

# Nova Scotia Centre on Aging

Spring 2021 Newsletter

## CARPE DIEM – Let’s use pandemic lessons to change the story for long-term care

Never was there a more applicable term than “Carpe Diem or Seize the Day” in relation to the care of older people in long-term care (LTC). We have witnessed deplorable situations, learned about the devastating consequences of visiting restrictions, been embarrassed by Canada’s unprecedented death rates, and are only beginning to understand the post trauma effects for staff, residents and family. It truly has been a horrible and stressful situation for those living, working and supporting loved ones in the more than 2000 care homes in Canada.

Yes, on a positive note, LTC residents were among the first to receive the COVID-19 vaccine in Canada. This was an important and necessary step to protect the most vulnerable in our society against this deadly disease. The vaccine is providing some relief as the virus continues to rage but vaccines are not the solution to the conditions that gave rise to the horrific pandemic events.

We have heard many times during the last year that what happened in LTC was not a surprise. There were numerous commissions, task forces and expert panels prior to the pandemic raising concerns about the conditions in LTC; all with recommendations calling for change. Unfortunately, priority was not given to LTC. During the pandemic

several more commissions and panels were struck to review what happened during the pandemic and, again, these recommended changes. I, and many of my colleagues, have contributed to the dialogue through participation on national panels, editorials, media interviews, etc. This awareness of the shortfalls is greatly needed but awareness alone is not enough. Action is needed. Change is essential. A serious and immediate commitment by our governments is required to implement critical changes that will value the quality of life of residents and their families, as well as the quality of work life for the staff.

As we start to see the end of pandemic on the horizon, we have a moral obligation to act. We cannot return to normal operations because the normal way we deliver care is neither acceptable nor sustainable. There will be challenges sorting out the way forward given federal-provincial jurisdictional responsibilities but it can be done if there is a will.

I encourage all of you to keep raising your voices about LTC. Let’s not become complacent. Let’s ensure that the legacy of the pandemic is changing the story for those who live, work and support someone living in LTC. Let us seize the opportunity to make fundamental change to improve our long-term care system. Carpe Diem!

*Janice*



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.



## What's Happening...

### Researchers conducting third set of interviews with study's home care constellations



This spring, researchers with the **Home Care Pathways** project are holding their third and final interviews with members of the 12 care constellations at both the Nova Scotia and Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA) sites. The initial interviews took place in the summer/fall of 2019. These

interviews with home care clients, caregivers, care coordinators, home support workers and agency supervisors over three points in time will offer rich insights into clients' pathways through the home care system, and will also have a pandemic lens.

Other members of the Pathways team continue with their analysis of client assessment data for Nova Scotia and WHRA and the examination of policies that inform client and worker experience. A number of manuscripts are in development. The 20+ member team is meeting in May, virtually, to discuss emerging findings and plans for knowledge translation activities.

Stay up to date [www.homecarepathways.ca](http://www.homecarepathways.ca)

### Home Care Pathways Team welcomes Dr. Mary Jean Hande as Postdoctoral Fellow

Dr. Hande is a community-engaged critical gerontologist with a strong background in health research using qualitative research methods investigating the care of older people in both Manitoba and Nova Scotia. She recently held a Postdoctoral Fellowship with the Centre's *Seniors-Adding Life to Years (SALTY)* project. Dr. Hande will be assisting with the care constellation interviews and supporting the integration of policy context through the study's findings.



Congratulations, Dr. Hande!

## Results emerging to support change in long-term care



Researchers with the **Seniors-Adding Life to Years (SALTY)** project are in their final stages of preparing deliverables:

- Three manuscripts are accepted or in press in leading journals such as *The Gerontologist* (see below), *Canadian Journal on Aging*, *Social Science and Medicine* and several others are under review or in progress.
- A presentation is being made at Canadian Association of Health Services Policy Research Annual Conference in May.
- A series of lay summaries highlighting key findings is soon to be released.
- An edited book.

Sincere thanks to the individuals who supported the project as research participants, study sites, and advisory members. It is hoped that results emerging from this multi year pan-Canadian study focused on quality of life in long term care will support change for those who live, work and visit care homes across Canada.

