

**Session Identifier: B.2****Session Theme: System Insights-Context, Practice, Policy****Thursday, June 16, 2016****1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.****Roles and Guiding Principles for Health System Navigator Programs Serving Older Adults and Caregivers**

Dr. Lori Weeks, Dalhousie University; Dr. Gloria McInnis-Perry, University of Prince Edward Island; Dr. Colleen MacQuarrie, University of Prince Edward Island; Sanja Jovanovic, Dalhousie University

While there is research interest in establishing the value and cost effectiveness of health system navigators, there is a lack of consensus on the desired characteristics of this role and a lack of knowledge about overarching principles to meet the needs of older adults with multiple chronic conditions and their caregivers. We collected data from 1) older adults and caregivers and 2) people working in the health system on Prince Edward Island. Questions for both groups included: issues for older persons going through the health service transitions; what works well, and what does not work well in these transitions, suggestions to improve transitions, and suggestions for future research. A total of 98 older adults and caregivers participated in focus groups and 52 healthcare professionals completed an on-line survey. Thematic analysis resulted in the identification of two main themes. Theme 1 focused on overall guiding principles of health navigator programs including the utilization of a person-centred approach, developing needs-based eligibility criteria, and being easily accessible for older adults and caregivers. Theme 2 focused on desired health navigation services and supports including information and education, support in planning and using health services, and advocacy for older adults and caregivers. Incorporating health system navigators focused on the needs of older adults with multiple chronic conditions and their caregivers may influence transformative change within the healthcare system, and our results will inform the future development of these programs based on evidence from older adults, caregivers, and healthcare professionals.

**Reversing the Tide: Reducing Long Term Care Waitlists and Wait Times**

Susan Stevens, Nova Scotia Health Authority

The aging population in Canada is often described in apocalyptic terms related to its perceived current and future impact on health and social systems. Decision makers, health care practitioners, the public, and the media often call for solutions involving more - more money, more human resources, more beds. In Nova Scotia a real-time social policy experiment is unfolding that validates Martin's contention that "Demography is not destiny" (Martin, 2011, p.43) and that social policy decisions (McDaniel, 1986) will shape our success in meeting the challenges of an older population. With wait lists and wait times for nursing home care growing, the Nova Scotia Health Authority implemented changes to the long term care placement policy in March 2015. These changes combined with a renewed focus on supporting individuals at home have resulted in significant reductions in both wait times and wait lists as well as influenced the location of applicants at the time of placement. This presentation will present findings from the NS government quantitative analysis of the interRAI-HC assessment data

comparing home care clients and long term care applicants (DHW, 2013), qualitative data gathered through telephone and in person interviews completed with long term care applicants and their caregivers (Fancey & Keefe, 2014), outline the new policies and home first approach being taken, and describe the resulting outcomes achieved in the first year of implementation.

### Exploring Experiences of Personal Support Worker Education in Ontario

Dr. Christine Kelly, University of Manitoba

Personal Support Workers (PSWs) are the engine of long-term care and home care in Ontario, and represent a highly precarious workforce that is disproportionately comprised of women, people of color and new Canadians. In recent years, there has been a flurry of policy activity surrounding Ontario PSWs, including the creation of a common worker for multiple contexts, the establishment of an online registry, a wage increase and the introduction of an educational standard. Informed by feminist and disability scholarship around care and the nature of gendered labour, this presentation explores the context of PSW education in Ontario, highlighting the complex landscape for PSW training programs and the newly introduced PSW Program Standard. Drawing on qualitative interviews and focus groups with educators, employers, PSW students and recent graduates, this presentation shares themes related to the educational experiences and perceptions of these experiences from multiple perspectives. The study demonstrates that students enter PSW programs with promises of secure job prospects that do not reflect the experiences of those who graduate, participants express a marked desensitization to abuse that they themselves face or witness of the residents during placements and upon employment, and that the “common worker” approach of the training programs is biased towards long-term care. The policy developments surrounding PSWs are missing some of these issues that perhaps call for a more fulsome cultural discussion around how to best value and support this essential workforce.

### A Colonial Genealogy of Nursing Homes in Nova Scotia

Dr. Katie Aubrecht, Mount Saint Vincent University

In this presentation I share findings from a genealogical analysis of the history of nursing homes in Nova Scotia that traces their appearance to the English Poor Laws. Documents from the Nova Scotia Archives, and secondary research that included peer-reviewed academic publications and publicly available information, were analyzed to understand the social and historical emergence of nursing homes as a form of care for older adults. This work sought to identify and understand the dominant ideologies that shape current policies and popular understandings of nursing homes, and that organize practices within nursing home settings. Archival research made it possible to situate the nursing home within a broader policy context that crossed temporal and geographic borders. In contrast to assumptions that the nursing home is a place designed for the care of older adults, historical documents tell a tale of intergenerational entanglement that links the social phenomenon of the nursing home with poor houses, workhouses and cottage homes, the trafficking of child labourers or ‘Home Children’, and the development of the residential school system in Canada. Findings have policy relevance and make a valuable contribution to knowledge of the social history of nursing homes in the province.

