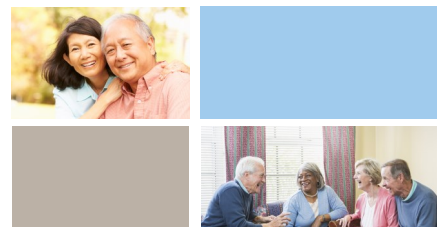


Nova Scotia Centre on Aging

Fall 2025 Newsletter



Long-term care study generating evidence to support staff well being

Quality of work life can affect recruitment and retention of staff in the long-term care sector, a sector that is essential to our health system. The long-term care sector continues to face workforce challenges- especially in Atlantic Canada. Research shows certain features of the working environment like leadership, culture, interactions, resources, etc. can be modified to improve staff outcomes.

Our Atlantic Research Collaboration in Long-term Care (ARC LTC) is leading the way in generating much needed evidence on staff experiences in Atlantic Canada, information that is currently lacking (see page 2 and www.arcltc.ca). We are broadly sharing findings from over 2000 surveys completed between 2023 and 2024. We have already shared custom reports of survey results to 50 care homes, infographics about select study findings with participants, held webinars with sector stakeholders, and presented at conferences. The survey results tell a mixed story of quality of work life that varies by employee group, province and organizational factors. For example, care aides in PEI and NS report lower burnout and better mental and physical health compared to care aides in NB and NL. Also, managers have better scores on almost all the well-being and work-life measures in the study, compared to nurses and care aides. These insights, and more to come, would not be possible without this kind of research.

There are plans to examine staff experiences from the survey with resident outcomes from resident assessment data available for the

participating care homes in NL, NB and NS. This novel work will help to explore the important association between quality of work and quality of care and provide strong rationale for interventions that may enhance staff's quality of work life.

Investment in long-term care research like the four-year CIHR grant supporting ARC LTC's work is yielding strong returns not only in terms of evidence, but also through training opportunities. Likewise, Shannex, through its philanthropic gift to the Mount, is investing in research for the long-term care sector through student scholarships and assistantships (see page 2), pilot funding for innovative research ideas, and the establishment of the Shannex Centre for Workforce Wellbeing. These research investments are contributing to MSVU's growing program of research in long-term care. I am pleased that our University's Department of Aging and Family Science is recruiting for a tenure-track position that will also hold the Shannex Research Chair in Workforce Wellbeing. I am further excited that this Chair will be located at the De Paul Long Term Care Centre which will be adjacent to our campus.

There is still much work to do to ensure those working in long-term care feel valued and supported for the important work they do. The ARC LTC and the Shannex-MSVU Partnership are initial steps in the right direction. We welcome additional partnerships to help support those who live and work in long-term care.



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.



Centre
on
Aging
Nova Scotia

What's Happening...

Presentations and Publications Underway for Atlantic Canada LTC Staff Quality of Work Life Study



Our 30+ member team convened in Halifax in June to review study findings and engage in dialogue to identify gaps, priority areas, and new ideas for analysis. Two of the team's Postdoctoral Fellows and three Trainees are headed to Montreal to share their work at the Canadian Association on Gerontology conference in October. They will present results from their staff quality of work life projects. More results will be presented by investigators at PEI Making Connections Conference (October 29-30) and NB Health Research Symposium (November 20-21). With one manuscript published and one recently submitted, analyses and writing continue for 12 manuscripts and four trainee theses.

We're also planning an exciting event for late November: a half-day summit spotlighting racial and cultural diversity in long-term care to better understand the worker experiences. The summit will offer dedicated time to:

- Share key research findings
- Highlight ongoing initiatives to support staff
- Facilitate open discussion

Keep up to date at www.arcltc.ca



Ongoing Dissemination for Nova Scotia Care Homes Involved in the 2021 and 2024 Staff Quality of Work Life Study

Participating care homes received individualized site reports comparing results from their care home at two points in time, and participating staff received an infographic summarizing the results.

