

Nova Scotia Centre on Aging

Spring 2026 Newsletter

Supporting Aging in Place Means Supporting Family and Friend Caregiving

There is a lot of talk these days about supporting older adults to remain at home and in their communities as long as possible, in other words “Aging in Place”. This is practical given the limited capacity of our long-term care systems, but more importantly, it reflects what people want. Evidence suggests that this preference strengthens with age, increasing from 77% among adults aged 50–64 to 85% among those aged 65–79, to 87% among adults aged 80 and older. At the same time, as we get older, the likelihood of living with physical and cognitive functional limitations and frailty increases. Having access to a supportive network of family and friends in later life can support aging in place.

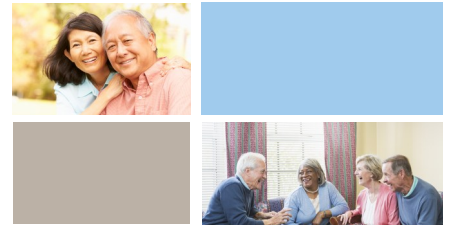
Despite the important role family/friend caregivers play in our health and social care systems, their needs are often less recognized. While caregiving can bring benefits and joy to some, many caregivers feel tired, worried, or anxious. Women provide more hours of care than men, and spouses more than adult children. Many are also balancing caregiving with paid work. The context of caregiving is further shaped by factors such as distance, quality of relationships, behaviours, duration of caregiving, competing responsibilities, and support from others. What caregivers do, and the challenges they face in their role can have significant physical, financial and mental impacts. So, when we talk about supporting “aging in place”, we also need to talk about supporting family/friend caregivers.

Support for caregivers is needed along with an ongoing understanding of how best to provide it. A few provinces offer caregivers financial benefits, but this is

typically limited by strict eligibility criteria. Most provinces have programs that offer caregivers a break or respite through day programs, in-home respite workers and temporary placement in a nursing home. Some workplaces offer employees with caregiving responsibilities designated paid leave days or flexible work schedules. Organizations like the Alzheimer Society and caregivers’ groups offer education and opportunities to connect with peers. These initiatives are critical to supporting family/friend caregivers, but much more is needed to achieve aging in place objectives.

My 30+ year career has had a strong emphasis on family/friend caregiving, as has the work of the Nova Scotia Centre on Aging. While our work has contributed to enhancements in policy and practice, greater attention is urgently needed especially with the intensified focus on aging in place. Several organizations are working to advance a public policy agenda about family/friend caregiving, including the Canadian Centre of Caregiving Excellence, Caregivers Nova Scotia, the Ontario Caregiver Organization, and provincial Alzheimer societies. I am also pleased to be working with an extensive team of researchers and interest holders on a project that is building knowledge about the wellbeing of employees with caregiving responsibilities. All these efforts, and many others, are critical to ensuring caregivers’ voices remain present.

Aging in place is an important policy goal, but it should not be achieved at the expense of family/friend caregivers. May is National Caregiver Awareness Month in Canada. If you are a caregiver, thank you for the important work you do. Aging in place is not possible without you.



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.

Advancing Aging Research. Enhancing Lives of Older Adults.



MSVU.CA/NSCA

What's Happening...

Results emerging to support change for staff in long-term care

Researchers with the Atlantic Research Collaboration in Long-term Care (ARC LTC) continue to share study results from the survey with more 2000 staff from 53 care homes in Atlantic Canada. The findings have the potential to influence change in the sector, and the team is committed to sharing results widely.

Since last fall, there were 14 presentations at various conferences and events aimed at national, regional and local audiences. In 2026, the team will be at eight conferences, covering a range of disciplines and professional groups, with 11 presentations. To date more than 20 papers have been submitted for publication or are in development.



ARC LTC team members at CAG2025 in Montreal, where 5 presentations from the project were given.

Similar to CAG2025, the ARC LTC team will have a strong presence at

CAG2026 in Charlottetown as part of several symposia and presentations, as well as a knowledge mobilization workshop. CAG2026 will be a valuable opportunity to showcase this exciting regional collaboration in its own backyard!

Work is also progressing on gaining access to resident assessment data to analyze with the staff survey data.

