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## Supporting the Caregiver: At Work and at Home

Many of us have heard the phrase, “our population is aging”, but what does that really mean and how will our aging population affect our families and communities?

As our population ages, more seniors will require care and this care is usually provided by a family member or friend. In Canada, 70% of care providers are family and friends. Family and friend care providers help with transportation, household work, coordinate appointments, manage finances, help with medical care and provide personal care.

Caregivers may face difficulties balancing work and care responsibilities, which can have employment implications. The 2012 General Social Survey tells us that employed caregivers had reduced their regular working hours over the past 12 months. Other findings are: almost 1 in 10 employed caregivers quit work to care, 22% take 1 or more months off work, 41% say their mental health suffered, 38% say their physical health suffered. Increased demand placed on caregivers may result in higher levels of stress and worse health.

So what do employed caregivers need? Employers can provide flex time, a compressed work week, paid time off for appointments or an option to work from home. Employers

can provide financial support, paid/unpaid leaves, information referral and support services and recognition and respect. A stronger option for employers is to implement a workplace policy.

Most of you know my research has focused on the development of public policy to support family and friend caregiving. We have examined policies internationally, ways in which existing policies could be enhanced, and developed a Caregiver Assessment tool (the C.A.R.E. Tool) to recognize that caregivers themselves have a role in identifying what would best support their situation. Recently, I took a different approach in my work. I welcomed the opportunity to join Minister Wong’s recently announced Employers for Caregiver Panel as a Content Expert. In this role I will be sharing evidence-based research and providing advice as panel members identify successful and promising workplace practices to support employees with caregiving responsibilities.

Employers are becoming more aware of the needs of their employees who are in a caregiving role, but more workplace policies and resources are needed.

We know that family and friend caregivers are important to our families, communities and workforce. Now we need to find ways to recognize and support what they do.



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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...

### Study on Nursing Homes Shares Results

The Care and Construction team continues to work on sharing results from the project. Since the beginning of the project, results have been shared in a number of presentations at nursing homes and in over 20 presentations at national and international conferences. Team members sharing results this fall at the Canadian Association on Gerontology (CAG) and the Gerontological Society of America meetings in Washington. Among those presenting results at CAG are two Masters-level students, Sacha Nadeau and Stephanie Chamberlain, who have recently defended their thesis research using project data.

A video sharing the overall results from the project was released this summer. The video can be viewed on YouTube through the project's website and a DVD copy was sent to each of the nursing homes in the province. To keep updated on the release of ongoing results from the project, visit the project's website at [www.careandconstruction.ca](http://www.careandconstruction.ca). The team is excited to be sharing results at a workshop in November for nursing home administrators. The workshop will look at how to support healthy workplaces and employee engagement within long term care. Registration for the workshop is free. Those interested can contact the project office at 1-877-302-4440 (toll-free) or [careandconstruction@msvu.ca](mailto:careandconstruction@msvu.ca).

### Study on Older LGBT Population Preparing For Later Life Underway

NSCA is collaborating on a national project that will examine how older LGBT individuals are looking ahead and preparing for later life and end of life. The project will also create an online community to support education and foster connection among LGBT older adults and their caregivers. The Centre will work with Co-investigator Dr. Áine Humble, Department of Family Studies & Gerontology, MSVU and other local stakeholders – NS Rainbow Action Project, Department of Seniors and Pride Health. This fall, focus groups are being held to understand barriers for later life planning and explore the role of technology to support planning. For more information contact [LGBT-end-of-life@msvu.ca](mailto:LGBT-end-of-life@msvu.ca).

### Supporting Dialogue about Age-Friendly Communities



Two brochures are available which highlight messages about important elements of an age-friendly community - **Home and Community Supports** and **Social Engagement**. Drawing on information gathered during the age-friendly community consultation work with municipalities in Nova Scotia, NSCA staff have been working with a multi-sectoral advisory group to shape the content of these brochures. The brochures are intended to raise awareness about these issues and be a tool to engage stakeholders in dialogue. In October, the NSCA is hosting a webinar with stakeholders across Nova Scotia to discuss the key messages from this work and to share examples of initiatives underway in the province.

### NSCA Supports Development of Provincial Dementia Strategy

Earlier this year, the Minister of Health and Wellness announced the development of a provincial dementia strategy. Since that time, the Department of Health and Wellness and the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia have been co-leading an Advisory Committee that will guide the development of Nova Scotia's first comprehensive plan to enhance delivery of dementia care and treatment to ensure persons living with dementia and their families are well supported. The NSCA is supporting the work of the Strategy by leading and participating in working groups. NSCA has also been engaged to support specific aspects of the Strategy's development. This fall, Dr. Keefe will be facilitating consultations for the public and health care professionals throughout the province and NSCA will be supporting the work to develop an evaluation framework for the Strategy. The Strategy is expected to be released in Spring of 2015

## NSCA Part of National Consortium on Dementia

The NSCA is pleased to announce that Dr. Janice Keefe will be participating in the Canadian Consortium on Neurodegeneration in Aging (CCNA) with Team 18. CCNA is a national initiative aimed at tackling the growing onset of dementia and related illnesses and improving the lives of Canadians with these illnesses, as well as their families and caregivers. Dr. Keefe's involvement on this Team includes leading a pilot project in Nova Scotia that will implement and evaluate a therapeutic skills training program for employees who provide support to a person living with dementia.