In June, one of our trainees presented their thesis at the "Our Future is Aging" Conference, highlighting how organizational context affects nurses' quality of work life. Data analysis and manuscript preparation comparing the two points in time are ongoing.

SHANNEX Scholarship in Aging and Nutrition Recipients



Pictured above: left, Hend Eldkl and Sara Mafla on the right.

Leading the way to a healthier future for aging adults, Shannex Incorporated has established the Shannex Graduate Scholarship in Aging and Nutrition to enhance research capacity related to long-term care. The \$10,000 scholarship is awarded annually to two new students who are focusing their research in an area related to long-term care in either Aging and Family Science or Applied Human Nutrition at Mount Saint Vincent University.

Congratulations to this year's recipients:

Sara Mafla – Master of Science Applied Human Nutrition

Hend Eldkl – Bachelor of Science Applied Human Nutrition Honours



Our Future is Aging Conference June 3-4, 2025 - A Success!



Several conference attendees enjoyed scenic Peggy's Cove

Our "Our Future is Aging" conference showcased more than 80 oral and poster presentations on topics including mental health, care and support, long-term care, retirement, dementia, aging in place, frailty, etc. Keynote speakers addressed topics on; [changing contexts of population aging](#), [artificial intelligence and aging](#), and leading [research networks and initiatives](#). The conference also featured a free [Public Event](#) exploring the realities of "living longer". The full program and recap video are available www.ourfutureisaging.ca

Thank you to our speakers and participants for your contribution to this outstanding conference!

Out and About

A Conversation about Aging Well in the Face of Ageism



The NSCA, Kathryn Allen Weldon Chair in Alzheimer's Research and the Halifax Public Libraries hosted a public conversation on ageism as a barrier to aging well and what we can do about it on October 6. The event was in recognition of United Nations' International Day of Older Persons (Oct 1), National Seniors Day in Canada (Oct 1), Nova Scotia Seniors Week (Oct 2-9) and Ageism Awareness Week (Oct 1-9).

Have you Heard...

Dr. Keefe receives 2025 Distinguished Alumni Award from UPEI



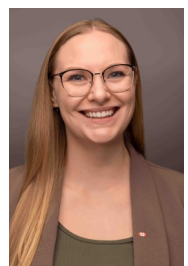
Photo credit: UPEI

Dr. Keefe has been awarded the 2025 Distinguished Alumni Award at the University of Prince Edward Island. Each year the Alumni Association commemorates one or more of our alumni for their outstanding contributions to knowledge, the arts, the community, the university, or humanity. Congratulations Dr. Keefe!

Welcome Dr. Heather Dicks & Dr. Kaitlyn Kuryk



The NSCA is pleased to welcome Dr. Heather Dicks. Dr. Dicks holds a PhD in Sociology from Memorial University of Newfoundland & Labrador (MUN), and she recently joined the NSCA to work as a Postdoctoral Fellow with the team on the Atlantic Research Collaboration on Long-Term Care (ARC LTC). In addition to her Fellowship, Dr. Dicks is teaching part-time within the Department of Aging and Family Science.



The NSCA is pleased to welcome Dr. Kaitlyn Kuryk. Dr. Kuryk holds a PhD in Sociology from the University of Manitoba, and she recently joined the NSCA (remotely) to work as a Postdoctoral Fellow with the Homecare Pathways Project. In addition to her Fellowship, Dr. Kuryk is teaching part-time in the Department of Aging and Family Science at MSVU, and in the Department of Sociology and Criminology at the University of Manitoba.

