Aging over the years were invited to speak at the conference.



The three Directors, from left to right:
Laurel Strain, Neena Chappell,
Verena Menec

Neena Chappell (Director, 1982-1992), **Laurel Strain** (Director, 1993-2003), **Mark Novak** (Associate Dean, Continuing Education Division, 1989-1996), **Colin Powell** (one of the founders of Geriatric Medicine in Canada, former Division Head of Geriatric Medicine), **Victor Marshall** (former director, University of Toronto Institute for Human Development, Life Course and Aging), and **Anne Martin-Matthews** (Scientific Director, CIHR Institute of Aging) all presented keynote addresses and participated in a question and answer session. Over 200 individuals registered for this event.

Student Funding

Lee Baugh, Psychology, MHRC funding - Interactions between perception and action in natural aging. (Supervisor: Jonathan Marotta)

Lucelia de Melo, Kinesiology and Recreation Management, MHRC funding - Community and environmental supports for active aging and health physical function. (Supervisor: Elizabeth Ready)

Jason Schapansky, Pharmacology & Therapeutics, MHRC funding - The role of Neuregulin in intracellular calcium release in Alzheimer's Disease. (Supervisor: Gordon Glazner)

Melissa Sitter, Human Nutritional Sciences, MHRC funding - The

effect of relocation on the eating habits, lifestyle, nutrition attitudes and nutritional status of older adults residing in personal care homes. (Supervisor: Christina Lengyel)

University of Manitoba CAG Student Rep

Nancy Newall, a PhD student in Psychology (Advisor: Judith Chipperfield), has been appointed the University of Manitoba student representative with the Canadian Association on Gerontology. Students interested in being involved with the CAG, and especially CAG 2009 in Winnipeg, may contact her at N_Newall@umanitoba.ca

Graduate Specialization in Aging

The Graduate Specialization in Aging allows students at either the Master's or PhD level to gain additional expertise in the field of aging and official recognition by the Faculty of Graduate Studies for that expertise. Students will graduate with extra credentials that, given the aging population, could be critical in finding a job.

Students must complete two, three credit hour, core courses: "Social Aspects of Aging" and "Health and Aging" and a thesis in the area of aging. At least one of the student's committee members must be a Research Affiliate of the Centre on Aging.

Verena Menec to Lead Million Dollar Aging Study

The age-friendly communities will be taken a step further in a five-year program of research funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). On October 24th, 2007, **Chad Gaffield**, President, SSHRC, attended a public announcement to congratulate **Verena Menec**, Canada Research Chair in Healthy Aging, Director, Centre on Aging and her research team on being awarded a one-million dollar Community University Research Alliance (CURA) grant. **The Honourable Kerri Irvin-Ross**, Manitoba's Minister responsible for Seniors, and **John Cox**, Manager, Policy, Planning and Evaluation in the Division of Aging and Seniors, Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) also attended the event and congratulated

Dr. Menec on her successful application.

The Age-Friendly Communities,

Active Aging Alliance creates a partnership between community members and organizations, including seniors; representatives of seniors' organizations, government, and service providers; and, a group of researchers representing a range of academic disciplines (city planning, community health sciences, geography, nursing, kinesiology and recreation management, psychology, social work, and sociology).

Assisting communities in becoming "age-friendly" may be one of the best ways to optimize not only health, but also to ensure seniors'

continued participation in society, as well as fostering a sense of security – all aspects of what the World Health Organization (2002) has labeled "active aging". According to the WHO (2006) an age-friendly community is one that provides supports and opportunities in eight areas: outdoor spaces and buildings; transportation; housing; respect and social inclusion; social participation; civic participation and employment; communication and information; and community supports and health services.

The Age-friendly Communities, Active Aging Alliance research partnership is designed to support community development within these eight domains through rigorous research. Researchers will address such questions as: What constitutes an age-friendly community from the perspective of seniors?

How age-friendly are communities currently? What are some of the challenges in creating age-friendly communities? What can we learn from other cities and communities that have tried similar approaches?



Chad Gaffield, PhD, President, SSHRC



Toni Morris-Oswald, PhD

Toni Morris-Oswald, PhD, has joined the Alliance as a Postdoctoral Fellow. She is using participatory photovoice research techniques within six different Manitoba communities to investigate older persons' perceptions of an age-friendly community. As part of the research, seniors will take photographs of their communities to represent their daily reality, and the challenges and strengths of their community which impact quality of life for older persons. Through group discussions, seniors will identify attributes within their community that make it age-friendly and those that detract from age-friendliness, investigate priorities and actions to improve age-friendliness, and challenges to be overcome. A broader vision is that through participation in the photovoice study, community members will take action within their communities to further age-friendly goals and increase inclusion of age-related concerns in all community-level decision making.

Centre on Aging Research Affiliates Update



Benedict Albensi, PhD, Pharmacology & Therapeutics, Faculty of Medicine, Division of Neurodegenerative Disorders, St. Boniface Hospital Research Centre, received funding from the Manitoba Medical Services Foundation to support his research examining the use of diffusion weighted imaging for identifying markers associated with brain injury leading to Alzheimer's Disease. He has also received an operating grant from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and a Research Tools and Instruments Grant from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC)



Abhijit Banerjee, PhD, Oral Biology, Faculty of Dentistry received funding from the Manitoba Health Research Council to support his research on cancers of the mouth (oral). These cancers account for two to four percent of all cancers in North America and is the sixth most prevalent cancer in the world. Deaths (>50%) associated with these cancers have not improved in the last decade as most are in advanced stages when they are diagnosed. There is an urgent need to establish early and appropriate diagnostic markers of molecular alteration that lead transition from precancerous to a cancerous state. Dr. Banerjee is investigating a new protein 'Decorin', in the oral precancerous cells to establish its role in development of oral cancer.