Congratulations to ARC LTC trainees Amber Duynisveld (MSVU) and Kayla MacLeod (UNB) on completing their Master's theses – well done!

Keep up to date at www.arcltc.ca

Instagram: [@ARC.LTC](https://www.instagram.com/ARC.LTC)

Facebook: [Atlantic Research Collaboration on Long-Term Care](https://www.facebook.com/AtlanticResearchCollaborationonLongTermCare)

LinkedIn: [Atlantic Research Collaboration on Long-Term Care](https://www.linkedin.com/company/AtlanticResearchCollaborationonLongTermCare)



National conference on aging In Atlantic Canada



The Centre's Director Dr. Janice Keefe and Dr. Jessica Strong (UPEI) have teamed up to co-chair the 55th annual scientific and education meeting of the Canadian Association on Gerontology being held in Charlottetown from October 15 to 17, 2026. This is the first time this national event has been in the region since 2019, and the first time ever to held in Prince Edward Island.

Keynote speakers will address critical and emerging topics in aging including: climate change, the animal-human bond and culturally responsive transnational research. The conference will feature hundreds of presentations spanning health and biological sciences, social sciences, social policy and practice, psychology and educational gerontology.

This is an event that Atlantic Canadians with an interest in matters related to aging won't want to miss! For more information go to: www.cag2026.ca

NSCA launches project to address ageism

A new project is underway at the Centre that will produce 9 audio podcasts on topics that will offer a fresh perspective on aging. Episodes will feature researchers and older adults and aim to encourage an engaged dialogue about the experience of growing older. Topics to include: rural communities, employment, creativity, and many more.

First episode to be released in September. Thanks to the Entente Foundation for supporting this innovative work.

Animating research: Turning evidence into short video stories

Led by post-doctoral researcher Dr. Heather Dicks, the ARC LTC team is bringing research evidence to life by creating short animated videos. The videos are intended to make research findings more accessible to a wider audience. Two videos have been released and more are expected over the coming months.



Alongside the video development, the team is evaluating whether this is an effective and appropriate way of sharing research with a broader audience. The evaluation involves screening the first video with three focus groups, gathering real-time feedback on each video through online surveys, and tracking social media engagement. In April, research assistant, Dina Sallam, shared preliminary findings about the video project at the Northwood Research Symposium.

To view the videos, go to www.arcltc.ca, social media channels, or the NSCA YouTube channel. And don't forget to tell us what you think!

Out and About

Dr. Keefe panelist on Elder Action Day Webinar

Dr. Keefe was a panelist on the Elder Action Day webinar, *The Condition of Home Care in Canada: What Do We Know? What can we do?* hosted by the Canadian Federation of University Women. This was an important national conversation about Aging in Place—and the conditions needed to help Canadians live safely, independently, and with dignity in their own homes as they age.

Dr. Keefe panelist at Northwood Research Symposium



Dr. Keefe was a panelist at this year's Northwood Research Symposium, sharing her insights about translating research into practice.

Have you Heard...

Official launch of MSVU'S Department of Aging and Family Science new programs

June 2 is the official kick off event for the MSVU's new academic programs as part of the Department of Aging and Family Science (formerly Department of Gerontology and Family Studies).

The event is celebrating the changing yet important role of families across the life span in Canadian society, and how the Department's new programs will prepare professionals to work in this exciting field.

June 2 @ 12:00 pm ADT, hybrid and in person at Mount Saint Vincent University, Register through Eventbrite



Dr. Keefe reappointed as Lena Isabel Jodrey Chair in Gerontology

Dr. Janice Keefe, Professor and Chair, Department of Aging and Family Science has been reappointed as the Lena Isabel Jodrey Chair in Gerontology for another five-year term, and by association the Director of the Nova Scotia Centre on Aging.

NSCA hosts practicum student



Natasha Beuree-Edwards is completing a practicum placement with the ARC-LTC project this spring and summer. Natasha is a student in the Master of Applied Health Services Research Program and interested in enhancing data analytics and knowledge dissemination skills.