## Advice Seeking Networks in Long Term Care

NSCA is working with a project led by Dr. Carole Estabrooks, University of Alberta and others that will identify and examine networks within residential long-term care sectors across Canada. This three-year project funded by Canadian Institutes of Health Research will generate results to support the spread of innovations and best practices to enhance resident care in nursing homes. This fall, NSCA is coordinating the implementation of a survey for senior administrators in nursing homes throughout Atlantic Canada. For more information visit [www.trec.uaberta.ca/Projects/SNA](http://www.trec.uaberta.ca/Projects/SNA)

## NSCA "Out and About"



## Café Scientifique Draws Full House

The NSCA's 3rd Cafe Scientifique, *Innovations in Nursing Homes - Are they Making a Difference?* welcomed a full house at the Coffee Culture Café & Eatery. Those in attendance enjoyed an informal public discussion about the results of two significant studies specifically designed to understand innovations in care in Nova Scotia nursing homes. The audience had an opportunity to listen to experts: Dr. Janice Keefe, Dr. Emily Gard Marshall and Ann McInnis. The event was moderated by Nancy Regan.

## NSCA Co-Hosts World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Event

In recognition of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 2014, the Department of Seniors, Nova Scotia Legal Information Society, and Nova Scotia Centre on Aging hosted an event on June 18<sup>th</sup> which focused on the launch of a web-page developed through the Elder Abuse Awareness for Health Care Providers Project.

## Have you Heard?

## Dr. Keefe an Advisor for Canadian Employers For Caregivers Plan



Dr. Keefe has been invited to participate in the Canadian Employers for Caregivers Plan as an advisor to the panel; an initiative recently announced by the Government of Canada. The Plan is intended to help maximize caregivers' labour market participation. Dr. Keefe gave the presentation *Supporting the Caregiver: At Work and at Home* to the Ministry of Seniors in June hosted a round table for employers in Halifax in September. The Panel is inviting employers to complete a questionnaire about their workplace policies at [www.esdc.gc.ca/eng/seniors/cecp/index.shtml](http://www.esdc.gc.ca/eng/seniors/cecp/index.shtml)

## New Website for Healthcare Professionals

The Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia, working in collaboration with the Nova Scotia Centre on Aging, Mount Saint Vincent University and the Nova Scotia Department of Seniors, has developed a website to improve access to information about abuse of older adults for healthcare professionals. The website helps healthcare professionals assess their knowledge of abuse of older adults and provides information about signs of abuse. Go to [www.legalinfo.org/ElderAbuse/](http://www.legalinfo.org/ElderAbuse/) for more information.

## Presentations

### Publications

St-Amant, O., Ward-Griffin, C., Browne, J.B., Martin-Matthews, A., Sutherland, N., Keefe, J., & Kerr, M. (2014). Professionalizing familial care: Examining nurses' unpaid family care work. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 37(2), 117-131.

Keefe, J., & Krawchenko, T. (2014, March). *An International comparison of priority setting and planning for an aging population*. Report prepared for the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Keefe, J., Ogilvie, R., Stevens, S., MacPherson, D., & Stoddart, N. (2014, March). *Provincial/regional variation in availability, cost of delivery and wait times for accessing home care services to address avoidable admissions to long term care, alternate level of care bed days and hospitalization*. Report prepared for Health Canada.

### Presentations

Keefe, J., & Cammack, V. (2014, June). Supporting the caregiver: At work and at home. Presentation to the Canadian Employer Panel for Caregivers. Ministry of Seniors. Ottawa, ON.

Aubrecht, K., & Keefe, J. (July, 2014). Dementia and the political paradox of 'Normal Aging,' Theorising normalcy and the mundane. More Questions of the Human 5th Annual International Conference. Sheffield.

Manuel, P., Rapaport, E. & Keefe, J. (2014, June). Implications of climate change impacts in rural coastal communities with aging populations: Cases from Nova Scotia. Sixth International Conference on Climate Change. Reyjavik, Iceland.

Rapaport, E. Manuel, P., & Keefe, J. (2014, June). Implications of climate change impacts in rural coastal communities with aging populations. Coastal Zone Canada 2014 Conference. Halifax, NS.

Aubrecht, K., & Keefe, J. (2014, May). Wasted or well spent: Temporalities of intimacy in person-centred dementia care. Canadian Sociological Association. St. Catharines, ON.

Keefe, J., Stadnyk, R., & Boudreau, D. (2014, June). Nursing home resident quality of life: What makes the difference? Panel presentation at 4th Annual Northwood Research Symposium. Dartmouth, NS.

## Margaret Norrie McCain Centre to Open in the Summer of 2015



Construction continues on the new Margaret Norrie McCain Teaching, Learning and Research Centre which is scheduled to open in the summer of 2015.

The McCain Centre will be home to the Dr. Rosemarie Sampson Centre on Aging which will include new space for the Nova Scotia Centre on Aging enabling new synergies and opportunities.

The work is now focused on finishing the interior of the building.

### Receive NSCA Facebook Updates



If you would like to receive updates on NSCA activities and events, search Nova Scotia Centre on Aging on Facebook and like our page.

## Opportunities to Support NSCA

### F.R. MacKinnon Endowment Fund

If you would like to support the efforts of the NSCA, contributions can be made to the F.R. MacKinnon Fund through the Mount's University Advancement Office at 902-457-6470.

### Contact us:

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