Canada’s population is aging and the proportion of adults over the age of 85 is increasing. In addition:

- One in ten of Ontario’s older adults are frail. (Collard et al 2012). Factors which increase likelihood of frailty as people get older are multiple chronic disease (Theou et al 2012) and social vulnerability (Andrew et al 2012).
- For every 1,000 older adults in the population there are 83 visits to the Emergency Department for potentially preventable conditions (such as complications due to diabetes). (Bronskill, et al 2010).
- Alternate level of care patients account for almost one in four in patient days. The number of days has been increasing over time for all age groups. (Bronskill et al 2010).

The occurrence of these events among those aged 85 and older is approximately double that of those aged 65-74.

There is a need for evidence informed activities to improve health and care for older adults.

Improving practice through knowledge transfer

For almost a decade, the Seniors Health Knowledge Network has delivered the right information—from the latest health and care research findings—in the right format to the right audiences. Examples of resources include:

- Best practice guidelines;
- Screening tools;
- Fact sheets;
- Pocket reference guides;
- Journal articles;
- Book chapters;
- Reading lists; and
- Toolkits for care providers.

We reach our audiences through:

- Live webinars and their archived recordings;
- Electronic newsletters;
- Conference attendance and booths;
- Relationships with key stakeholders; and
- A dynamic, easily searchable website.

Who we are

The Seniors Health Knowledge Network (SHKN) works to improve the health and care of Ontario’s older adults through:

- sharing evidence-based care practices;
- informing research from lived experience; and
- influencing policy.

We are a network of networks that collects evidence, shares knowledge and manages relationships among practitioners, researchers and policy makers. The Network provides access to:

- expertise in Aging and Health curriculum development and delivery, and innovation in education and knowledge exchange;
- a broad variety of tools and resources that bring the latest in science to the bedside, and
- over 7,000 members from many regions and disciplines who share our resources with their own networks.

We link knowledge to practice by:

- building capacity for care and influencing change at the individual, organization and system-level within all older adults’ care settings;
- mobilizing groups and individuals into Communities of Practice (CoPs), which respond to needs and support the development and dissemination of tools, resources and knowledge, and
- Collaborating and supporting the work of other organizations, researchers and governments.

See our webinars at: youtube.com/user/SHKNetwork
Serving the Full Spectrum of Health Care
We build capacity and facilitate links between:

- Patients/clients;
- Practitioners/care partners;
- Planners;
- Educators;
- Administrators;
- Researchers; and
- Policy-makers.

Communities of Practice bring together leaders from multiple disciplines to exchange information on a topic related to older adult health and care. Members work collaboratively to disseminate and implement best practice knowledge in all care sectors.

Communities of Practice we have actively supported include:

- Activity and Aging
- Aging and Developmental Disabilities
- Alzheimer and Related Dementias
- Arts and Humanities in Health Care
- Blood Pressure
- Caring for Caregivers
- Communicative Access and Aphasia
- Compulsive Hoarding
- Continence Care
- Diabetes
- E-learning
- Falls Prevention
- Frail Medically Complex Adults
- Functional Decline
- Hospice Palliative Care
- Healthcare Worker Influenza Immunization
- Gerontology and Geriatric Competencies
- InfoCare for Seniors
- Medically At-Risk Older Drivers
- Medication Safety / Polypharmacy
- Mental Health, Addictions and Behavioural Issues
- Nutrition
- Oral Health
- Osteoporosis
- Pain
- Pneumonia
- Resident Assessment Instrument – Minimum Data Set
- Rural Seniors
- Support for Personal Support Workers
- Spiritual Care
- Wound Care

Supporting Knowledge Mobilization & Advancing its Practice
Our Knowledge Mobilization experts support the work of our members as well as advance the field of Knowledge Mobilization itself.

Knowledge Brokers gather knowledge and pass it on in useable formats to our members. They also share information from the field back to researchers. They facilitate networking between members, researchers, policy makers and care providers and foster collaboration and knowledge sharing with CoPs, the Ontario Research Coalition of Centers/Institutes on Aging and Health, and across sectors.

Information Specialists provide the research evidence base for tool and project development through the production of evidence-informed briefs, targeted reading lists, answers to specific health and care questions, support for policy-informed decision-making and contribution to information sharing events.

Our Steering Committee is made up of researchers, practitioners and policy makers with extensive experience in bringing knowledge to practice.

Our Network has been a trailblazer in the field of Knowledge Transfer and Exchange. Reviews of Network KTE activities have found them to have positive implications for clinical and policy decision making.

What is Knowledge Translation or Knowledge Mobilization?
These terms refer to activities that close the loop between research, policy and practice by sharing the right information, at the right time, to the right people, in the right format. The goal is to improve outcomes and influence decision-making and practice.
Information Service
Caregivers, policy makers, researchers and administrators often experience challenges to accessing new knowledge. Many cannot obtain literature or lack the skills to search, appraise and apply evidence. Our skilled Information Specialists and the knowledge resources of library partners address this need.

Information Specialists provide a range of information services including:
- Literature Searching – conducting systematic searches using relevant databases
- Document Delivery – obtaining and sending actual copies of documents
- Current Awareness Services – alerts about relevant resources and events
- Education – coaching and training on different aspects of information literacy

Building Capacity
Our innovations and advancements integrate the health care system across the continuum of care (including long-term care, acute care, primary care, community care, and rehabilitation). Through our linking stakeholders and fostering collaboration we helped to align activities for common benefits for numerous partners and stakeholders.

Our members have served on advisory committees within government, on research projects and with other networks. These collaborative efforts influence practice change. Through education, outreach, networking and collaborative work, our members and partners raise awareness of the need to provide evidence-informed care. We play a pivotal role in influencing culture shifts in organizations, government departments, agencies, sectors and networks.

The Ontario Research Coalition of Centers/Institutes on Aging and Health (ORC) is a key partner. The ORC:
- fosters research centre collaboration and provides a direct link to CoP members;
- nurtures innovative talent by providing incentives for people early in their research careers to focus on health and aging; and
- encourages researchers to join forces to improve competitiveness and access to funding from peer reviewed competitions.

The ORC brings together researchers from seven key research institutes:
- Aging, Rehabilitation and Geriatric Care Centre, Lawson Health Research Institute, at the University of Western Ontario
- Bruyère Research Institute, a partnership of the SCO Health Service and the University of Ottawa
- Centre For Education and Research on Aging and Health (CERAH) at Lakehead University
- Centre for Studies in Aging and Health (CSAH) at Providence Care and Queen’s University
- Rotman Research Institute, Baycrest, affiliated with the University of Toronto.
- R. Samuel McLaughlin Centre on Gerontological Research and Education, at McMaster University
- Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging, affiliated with the University of Waterloo
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