Check out the study's video at: <https://vimeo.com/389017178> Keep up to date with the latest on the team's dissemination activities at: [www.SALTYItc.ca](http://www.SALTYItc.ca)

@SALTY\_Itc SALTYItc

Check out the recent publication in *The Gerontologist* that looks at how existing long-term residential care policy in Canada guides staff in enhancing multiple aspects of resident quality of life, including dignity, physical comfort, autonomy, meaningful activity, and relationships.



Special Issue: Workforce Issues in Long-Term Care: Research Article  
**Long-Term Residential Care Policy Guidance for Staff to Support Resident Quality of Life**

Mary Jean Hande, PhD,<sup>1</sup> Janice Keefe, PhD,<sup>1,2\*</sup> and Deanne Taylor, PhD<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Nova Scotia Centre on Aging, Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada; <sup>2</sup>Department Family Studies and Gerontology, Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada; <sup>3</sup>Interior Health Authority, Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada.

\*Address correspondence to: Janice Keefe, PhD, Nova Scotia Centre on Aging, Mount Saint Vincent University, 207 McCain Centre, 188 Bedford Highway, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3M 2J8, Canada. E-mail: [janice.keefe@msvu.ca](mailto:janice.keefe@msvu.ca)

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**Abstract**  
Background and Objectives: Amidst a complex policy landscape, long-term residential care (LTRC) staff must navigate directives to provide safe care while also considering resident-preferred quality of life (QoL) supports, which are sometimes

## Gaining insights about support visitation programs in long-term care during pandemic



Interviews are underway with staff and families within the participating care homes in NS and PEI as part of the **LTC Family Visitation** project. Five research assistants are conducting the interviews which will offer insights about the implementation of both province's public health directive to increase family presence during COVID: Designated Caregiver (NS) and Partner in Care (PEI). More than 75 interviews have been completed to date. Researchers are also consulting with informants from three other jurisdictions implementing similar visitation programs to learn from and share lessons. For more information on the project, contact coordinator [paula.richardson@msvu.ca](mailto:paula.richardson@msvu.ca)

## Have you Heard...

### Funding approved for study on quality of work life in NS care homes

Dr. Janice Keefe has received funding for research on quality of work life in Nova Scotia's care homes. Areas to be examined include: job satisfaction, burnout, work engagement, organizational context, etc. with attention given to the impact of COVID-19 on quality of work life. Established survey tools available from the Translating Research in Elder Care program at the University of Alberta will be used with participating care homes in Nova Scotia.

Funder:



### MSVU site for SSHRC-funded CANd3 project



Interested in a training opportunity to develop data analytic skills with "big data"? We are pleased to be a partner on the Consortium on Analytics for Data-Driven Decision-Making (CANd3) program. This is an integrated, interdisciplinary program for tackling population aging using powerful analytics. Go to [www.mcgill.ca/cand3/](http://www.mcgill.ca/cand3/) to learn more or contact [nsc@msvu.ca](mailto:nsc@msvu.ca).

## Dr. Keefe reappointed Director of NSCA



Dr. Janice Keefe has been reappointed as the Lena Isabel Jodrey Chair in Gerontology, Mount Saint Vincent University, and has also been reappointed as the Director of the Mount's Nova Scotia Centre on Aging for another 5 year term (2021- 2026).

## Postdoctoral Fellowship available

We are accepting applications for a Postdoctoral Fellowship position with the project: How Approaches to Care Shape the Pathways of Older Adult Home Care Clients. For more information go to [www.homecarepathways.ca](http://www.homecarepathways.ca)

## Out and About (Virtually)

### "Let's Talk Care" podcast series a success!



Trainees with the SALTY research project are excited about the response to their podcast series that examines

issues in long-term care. They have listeners from across Canada and also from United States, Mexico and Europe. Their series offers insights from the perspective of early career researchers as well as special guests. Access the series through top podcast directories:

- Quality of Life
- Power and Marginalization
- Working in Long-Term Care
- Family Presence in Long-Term Care
- Living with Dementia

Podcast hosts:



Mary Jean Hande



Emily Hubley



Marco Redden

## Presentations & Publications

### Publications:

Mah, J., Stevens, S., Keefe, J., Rockwood, K., & Andrew, M. (2021). Social factors influencing utilization of home care in community-dwelling older adults: A scoping review. *BMC Geriatrics*, 219(145), 1–21. doi.org/10.1186/s12877-021-02069-1

Hande, M.J., Keefe, J., & Taylor, D. (2021, online). Long-term residential care policy guidance for staff to support resident quality of life. *The Gerontologist*, gnaa176, doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnaa176

Hande, M.J., Taylor, D., & Keefe, J. (2021). The role of volunteers in enhancing resident quality of life in long term care: Analyzing policies that may enable or limit this role. *Canadian Journal on Aging*, 1-12, doi:10.1017/S07114980821000106.