Presentations & Publications

Publications

Hoben, M. Kilmen, S., Keefe, J., O'Rourke, H. M., Banerjee, S., & Estabrooks, C. A. (2025). Measurement invariance and differential item functioning of a care staff proxy measure of nursing home resident dementia-specific quality of life (DEMQOL-CH): Do care aides' first language, and residents' ethno-cultural background matter? *Social Science & Medicine*, 375, 118089. doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.118089

Presentations

Mah, J., Quach, J., Stevens, S. Rockwood, K., Keefe, J., Andrew, M., & Godin, J. (2025, June). *Relationship between formal home care hours and social vulnerability among older adults in Nova Scotia followed for 10 years*. [Oral]. Our Future is Aging: Multidisciplinary Research Informing People, Policy and Practice Conference, Halifax, NS.

Kuryk, K., O'Neil, K., Funk, L., Macdonald, M., Martin Matthews, A., & Keefe, J. (2025, June). *Continuing engagement: Home care clients' contributions to family and community*. [Oral]. Our Future is Aging: Multidisciplinary Research Informing People, Policy and Practice Conference, Halifax, NS.

McCloskey, R., Morris, P., & Keefe, J. (2025, June). *Does residents' responsive behaviors affect care aides' quality of work life in long term care (LTC) homes in Atlantic Canada*. [Oral]. Our Future is Aging: Multidisciplinary Research Informing People, Policy and Practice Conference, Halifax, NS.

Holland, M.R., Keefe, J., Poss, J., Mitchell, L., & Mah, J. (2025, May). *Do structural inequalities lead to home care clients receiving less support when a caregiver is present?* [Oral]. Canadian Association for Health Services and Policy Research Conference, Ottawa, ON.

Mah, J., Keefe, J., Poss, J., & Mitchell, L. (2025, May). *Sex differences in home care responsiveness to hospitalizations among older home care clients in Nova Scotia and Winnipeg Regional Health Authority*. Canadian Geriatrics Society 2025 Annual Scientific

Dr. F.R. MacKinnon Endowment Fund

If you would like to support the efforts of the NSCA, contributions can be made to the Dr. F.R. MacKinnon Fund through the Mount's University Advancement Office at giving@msvu.ca

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**. It is located within the Dr. Rosemarie Sampson Centre on Aging and affiliated with the Nova Scotia Centre on Aging.

Recent published papers:

· Hamm, S., Teerawichitchainan, B., Zimmer, Z. & Nguyen, MH. (2025). Patterns of productive aging among Vietnamese war survivors: The influential role of early-life war exposure and past military service. *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*. July 25; 80(8): gbaf108. doi: 10.1093/geronb/gbaf108.

· Zhuang BC, Jude MS, Konwar C, Yusupov N, Ryan CP, Engelbrecht HR, Whitehead J, Halberstam AA, MacIsaac JL, Dever K, Tran TK, Korinek K, Zimmer Z, Lee NR, McDade TW, Kuzawa CW, Huffman KM, Belsky DW, Binder EB, Czamara D, Korthauer K, & Kobor MS. (Preprint, 2025 June 12) Accounting for differences between Infinium MethylationEPIC v2 and v1 in DNA methylation-based tools. *bioRxiv* doi: 10.1101/2024.07.02.600461.

· Grol-Prokopczyk H, Huang R, Yu C, Chen YA, Kaur S, Limani M, Lin TH, Zajacova A, Zimmer Z, Cowan P, Fillingim RB, Gewandter JS, Gilron I, Hirsh AT, Macfarlane GJ, Meghani SH, Patel KV, Poleshuck EL, Strain EC, Symons FJ, Wesselmann U, Dworkin RH, & Turk DC. (2025). Over 50 years of research on social disparities in pain and pain treatment: A scoping review of reviews. *Pain*. 2025 Nov 1;166(11):2458-2472. doi: 10.1097/j.pain.0000000000003676.

· Low, T., Teerawichitchainan, B., Zimmer, Z., & Toan, T. (2024). Later-life social network profiles of male war survivors in Vietnam: Implications for health behaviors. *Social Science and Medicine*. 362 (117465).

For more information go to:
www.globalagingandcommunity.com

Stay up to date...follow us on Facebook, X, Youtube and Bluesky



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