



# PROVINCIAL SENIORS HEALTH & CONTINUING CARE

## Integrated Provincial Program

### SENIOR PROGRAM OFFICER

**Niall MacDonald (Interim)**, BSc, CHE  
**David O'Brien**, CPA CMA

### SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR

**Dr. Adrian Wagg**, MB FRCP (Lond),  
FRCP (Edin), FHEA, University of  
Alberta

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Niall MacDonald**, BSc, CHE  
(since 10/2021)  
**Reverdi Darda**, RN, BSCN, CHE,  
FCGS (to 10/2021)

### KEY PARTNERS

**Zone operators**  
**Contracted care providers**  
**Acute Care Provincial Pathways**

### SENIOR MEDICAL DIRECTOR

**Dr. Jim Silvius**, BA (Oxon), MD,  
FRCPC, University of Calgary

### ASSISTANT SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR

**Dr. Heather Hanson**, PhD,  
University of Calgary

### MANAGER

**Abram Gutscher**, BHSc, MHA

## Major initiatives and achievements, 2021-2022

The former Seniors Health Strategic Clinical Network inclusive of the Scientific Office is integrated directly within the Provincial Seniors Health and Continuing Care (PSHCC) integrated provincial program. PSHCC works with the zones, government and other organizations to engage and empower seniors health and continuing care community through planning and policy in the province. We use research and evidence to inform the innovation and implementation planning and actions undertaken by our partners. We translate government priorities, and assist and facilitate in the implementation of provincial strategic initiatives to support Albertans.

### Meeting evidence and decision-making needs during the COVID-19 pandemic



The continuation of the coronavirus pandemic disproportionately affected older Albertans. The age groups with highest proportion of individuals hospitalized or dying from coronavirus were those 65 years of age and older. Older Albertans residing in continuing care facilities were affected by visitation restrictions and outbreaks, while disruptions to services and support across health and social care provision affected older Albertans and their care partners. The impact of isolation and loss of connectedness became apparent as time progressed.

PSHCC supported the pandemic response with timely evidence generation and decision-making. We revised and updated the evidence on strategies to address acute care length of stay and alternative level of care days. We led the development of guidelines to better enable long-term care staff to provide safe and resident-centred care within the restrictions of a pandemic outbreak at their site and in compliance with public health orders. Our leaders continued to play critical roles in the province-wide pandemic response, conducting rapid evidence reviews of COVID-19 in care homes, examining the efficacy of interventions, and exploring the extent to which AHS had implemented these according to continuing care action plans.

Guidance provided by PSHCC supported the care of older Albertans, including many most at risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19. They also supported provincial decision making and information sharing with health and community partners, including AHS' Emergency Coordination Centre, site and facility operators, and staff at continuing care sites across Alberta.

### Healthy aging in Alberta: Measuring quality and what matters to older adults

Following an exhaustive systematic review of disease-specific and generic quality indicators (QI) relevant to older adults, the SO has engaged with health and social care context experts in a Delphi exercise to prioritize generic QI to inform PSHCC QI reporting of its activities. These QI will also have relevance across AHS when proposing development of new, or revised healthcare services.

The Scientific Office has also embarked upon a parallel project to gain the views of older Albertans. PSHCC has partnered with the Imagine Citizens Network and the University of Alberta to hear from older adults and understand their perspectives on priorities in healthcare and the type of quality indicators expected from healthcare services for older adults. This work adds a patient and end user perspective to the selection of measures that PSHCC may use to evaluate its work.



Our goal is to identify measures that will inform strategic planning and drive improvements in health, well-being, and independence and that will have significance to older adults in Alberta. Over the past year, Albertans, 65+ or older, participated in individual interviews and guided group conversations to share experiences as older adults (or as the care partner of an older adult) and discuss what is critical to living and aging well and to synthesize a prioritized list of quality outcome indicators for older adults that resonate with the groups.

"It's important to always involve people who you are designing the service for, and not in a token way. It's good to see this happening."

70+ Essential Care Partner

## Other highlights

### Social determinants of health & aging in Alberta

Following the successful James Lind Alliance work in prioritizing unmet healthcare research questions from the perspective of older adults, the PSHCC Scientific Office has embarked on work to gain older adults' views on social determinants of health that either facilitate or impede healthy aging in Alberta. The work includes an initial survey, followed by a combination of semi-structured interviews and focus groups, and a software-based Delphi prioritization exercise. Data collection is underway.

Results will feed into and support the province's response to the [Alberta Health's Facility-based Continuing Care Review](#), in which the means to allow people to remain in the location of their choice for as long as possible remains a key objective. The voices and perspectives of older adults is essential to ensure patient- and family-centred solutions. This project will be able to report in December 2022.

## Impact on health and care in Alberta

As we organize into an integrated team, leveraging the strengths of each group, we continue our work together to improve health outcomes and healthcare for older Albertans and continuing care clients. Over the past year, this work has contributed to:

- Evidence-informed decisions on how to prepare the health system to meet the needs of Albertans with and without COVID-19
- Working with leaders and staff in long term care, designated supportive living and acute care to implement targeted quality improvement interventions
- Supporting communities to strengthen their readiness to support older Albertans with dementia and their family caregivers



## Actions and areas of focus

- Mobilization of research in end-user identified areas of priority for seniors' health
- Expansion of elder-friendly care practices in acute care settings
- Supporting Albertans living with dementia and their caregivers
- Focus on end user involvement in all activities

## PROVINCIAL SENIORS HEALTH & CONTINUING CARE

### Grants and Publications



6

Peer-reviewed Publications

### Engagement



3

Workshops & Presentations

### Outcomes and Impact

Supported provincial engagement & comprehensive reviews led by Alberta Health, including:

- ✓ Facility-based Continuing Care Review
- ✓ Home Care Review
- ✓ Palliative Care

These reviews focus on transforming, modernizing & optimizing services to improve quality, choice and access to care for Alberta seniors



\$1.0M

Research Grants



112

Research members

[www.ahs.ca/seniorshealthscn](http://www.ahs.ca/seniorshealthscn)