

Nova Scotia Centre on Aging

Fall 2023 Newsletter

Supporting Staff in Long-Term Care Means Supporting Resident Care

The pandemic shone a light on the long standing deficiencies in long-term care and we learned how these deficiencies affected those living and working in these care homes. There were numerous accounts of staff shortages as well as concerns for the health and well-being of the staff working in this sector. The work that continuing care assistants (CCAs) and nursing staff take on to provide person-centred care can be rewarding but it can also be exhausting on the best of days. Results from a study we conducted with staff in 10 Nova Scotia nursing homes during the pandemic found 70% of CCAs and 56% of nursing staff reported experiencing moderate to severe levels of stress and 70% of CCAs reported high levels of emotional exhaustion. These findings about staff quality of work life are concerning given that we know the conditions of work will impact the conditions of care. In addition, quality of work life can affect recruitment and retention initiatives in a sector already facing workforce challenges.

There is good news, however. Existing research tells us that there are features of the working environment that can help or hinder staff's quality of work life. These are things like leadership, culture, interactions, resources, etc. that are modifiable in order to improve staff outcomes. Better understanding of these contextual factors will enable the development and execution of support initiatives for staff.

There is more good news. I am very pleased to be leading a team of committed and invested researchers and sector leaders from across Atlantic Canada on a study that will examine these contextual factors in more than 50 care homes across our region. Through this multi-year project, we will also get a better understanding of the experience of staff's mental health and well being – information that is currently lacking in Atlantic Canada. For staff in the 10 nursing homes in the 2021 study we will be able to assess the impacts of recent investments in the sector. The information from this study will help us to understand the quality of work life in long-term care, learn more about the association between conditions of work and conditions of care, and help to advance initiatives that better support health and work-life outcomes for staff.

We need to continue to address the deficiencies in long-term care. The 2020 Royal Society of Canada's (RSC) report *Restoring trust: COVID-19 and the future of long term care in Canada*, outlined many of these deficits. A follow-up report is to be released about the achievements to date. As an author on both reports, I will be a panelist at the RSC G7 Research Summit on Healthy Aging being held in November. There is still a significant gap needing to be filled to ensure those working in long-term care feel valued and supported for the important work that they do. I am pleased to play a small part in this change.

Janice

Advancing Aging Research. Enhancing Lives of Older Adults.



NSCA Director,
Dr. Janice Keefe

Our News

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Our Mission

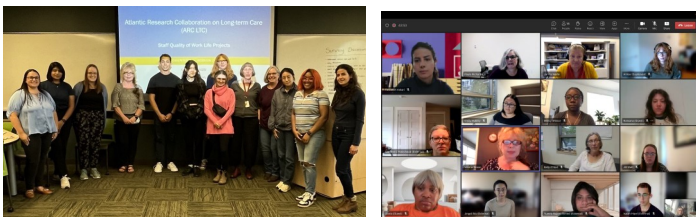
Through research, education and community engagement, the Nova Scotia Centre on Aging advances knowledge on aging to inform social policy and practice and enhance the quality of life of older people and their families.



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What's Happening...

Research launched on staff quality of work life in long-term care



Training session with individuals who will be administering the survey with staff in NS and PEI care homes

This Atlantic Canada research collaboration is up and running with data collection to get underway in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island this fall. Team members with the NS/PE Hub have begun reaching out to randomly selected care homes with the opportunity to participate in this study: "An Underrepresented, Undervalued Workforce: Understanding and Supporting Quality of Work Life in Long-term Care". Staff of participating care homes will complete a survey to understand their work environment, best practice use, and health and well-being.



Project staff for the New Brunswick Hub and Newfoundland & Labrador Hub of the project are getting in place with recruitment to begin with homes in those provinces in the coming months.

This work is being done in collaboration with the [TREC program of research](#) based at the University of Alberta where the survey is also being administered with staff from care homes in Alberta.



