

CanAge Connections

CanAge is Canada's national advocacy organization for older adults. We work to advance the rights and well-being of Canadians as we age in order to live vibrant and connected lives. This is the February 2021 edition of our monthly newsletter 'CanAge Connections'.

February is Heart Month!



Wear Red Canada

**February 13th, 2021
12:00pm-7:00pm EST**

The CWHHA and CWHHC have released their National Program for Wear Red Canada on February 13th. Hear from Canadian women's heart health experts and advocates from all areas of the country. Talks vary from mental health, to the impact of COVID on heart health to stress management. Free registration is available [online](#). Learn more about Wear Red Canada [online](#).

Did you know that men and women experience heart disease differently? When we think 'heart attack' we picture men clutching their chest in crushing pain, but the experience of women tends to be more subtle, such as shortness of breath, chest discomfort, or back/neck pain.

A lack of research in women's heart health means women are often underdiagnosed or mistreated. According to [Heart and Stroke](#), estrogen plays a significant role in reducing women's risk of heart problems e.g., helping manage cholesterol, but after menopause, their risk factors increase. Learn more about women's [unique risk factors](#).

When considering heart disease during COVID-19, [Heart and Stroke](#) recommends::

- 1  Checking your supply of prescriptions and inquiring with your local pharmacy about home delivery.
- 2  Keeping a list of contacts including caregivers, health providers, friends and family, and familiarize someone close with your prescriptions.
- 3  If you're stocking up on non-perishable foods, check the label and try to avoid high-sodium items.

As always, ensure that you're eating a [healthy diet](#) and getting regular [physical activity](#) while adhering to public safety guidelines.



Source: Ministry of Ontario



Visit [Heart and Stroke](#) online for heart-healthy tips on diet, exercise, stress, and more.

Wear Red Canada Day is hosted by the [Canadian Women's Heart Health Alliance](#) and funded by the [Canadian Women's Heart Health Centre](#). Every February 13th, Canadians gather to raise awareness about women's heart health. Events are held across the country to promote heart health and wellness. View the [National Program Schedule](#) for 2021 and register for events [online](#).

Government Relations

Where are we now?



The CanAge Policy and Advocacy team has continued to meet with government leaders to discuss our VOICES of Canada's Seniors: A Roadmap to An Age-Inclusive Canada. This past month, we had the opportunity to meet with the Honourable Erin O'Toole, Leader of the Official Opposition and the Conservative Party of Canada.

Our conversation focused primarily on section I - Infection Prevention and Disaster Response, and section C - Caregiving, Long-Term Care, Home Care, and Housing Resources of the VOICES Roadmap.

Recommendations

Recommendations that will improve the lives of Canadians that were discussed with Mr. O'Toole include:

- The creation of national standards in long-term care homes
- The need for more robust infection control measures
- Funding options for vaccination programs across the country
- Suggestions to update the Caregiver Tax Credit
- The need to investigate the stark rise in elder abuse during the time of COVID-19
- The urgency for a Seniors' Advocate at the Federal Government level
- The discussion and insights shared were well received

We appreciate our time with Mr. O'Toole and his team and look forward to future conversations and collaboration.

**FREE 1 Year
CanAge Membership**

JOIN



We'd love to have you join CanAge for **FREE** for 1 year. You can become a member of CanAge at **NO COST** to you. If you would like to be part of our CanAge Community, participating in online events, online surveys, and polls, as well as other CanAge initiatives, then take advantage of this founding membership offer. We'd love to have you [be part of CanAge](#).

In the News

CanAge is the go-to organization when journalists seek comment about the issues affecting older Canadians. Here are some recent highlights.

[Emergency Town Hall](#)

CanAge CEO Laura Tamblyn Watts was invited to participate in the Green Party of Canada's January 4th Emergency Press Conference on Long Term Care and a second on January 8th Emergency Press Conference on Long Term Care.

[Read more at CanAge.ca/media](#)

[CTV News Vancouver](#)

Care home staff struggle to isolate dementia patients during COVID-19 outbreaks, experts say: "It's a significant problem in the time of COVID-19 and long-term care," said Laura Tamblyn Watts, CEO of CanAge, a national seniors advocacy group.