Malcolm Doupe, PhD, Community Health Sciences/ Manitoba Centre for Health Policy, Faculty of Medicine, received funding from the Manitoba Health Research Council for a project entitled *Performing activities of daily living (ADL's) tasks: Determining why some nursing home residents become more dependent with time*. Nurses, using an assessment tool called MDS 2.0, record changes in resident's performance of ADL's. Data will be linked to health care utilization data to determine resident and facility-level risk factors. It is anticipated that linked data will determine which factors lead to function loss, when additional supports are required by residents, and define more effective preventive interventions.



Kathy McKnight, Faculty of Social Work, was awarded funding from the Deer Lodge Centre Foundation (with Joe Puchniak, Deer Lodge Centre Department of Social Work) to study the experience of cognitively intact residents living with cognitively impaired residents in a long-term care setting. The research will be conducted at Deer Lodge Centre. She also examines public pension income policy and its relation to older women who are separated/divorced in retirement.



Kerstin Stieber Roger, PhD, has been appointed as an Assistant Professor, Family Social Sciences, Faculty of Human Ecology. Dr. Roger recently completed a two-year Post Doctoral Health Science Centre Foundation Fellowship under the supervision of Dr. H.M. Chochinov. The focus of her research was examining the experience of people living with memory loss. Four peer reviewed publications resulted from the data derived from this qualitative study. Dr. Roger's research interests include social aspects of health with a focus on family and intergenerational care provision; dementia, aging and end-of-life; applied ethics; and, abuse and neglect.

Upcoming Events in Winnipeg

Biology of Aging: New Answers to Old Questions

The Canadian Federation of Biological Societies (<http://www.cfbs.org/annual.html>) is a research consortium representing researchers from university, government and laboratories involved in Canadian biological and biomedical professional associations. The focus of their 6th Northern Lights Summer Conference, to be held in Winnipeg, June 17 - 20, 2008, is the biology of aging. The Conference program is organized by **Phillip Gardiner**, Canada Research Chair in Physical Activity and Health Studies, University of Manitoba and includes sessions chaired by Centre Research Affiliates. **Michelle Porter**, PhD, (Kinesiology and Recreation Management) will chair a session entitled *Neuromuscular function and resistance training in older adults - From laboratory research to clinical implications*, and **Daniel Sitar**, PhD (Pharmacology and Therapeutics) *Dilemmas of drug therapy in the elderly*.

Planning by Design in Community: Making Great Places Healthy, Caring, Inclusive and Green

The Manitoba Professional Planners Institute will be co-hosting the Canadian Institute of Planners (<http://www.cip-icu.ca>) national conference in Winnipeg, July 13 to 16, 2008. Richard Milgrom, PhD, Assistant Professor, City Planning, Faculty of Architecture and Research Affiliate, Centre on Aging, has organized a session examining the social impact of sprawl in a slow growth city, planning and design for age-friendly communities.

Partners in Care...Influencing Care Today and Tomorrow

The Alzheimer Society of Manitoba (www.alzheimer.mb.ca) will host its annual conference on March 10 & 11, 2008. Keynote speakers include Dr. Carole Cohen, Clinical Director, Community Psychiatric Services for the Elderly, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, Toronto; Joanne Collins, Continuing Care Branch, Health, Halifax; and Karen Dunlop, RN, BN, LLB, Specialty Care, Seven Oaks Hospital, Winnipeg, MB.

Centre on Aging 25th Spring Research Symposium

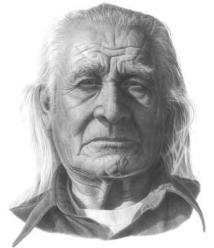
The Centre on Aging will hold its 25th annual Spring Symposium on Monday, May 5, 2008 on the Bannatyne Campus.

Canadian Association on Gerontology (CAG)

The 2009 annual meetings of the Canadian Association on Gerontology will be held in Winnipeg. Anyone interested in participating in the organization of the conference is asked to contact the Centre at 474-8754.

Portraits of the North

Portraits of the North, an art exhibit and sale by **Gerald Kuehl**, a self taught pencil artist, was held at the 25th Anniversary Celebration. The seed for Portraits of the North was planted in 1997 during a trip to Northern Manitoba. Gerald was fascinated by the stories of the individuals he met who had endured so much in their struggle to survive the harsh northern environment. These stories were etched on the faces of these proud people through the lines, scars and expressions they wore. He was determined to capture their spirit and vitality through pencil portraiture. www.portraitsofthenorth.com



CENTRE ON AGING

The Centre on Aging, established on July 1, 1982, is a university-wide research Centre with a mandate to conduct, encourage, integrate, and disseminate research on all aspects of aging.

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The Centre on Aging News is published 3 times a year and is available on our web site or by request. Direct comments and inquiries to:

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