With limited data in the Atlantic region on the association between working conditions in long-term care homes and the quality of work life for staff and the conditions of care for residents, selected care homes and their staff will be able to help investigators across the region understand what can be done to better support our long-term care staff. The project will also support building capacity for research on long-term care in the region.

For more information go to www.arcltc.ca

Home Care Pathways team focuses on dissemination

The team continues its focus on analysis and dissemination activities. Recently released manuscripts drawing on the insights from the 12 care constellations are:

[Ageing in place with non-medical home support services need not translate into dependence](#) in Ageing & Society

[Person-centered home care: Exploring worker-client relationships using an intersectional and critical disability framework](#) in Journal of Applied Gerontology

Recent summaries

Conference presentations

Understanding home care pathways over time: Insights from longitudinal qualitative inquiry. Canadian Association on Gerontology, Toronto

Do public home care clients "Lose Out on Services" because they have a family caregiver? Gerontological Society of America, Tampa

Stay up to date: www.homecarepathways.ca

Congratulations to Rosanne Burke (former Research Assistant with NSCA) who successfully defended her thesis *How Home Care Communication Adapts Over Time to Meet Clients' Needs: A Case Study of Home Care Constellations*. The thesis utilized data from the Home Care Pathways Project.

Refresh of dementia education underway

Staff are gathering input from course facilitators, learners, sector representatives and subject matter experts on considerations for the update and refresh of *Dementia: Understanding the Journey* education. This 27-hour course is a required education component for Continuing Care Assistants and License Practical Nurses in Nova Scotia and is also being integrated into education programs for registered nurses in the province.



For more information on the DUTJ course visit www.dementiaedu.ca

Have you Heard...

Dr. Keefe featured in MSVU'S 150 People Profile

As part of MSVU's 150th anniversary recognition activities, stories about students, faculty, staff and alum are being highlighted. Congratulations Dr. Keefe for [being featured!](#)

Dr. Keefe appointed Chair of Review Panel of Long-Term Care and Personal Care Home Programs in NL

Dr. Keefe is chairing the panel established to review long-term care and personal care home programs in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Panel's work is getting underway this fall.

Report released of PEI Long-Term Care COVID-19 review

PEI Health and Wellness has released the [Panel's report](#) on the impact of the pandemic in PEI's facilities. The Report includes 17 recommendations to enhance care for residents. Dr. Keefe was a member of the Review Panel.

Dr. Zimmer's Tier 1 Canada Research Chair renewed

Dr. Zachary Zimmer's Tier 1 Canada Research Chair, Global Aging and Community Initiative has been renewed for another 7 years. Congratulations Dr. Zimmer! (See page 4 for more information on his program of research).

Dr. Keefe to speak at Research Summit on Healthy Aging



Dr. Keefe is invited to speak at the Royal Society of Canada's G7 Research Summit on Healthy Aging, November, Niagara Falls.

Out and About

NSCA Celebrates International Day of Older Persons



NSCA celebrated International Day of Older Persons and National Seniors Day in collaboration with the National Association of Federal Retirees by tackling the topic of ageism.

Dr. Keefe creates awareness of research on quality of work life with members of the Nursing Home Association of NS



In September, Dr. Keefe shared information on the Atlantic Research Collaboration project on long term care involving sector partners and government representatives from across the region.

Opportunities to Support NSCA

Dr. F.R. MacKinnon Endowment Fund

Support the efforts of the NSCA, contributions can be made to the Dr. F.R. MacKinnon Fund 902-457-6470.

Presentations & Publications

Publications:

Song, Y., Keefe, J.M., Squires, J., deGraves, B., Duan, Y., Cummings, G., Doupe, M., Hoben, M., Duynisveld, A., Norton, P., Poss, J., & Estabrooks, C. (2023). Changes in health and well-being of care aides in nursing homes from a pre-pandemic baseline in February 2020 to December 2021. *Journal of Applied Gerontology*.

Journal of Applied Gerontology.

Spring, L., Funk, L., Kuryk, K., Warner, G., Macdonald, M., Burke, R., & Keefe, J. (2023). Person-centered home care: Exploring person-centered home care worker-client relationships using an intersectional feminist and critical disability framework. *Journal of Applied Gerontology*.