[Read more at CanAge.ca/media](#)

[CTV News Barrie](#)

One-on-One with Laura Tamblyn Watts: "We do need mass hirings of staff like Quebec did, where they hired 10,000 support workers in the summer, and had more than half of them available by September."

[Read more at CanAge.ca/media](#)

For full media coverage visit [CanAge.ca/media](#)

Prior to my Heart Attack, I Thought I was Healthy

by Florence Nimon

Florence Nimon tells CanAge about her unexpected and life-changing brush with heart disease.



Source: Canva

I was on holiday in Turkey with my husband's family when I had my first cardiac event. I had had some discomfort in my chest on and off for a few days and promised myself that I would see my doctor on my return home. However, in a matter of days I was in hospital getting a two stent angioplasty.

Three months later back home I had a series of blockages and stents put in. This repeated every three months for about a year and eventually resulted in a triple bypass surgery. Nine months after surgery, I had another blockage and angioplasty. That was 3 years ago and I've been well since.

More than fear was disbelief. Having been a physiotherapist for 50 years, it was extremely difficult to be on the other side of the fence! I was scared, confused, and exhausted. Eventually I 'submitted' intellectually and emotionally.

I next shifted my focus to diet and cardiac rehabilitation, and lost 45 pounds. I would far prefer to be a couch potato but recognize that 'exercise is medicine' and most medicine doesn't taste good!

Having been a physiotherapist for 50 years, it was extremely difficult to be on the other side of the fence!

Visits and phone calls from family and friends were my main source of comfort and helped to boost my morale. My brother is a physician and was a great support.

After the bypass surgery, I was totally dependent on my husband. Attending cardiac rehab helped me regain my strength, and helped me stay motivated during my recovery.

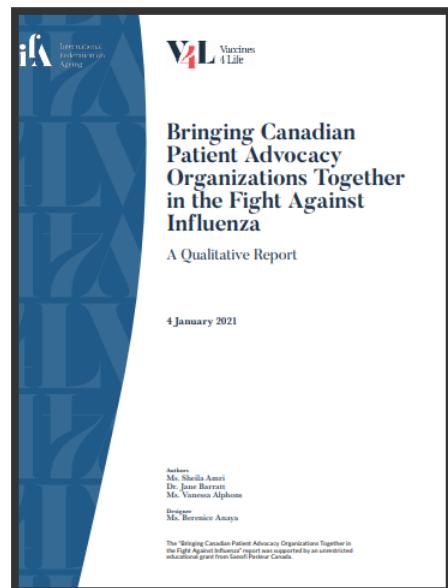
I still travel, but worry about what might happen if I have any health issues abroad. I had never taken medication before and I don't think I will ever get accustomed to having to rely on medication for the rest of my life.

Even now, there is a sense of bewilderment that still persists. It is as if all this happened to someone else, not me!

Sometimes I am scared that I may have another cardiac event and wonder if I will have warning signs like I had previously had. Recovery is a slow process. Make sure to educate yourself and be determined towards accomplishing your goals.

CanAge thanks Florence for sharing her story. If you are interested in sending a submission or providing feedback, please email newsletter@canage.ca. For more information visit us online at CanAge.ca





Stay informed...

Empowering Canadian civil society organizations in the fight against influenza



The International Federation on Ageing has released a report titled *Bringing Canadian Patient Advocacy Organizations Together in the Fight Against Influenza*. Influenza is among the leading causes for hospitalization in older adults in Canada. 60% of hospitalizations due to influenza in 2018 occurred among adults over 65 years of age, and 87% of those had more than one chronic condition. For these at-risk groups, influenza can lead to serious complications including significantly diminished functional ability and death.

Yet despite the illustrated severity of influenza in older adults, the decline in influenza vaccination and suboptimal rates for 2018-2019 are evidenced by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) in the Departmental Results Report on Infectious Disease and Control, and far below the national coverage goals of 80%. To read the full report [click here](#).

The Federal Testing and Screening Expert Advisory Panel has recommended that rapid tests be used in long-term care homes and other high-risk settings for screening to identify COVID-19 infections and help prevent outbreaks. For more information [click here](#). By strengthening screening in long-term care homes, rapid tests can save lives and give worried families greater confidence that their loved ones are safe.