### Presentations:

Keefe, J. (2021, February). Improvements for long-term care in Canada and NS (LTC). Presentation for Canadian Federation of University Women, Virtual, February 24.

Keefe, J. (2021, February). Falling through the cracks: Long-term care and COVID-19. Panel presentation, MacEachen Institute, Dalhousie University, Virtual, February 18.

Keefe, J., & Carriere, Y. (2020, December). When policy domains collide: Trends and projections of effective retirement age and its impact on care. CAnD3 Training Program, Lunch & Learn Series (Webinar). December 9.

Aubrecht, A., Burke, R., Gahagan, J., Dowling, L., Kelly, C., Hande, M.J., Hardie, S., & Keefe, J. (2020, November). Health equity impacts of COVID-19 policies on dementia-relevant community services: A SGBA+ policy scan. Poster presentation to the GSA 2020 Annual Scientific Meeting, November 4-7, virtual.

Gruneir, A., Hoben, M., Jensen, C., Buencamino, M., Easterbrook, A., Tompalski, J., Marshall, S., Murphy, R., Keefe, J., & Estabrooks, C. (2020, November). Priorities for end of life reporting in nursing homes: Results from a mixed methods study. Oral presentation to GSA 2020 Annual Scientific Meeting, November 4-7, virtual.

Jensen, C., Gruneir, A., Hoben, M., Tompalski, J., Easterbrook, A., Buencamino, M., Keefe, J., Murphy, R., Estabrooks, C., & Marshall, S. (2020, November). The Action Project Method applied in nursing home settings. Oral presentation to GSA 2020 Annual Scientific Meeting, November 4-7, virtual.

## Opportunities to Support NSCA

### 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 902-457-6470.

## 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 in the Dr. Rosemarie Sampson Centre on Aging and is affiliated with the Nova Scotia Centre on Aging.

**New grants:** CIHR Project Grant: “Long-term Effects of War on Health of Older Persons within a Rapidly Aging Population: The Case of Vietnam.” Dr. Zimmer Principal Investigator; four-years \$1.2 CAD million. SSHRC grant: “Social Causes and Consequences of Chronic Pain” Dr. Anna Zajacova, University of Western Ontario, GACI Affiliated Scientist, Principal Investigator.

**Ongoing projects:** GACI continues with two primary grants from the US NIH: “The Demography of Chronic Pain: A Population Approach to Pain Trends, Pain Disparities, and Pain-Related Disability and Death”, is headed by GACI Affiliated Scientist Dr. Hanna Grol-Prokopczyk, University of Buffalo. “Health and Aging Post Conflict: War’s Enduring Effects Among Survivors in Vietnam,” is led by GACI Affiliated Scientist Dr. Kim Korinek, University of Utah.

### Recent publications:

“Education, wealth, and duration of life expected in various states of frailty,” authored by Zimmer and colleagues, *European Journal of Ageing*.

“War across the life course: Examining the impact of exposure to conflict on a comprehensive inventory of health measures in an aging Vietnamese population,” authored by Zimmer and GACI Research Associate Kathryn Fraser, *International Journal of Epidemiology*.

**Other news:** Post-doctoral scholar Feinuo Sun will join GACI in August 2022. Sun is completing her Ph.D. in Sociology at the University at Albany, State University of New York.

For more information visit:  
[www.globalagingandcommunity.com](http://www.globalagingandcommunity.com)

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### Contact us:

Nova Scotia Centre on Aging T: 902-457-6546  
Mount Saint Vincent University E: [nsca@msvu.ca](mailto:nsca@msvu.ca)  
166 Bedford Highway [www.msvu.ca/nsca](http://www.msvu.ca/nsca)  
Halifax, NS B3M 2J6