Kuryk, K., Funk, L., Warner, G., Spring, L., Macdonald, M., Lobchuk, M., Rempel, J., & Keefe, J. (May 2023). The work required of older clients to age in place with non-medical home support services. *Ageing & Society*.

Mah, J., Godin, J., Stevens, S., Keefe, J., Rockwood K., & Andrew, M. (2023). Social vulnerability and frailty in hospitalized older adults. *Canadian Geriatrics Journal*.

Keefe, J., & Krawchenko, T. (2023). Policies that support and hinder families as partners in care during COVID-19 pandemic: Comparative policy learning from England, British Columbia and the Netherlands. *Canadian Journal on Aging*.

Estabrooks, C.A., Ewa, V., Keefe, J., & Straus, S.E. (2023). The predictable crisis: COVID 19 in Canada's long-term care homes. *British Medical Journal*.

Hoben, M., ... Keefe, J., O'Rourke, H. M., Saeidzadeh, S., Song, Y., & Estabrooks, C. A. (2023). Factors associated with the quality of life of nursing home residents during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A cross-sectional study. *Journal of the American Medical Directors Association*.

Presentations:

Keefe, J. (2023, October 1). *Exposing our ageist society and what we can do about it*. 60th Anniversary of National Association of Federal Retirees, Halifax, NS.

Huble, E. Warner, G., Andrew, M., Chamberlain, S., Hande, M.J., Weeks, L., & Keefe, J. (2023, October 26-28). *How approaches to communication affected family and staff experiences with COVID-19 family visitation programs: A comparative case study of three long-term care homes*. Canadian Association on Gerontology, Annual Meeting, Toronto, ON.

Funk, L., Kuryk, K., Spring, L., Burke, R., Lobchuk, M., Macdonald, M., Rempel, J., Warner, G., & Keefe, J., (2023, October 26-28). *Understanding home care pathways over time: Insights from longitudinal qualitative inquiry*. Canadian Association on Gerontology, Annual Meeting, Toronto, ON.

Duynisveld, A., & Keefe, J. (2023, October 26-28). *A workforce needing support: Mental health and quality of work life among staff in Nova Scotia's long-term care homes*. [Poster]. Canadian Association on Gerontology, Annual Meeting, Toronto, ON.

News from the Global Aging and Community Initiative



The Global Aging and Community Initiative (GACI) is directed by Dr. Zachary Zimmer, Tier 1 Canada Research Chair, and is located within the Nova Scotia Centre on Aging.

- Dr. Zimmer's Tier 1 Canada Research Chair was renewed for an additional seven-year term.
- Sara Hamm was hired as a Research Associate on the project 'Long-term Effects of War on Health of Older Persons within a Rapidly Aging Population: The Case of Vietnam', funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.
- Dr. Feinuo Sun, former Postdoctoral Fellow, has taken up a tenure-track position at the University of Texas at Arlington.

Published papers by Dr. Zimmer and colleagues:

- "Educational differences in life expectancies with and without pain." *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*.
- "Respiratory Health among Older Adults in Vietnam: Does Earlier-Life Military Role and War Exposure Matter?" *Journal of Aging and Health*.
- "A global comparative study of wealth-pain gradients: Investigating individual- and country level associations." *Dialogues in Health*.

Papers presented at professional meetings:

- Are we adding pain-free life to years? Testing a compression of morbidity argument. Annual Meeting of REVES (The International Network on Health Expectancy and the Disability Process). Padua, Italy
- Examining pain and disability among older adults using a group-based dual trajectory modelling approach. Annual Meeting of REVES (The International Network on Health Expectancy and the Disability Process). Padua, Italy.
- Educational disparities in arthritis and arthritis-attributable moderate or severe joint pain across the U.S. states: Do state contexts matter. Population Association of America Meetings in New Orleans.

Visit: www.globalagingandcommunity.com

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