Stay tuned...

February 2, 9, 16, 2021, 2-2.30pm EST: Resilience Recharge: Practices for Mental Wellness during the Second Wave

Free webinars from AdvantAge Ontario. PPE is there to protect your physical health, but your mental health needs care and attention too. Learn to cultivate inner calm and strength in the face of the current pandemic storm through this bite-sized webinar series. [Register for free today!](#)

February 8th, 2021, 2-4pm EST: Health System Transformation and COVID-19 Webinar

Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario's CEO Doris Grinspun hosts a COVID-19 webinar for health professionals, providing updates about the pandemic. [Register here](#) (free account required).

April 20-22, 2021: Together We Care

The Ontario Long Term Care Association (OLTCA) in partnership with the Ontario Retirement Communities Association (ORCA) are taking Together We Care, Canada's largest long-term care and retirement communities event, online for the first time ever. Register to reserve your spot now!

Take the Next Step in your Career!

June 6-16, 2021

Education

Administrator Leadership Program

Preparing Long Term Care Leaders

Apply now to take part in the spring session of AdvantAge Ontario's highly respected Administrator Leadership Program.

The program is now delivered entirely online, making it more affordable and accessible than ever. [Learn more](#) on their website, or email for application and general inquiries.

You Asked, We Answered

Q.

It came to my attention that seniors transferring into LTC from hospital are NOT pre-tested for COVID. That was how the Tabor LTC got their first case earlier in 2020.



There was an outbreak at the Abbotsford Hospital and a patient who had been transferred there for a non-COVID reason, was returned to Tabor with a case of COVID. Is this the case in other provinces too? No patient/resident testing before 'moving in'?

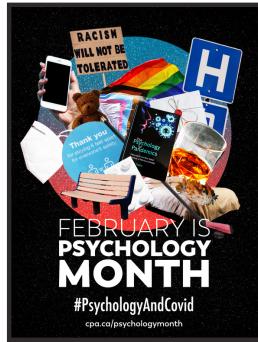
A.

Thank you for reaching out to us. It is very troubling and frustrating to hear that the right precautions aren't being taken across Canada. The level of precaution varies between provinces - some long-term care homes put new residents in 14-day isolation. Right now the focus of our advocacy work is highlighting areas of investment that governments can make to help the lives of Canadians as they age, and long-term care is certainly a priority. More staffing, funding, and attention need to be directed to LTC, a need we have highlighted in our [VOICES](#) policy platform.

We encourage you to write to your local MP or Health Minister and voice your concerns with them. If there is anything we can help you with, don't hesitate to reach out to us again.

Have a question for CanAge? Submit it via newsletter@CanAge.ca.

Are you Feeling the February Blahs?



Us too. [Psychology Month](#) is celebrated in February each year to highlight the importance of psychologists and the practice of psychology. The Canadian Psychological Association offers [fact sheets](#) that can be quite useful, particularly during the COVID-19 crisis.

- [Psychology Works Fact Sheets responding to COVID-19](#)
- [Psychology Works Fact Sheet: Psychological Impacts of the Coronavirus](#)



Is it more than just the blahs?

If you know an older adult, or a person living with a disability who is feeling anxious or lonely, the National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly (NICE) Network wants to help.

Their [Talk2NICE](#) initiative matches volunteers with social work students for friendly phone calls and support services. Note this is not a crisis line.



Call toll-free
1 (844) 529-7292



Celebrate Family Day Virtually

Most provinces celebrate Family Day in February. This year, activities and events are tightened or restricted due to COVID-19, but there are ways to celebrate with your loved ones. Our CanAge policy team members found the following:

- Learn about [Black History Month](#)
- Take part in Manitoba's [I Love to Read Month](#)
- Prana Yoga based out of Alberta, is offering a [virtual family yoga session](#) for all ages. (\$29 per household).
- Prince Edward Island celebrates [Islander Day](#)
- Nova Scotia celebrates [Heritage Day](#)
- Manitoba celebrates [Louis Riel Day](#)

Additionally, CanAge's Winter Wellness Wonderland has a listing by province and territory of virtual events and attractions. Visit CanAge.ca/wellness.