Dr. Keefe receives Dr. Janet Fast Research Excellence Award

Dr. Keefe received the Dr. Janet Fast Research Excellence Award. The Award recognizes researchers who make significant contributions to advance knowledge on caregiving. The Award was presented by the Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence at their Gala event in Ottawa.

Presentations & Publications

Publications

Mah, J., Godin, J., Stevens, S., Keefe, J., Rockwood, K., & Andrew, M. (2026). Social vulnerability and frailty associations with home care hours among community dwelling older adults followed for ten years in Nova Scotia, Canada. *Research Connections*, 2(1), vmag028, <https://doi.org/10.1093/rescon/vmag028>

Dusing, G. J., Corbett, K., Dymchuk, E., O'Rourke, H., Chamberlain, S. A., Doupe, M. B., Kelly, C., Keefe, J., Aubrecht, K., Beeber, A. S., Arya, A., Banerjee, S., Jarrett, P., Estabrooks, C. A., Shrestha, S., Devkota, R., Ristau, M., & Hoben, M. (2026). Clinical, social, and home-level factors associated with the quality of life of residents living with dementia in Canadian nursing homes: A cross-sectional, multi-province study. *Health Qual Life Outcomes*. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12955-026-02539-3>

Funk, L., Kuryk, K., O'Neil, K., Warner, G., Macdonald, M., & Keefe, J. (2025). Understanding change in home care pathways over time through longitudinal qualitative inquiry. *Canadian Journal on Aging*, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S071498082510038X>

Presentations

Sallam, D., Dicks, H., Hubley, E., O'Neil, K., & Keefe, J. (2026, April 30). How a user-centered approach can inform the development of short research videos. [Poster presentation]. Northwood Research Symposium. Halifax.

Grittner, A., Keefe J., & Macdonald, M.E. (2026, April 30). Innovations in Aging – From Research to Implementation. [Panel discussion]. Northwood's 14th Annual Research Symposium – Innovating Care, Empowering Lives, Halifax.

Andrew, M., Duynisveld, A., Adefemi, K., McCloskey, R., & Keefe, J. (2026, April 23-25). Unit-level organizational context in relation to responsive behaviours experienced by care aids in long term care facilities: An Atlantic Research Collaboration on Long-Term Care study [Virtual poster presentation]. Canadian Geriatrics Society 2026 Annual Scientific Meeting, Montreal.

Keefe, J. (2026, January 15). Atlantic Research Collaboration on Long-Term Care. [Presentation, online] to the Atlantic Advisory Committee on Health Human Resources.

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 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:

· Engelbrech, H., Konwar, C., Zhuang, B., Dever, K., Maclsaac, J., McDade, T., Khanh Toan, T., Korinek, K., Zimmer, Z., & Kobar, M. (forthcoming). Strong concordance of DNA methylation measures between venous and capillary blood – implications for human epigenome studies. *IScience*.

· Zimmer, Z., Korinek, K., Kuy, K., Young, Y., & Khanh Toan, T. (forthcoming). Post-traumatic stress mediates the association between early-life war exposure and late-life disability: A study of Vietnamese war survivors. *Journal of Aging and Health*.

· Ruan, H., Grol-Prokopczyk, H., Zimmer, Z., & Zajacova, A. (2026 preprint). Educational disparities in disability in mid- to late-life: How much is attributable to pain. *Journal of Aging and Health*. doi: 10.1177/08982643251413824

· Huang, R., Li, Y., Grol-Prokopczyk, H., Zimmer, Z., & Khanh Toan, T. (2026 preprint). Early-life war exposure and later-life chronic pain in Vietnam: Risk, resilience, and timing. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. doi.org/10.1177/00221465251401249

· Huang, R., Srinakaran, K., Zajacova, A., Zimmer, Z., Palermo, T., & Grol-Prokopczyk, H. (2026). Country-level gender inequality and sex disparities in adolescent chronic pain: A 47-country analysis. *Preventive Medicine*. doi: 10.1016/j.ypmed.2026.

Invited Lecture:

· The demography of chronic pain. Faculty of Social Sciences, HKU Research Hub of Population Studies, Sau Po Centre on Ageing, Hong Kong University. December 10, 2025.

For more information go to:

www.globalagingandcommunity.com

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