

2024

WOMEN AT THE FOREFRONT OF AGING IN CANADA:
Challenging the status quo for older women

Supplemental Documents
APPENDIX A



GAPS

RECOMMENDATIONS

EXAMPLES

Inadequate inclusion of older women in health research

- Collect and use sex, gender and age disaggregated data needs to be the standard practice in research, healthcare and policy-making
- Increase inclusion of older women and reporting of their data in health research to advance our understanding of their unique health needs
- Healthcare providers to use evidence and guidance to consider sex, gender and age differences when prescribing medications, and reduce drug harm among older women.

- Statistics Canada introduced the [Disaggregated Data Action Plan](#) in December 2023 with \$172 million in funding over five years. This is an example of an important governmental initiative, where age should be included in all instances of data collection.
- [2030 Sustainable Development](#) goals set by the United Nations to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030 specifically call for data being disaggregated by age. [Tichfield Group](#) on Ageing-related Statistics and Age-Disaggregated Data was created by the United Nations Statistical Commission to establish international standards and methods to compile data on age-disaggregated data across the life course.
- Canadian Institutes of Health Research's Institute of Aging has developed a [strategic plan](#) to support the needs of older adults to guide its priorities from 2023-2028.
- In clinical settings, adoption of tools such as the geriatrician-created [DRUGS guide](#) provides the framework to optimize medication safety among older adults

Unique health and wellbeing needs of older women are unrecognized and unmet

- Educate healthcare providers on unique needs of older women, based on sex, gender and age
- Leverage geriatricians and healthcare providers focused on older adults across the health system to support our aging population

- Creating [attractive](#) clinical opportunities to gain exposure to the field.
- Increased recognition of the value of geriatricians and further mentorship will help attract the next generation.
- Actively engage women throughout the co-design of resources and tools to ensure they meet the unique needs of older women.

Long-term care homes need to meet the needs of women

- Consider the unique needs of older women in LTC homes
- Protecting the LTC home workforce by improving staffing to elevate care provided primarily by women for women

- Women need to be considered in policies and initiatives related to LTC homes.
- The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has provided examples of improvement for LTC staff in their report [Beyond Applause? Improving Working Conditions in Long-Term Care](#).
 - For example, Scotland and Wales have implemented a minimum hourly wage for care about 10% above the economy-wide statutory minimum. In Ireland, there has been a provision of more professional advancement to carers. In the United Kingdom, there is increased investments in digital technologies in social care and in the LTC home workforce.

Lack of support for caregivers

- Recognize the value of paid and unpaid caregivers, most of whom are women, and provide them with effective financial support to better manage the complex needs of the care recipients
- Adopt a national strategy to increase the visibility of unpaid caregiving in policymaking

- [Nova Scotia](#) provides direct compensation to unpaid caregivers through grants and allowances.
- In 2024, Oklahoma introduced first of a kind legislation, where [unpaid family caregivers](#) will be able to claim up to \$5,000 in tax credits for out-of-pocket costs.
- Some provinces, such as [Manitoba](#), have developed and implemented their own policies to support caregivers in Canada.



ENVIRONMENTAL, SYSTEMIC, AND POLICY GAPS

APPENDIX A

GAPS	RECOMMENDATIONS	EXAMPLES
Prevalence of loneliness epidemic among older women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal government needs to lead efforts in addressing loneliness and champion the importance of promoting social connections. Measure loneliness across the life course, improve evidence and knowledge to inform and evaluate public health responses to loneliness Focus on intergenerational connections as a key principle in alleviating loneliness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designing a comprehensive response, such as through a “Connection-in-All-Policies” approach that recognizes the important role of social, cultural and policy institutions, with specific considerations for different contexts and demographics such as older adults and women. Notable examples: United Kingdom and Japan have appointed Ministers of Loneliness to address its harmful impact. The Surgeon General of the United States has released an advisory specifically on the impact of loneliness.
Gendered ageism as a systemic issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement awareness campaigns to reduce ageism and provide resources for organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The WHO global campaign to combat ageism is an example of an international campaign to reduce ageism including providing recommendations for action across sectors
Limited inclusion of older women in designing of living environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provincial and regional governments to commit to improve the ability of older adults, particularly women to age in place, and create supportive communities that enable healthy living and provide connectedness Government at all levels need to invest in strengthening aging in place models such as Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs), where older women are majority of the residents Ministries of Education in partnership with universities and colleges should explore adoption of age friendly principles across campuses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NORCs with enhanced services, promote independence and social connections, which are vital for improved health outcomes for older women. The Aging with Dignity initiative is an acknowledgment by the government, given the historic disparities in supporting older adults. An example of a multigenerational approach in education is older adults offering affordable housing to students through programs like Canada Home Share and Spaceshared. This is an effective way for older adults including women to remain in their homes, alleviate any financial constraints, and connect with different generations.
Lack of national strategy to support Canada’s aging population including older women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal government to develop a national strategy to support older adults while considering the distinct needs of women Proactively include age in the Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) framework, in addition to sex and gender to better understand impact of policies on older women and men 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many reports such as the Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women have laid out recommendations on addressing financial insecurities such as evaluating and strengthening benefits for surviving spouses, who are mostly women of deceased recipients through the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS).