

# News

Newsletter Issue #3 – April 2022



*Jill Ronan (left) shares a laugh with her father, Veteran Tom Ronan, during a meeting with staff. Learn more about Tom's journey on page 2.*

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**Perley  
Health**

Centre of Excellence  
in Frailty-Informed Care™

# Letter from the Director



*Danielle Sinden,  
Director, Research and  
Operations*

*Centre of Excellence in  
Frailty-Informed Care™*

Welcome to the third edition of our newsletter. As this edition demonstrates, the impacts of the Centre of Excellence now ripple through not only the research and long-term care (LTC) communities, but also increasingly through the community at large. It marks an exciting time in our journey.

The idea of establishing the Centre of Excellence in Frailty-Informed Care™ emerged nearly a decade ago, as part of Perley Health's long-term strategic planning. Thanks to strong support from all sides — including private and corporate donors - the idea is a flourishing reality with more than a dozen projects underway. Perley Health's Board of Directors is currently updating its strategic plan. Central to the update is an increased emphasis on knowledge transfer — on ensuring that the best practices in care developed, implemented and evaluated at and by Perley Health benefit all Canadians. Knowledge transfer is also central to the Centre of Excellence mandate and we are determined to do more of it and to increase

our contribution to the sector and to individual families.

While the worst of the pandemic may be over, its impacts will linger for decades to come. Some of our current research projects will improve our understanding of how efforts to control a pandemic can increase feelings of social isolation and loneliness, and contribute to poor health outcomes. Another important focus of our research is the use of digital technologies in the care of older adults living with frailty. This research is destined to increase in importance as the number of Canadians aged 85+ grows and as digital technologies become ever faster and more functional.

I hope you enjoy our newsletter and I encourage you to share your comments — along with your ideas for future editions — by contacting me directly.

Danielle Sinden,  
Director, Research and Operations  
Centre of Excellence in Frailty-Informed  
Care™

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## Who we are.

Established in 2019, Perley Health Centre of Excellence in Frailty-Informed Care™ (CoE) aims to set a new benchmark in seniors' care, facilitating applied research that fuels innovation in education, best practices, and knowledge translation. Our goal is to ensure Seniors and Veterans living with frailty receive the highest level of care both within our walls and beyond. The CoE is part of Perley Health, a unique and innovative community of care located on a 25-acre campus adjacent to The Ottawa Hospital. Perley Health is home to approximately 450 residents (many of them Veterans who served overseas) in long-term care, along with approximately 200 seniors in 139 independent-living apartments. Funded by donations to the Perley Health Foundation, the CoE supports Perley Health's mission of excellence in the health, safety, and well-being of Seniors and Veterans.

## Nothing short of excellent

Exceptional care, research, education and innovations at Perley Health are supported in part by the generosity of our community. To donate to the Centre of Excellence in Frailty-Informed Care™, please visit: [www.PerleyHealthFoundation.ca](http://www.PerleyHealthFoundation.ca)





*Jill Ronan (left) sits with father Tom Ronan to learn about SeeMe™ from Collaborative Practice Leader Daniela Acosta*

## The Ronan Family's SeeMe™ Journey

During the final years of Tom Ronan's life, SeeMe™: Understanding *frailty* together brought clarity and comfort to him and his family.

A Veteran of the Second World War, Tom Ronan was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in his 80s. As his care needs increased, he and his wife Betty moved into an independent-living apartment at Perley Health. Soon after Betty passed away in 2015, Tom moved into a secure unit at Perley Health.

"Many years earlier, my parents had told me, my brother and my sister, about how they envisioned the last part of their lives," says daughter Jill Ronan. "We were lucky to have parents who were so open and loving — they wanted to spare us the agony of having to make difficult decisions about their care."

Tom Ronan and his children participated in SeeMe™ during its first year of implementation. By this point, Tom's cognition was severely impaired due to Alzheimer's. Jill and her siblings met with the care team to develop a care plan based on the goals he had described years earlier, while still able to make his own decisions. Together, they considered the various ways that Tom's health status might change and how best to respond.

"My parents and siblings all understand that we're mortal," says Jill. "Through SeeMe™, we got a better sense of how we can control the type of care we receive. That's particularly important should we end up unable to express our wishes clearly when key decisions need to be made."

At one point, Tom suffered a heart attack. A cardiologist offered to put in stents, but the family declined. The cardiologist quietly told them that he agreed with the decision, as further tests revealed that Tom also had lung cancer. When he later developed pneumonia, the family and care team agreed that no antibiotics should be administered.

"Toward the end, other people might have looked at my dad and seen a lovely, happy person with cognitive impairment," says Jill. "To those of us who knew him well, though, that person was no longer Tom Ronan. His final years were bittersweet for us."

Eventually, Tom's condition worsened and he received palliative care before passing away.

"SeeMe™ was integral to the exceptional care that Dad received," says Jill Ronan. "I wish it were available to all families with someone in long-term care."





A simulated SeeMe™ Care Conference

# Peer-Reviewed Journal Publishes Study Validating SeeMe™

The March 2022 issue of The Canadian Geriatrics Journal features a CoE study documenting several key benefits of a frailty-related program developed at Perley Health. SeeMe™: Understanding *frailty* together, is a comprehensive and collaborative approach to care that integrates the assessment and management of frailty into care plans. Under SeeMe™, residents and their families collaborate with medical and nursing professionals to identify goals of care and incorporate them into care plans. Through this collaboration, residents, their loved ones and the care team develop a shared understanding of a resident's values, preferences, and desired lifestyle and outcomes.

First implemented in 2019, SeeMe™ is now used to develop care plans for all LTC residents at Perley Health. The CoE partnered with the Bruyère Research Institute to study specific aspects of SeeMe™ during its first year of implementation. The study followed a mixed-methods approach involving quantitative data from surveys, goals-of-care preferences and hospital transfers, along with qualitative data from interviews.

The study found that SeeMe™ resulted in high satisfaction levels among nurses, physicians and the families of LTC residents. Nurses reported that embedding the program into their workflow increased

both their knowledge and confidence. Residents and families appreciated how SeeMe™ enhanced their ability to make informed decisions about care plans and quality of life. Many chose care plans that did not include cardiopulmonary resuscitation and transfers to hospital, for instance. As the study reports, existing research indicates that hospitalizing residents of nursing homes does not decrease mortality rates.

The study's appearance in The Canadian Geriatrics Journal, widely considered the medical specialty's leading peer-reviewed publication, significantly raises awareness of SeeMe™. Given the program's demonstrated ability to align resident goals for quality of life and care, along with its potential impacts on hospital capacity, other LTC homes may choose to adopt SeeMe™.

**See the preceding feature articles for more information.**  
[PerleyHealth.ca/seeme-care-programs](https://PerleyHealth.ca/seeme-care-programs)



# Publications

## Program Evaluation of SeeMe™: Understanding *frailty* together

See the preceding articles for more information.

Liu, A., Sinden, D., Plant, J., Norman, M., Acosta, D., Hsu, A., and Robert, B. 2022.

The Canadian Geriatrics Journal 25(1):1-31

<https://cgjonline.ca/index.php/cgj/article/view/528>

This study evaluated SeeMe™: Understanding *frailty* together. Developed at Perley Health, SeeMe™ is a comprehensive framework for developing care plans that priorities resident's values, preference and desired lifestyle. The study demonstrated that the SeeMe™ approach resulted in high satisfaction levels among nurses, physicians and the families of residents in long-term care. Nurses reported an increase in knowledge and confidence with the program embedded into their workflow. Importantly, the study indicated that the education from SeeMe™ influenced long-term care residents and their families to choose less invasive interventions to preserve both their health and quality of life.

## Veteran Relaxation: Can VR Therapy Help Veterans Living with Dementia Who Exhibit Responsive Behaviour?

Appel, L., Appel, E., Kisonas, E., Lewis, S., and Sheng, L. Q. 2022.

Frontiers in Virtual Reality 2:724020

[Frontiers | Virtual Reality for Veteran Relaxation: Can VR Therapy Help Veterans Living With Dementia Who Exhibit Responsive Behaviors? | Virtual Reality \(frontiersin.org\).](#)

In this study, Virtual Reality (VR) was used as a non-pharmacological therapy to evaluate its potential to reduce responsive behaviours events in Veteran residents living with dementia at Perley Health. The study co-led by Lacey Sheng, Perley Health's Manager of Analytics and Informatics involved 33 eligible residents with varying degrees of cognitive impairment participating in a total of 111 VR sessions. All sessions and observations were completed by trained recreation professionals at the Perley Health. Results indicated that an individual's varying degree of cognitive and physical impairments affects their ability to accept VR therapy and that there is a potential for VR to reduce certain triggered responsive behaviours in Veterans living with dementia.

## The Integration of Long-Term Care and Personal Support Worker Education: Evaluation of a Living Classroom Experience

Plant, J., Fiset, V., Munoz, J., Soto, E., and Crick S. 2021.

Journal of Aging and Long-Term Care 4(1):1-10

<https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/jaltc/issue/67924/1013670>

The study evaluated the Living Classroom, a partnership between Perley Health and Algonquin College. Students of the College's Personal Support Worker program studied in a classroom created at Perley Health and served placements on-site. The study found that the Living Classroom was a success: the opinions of students about the LTC sector improved, several graduates transitioned directly into jobs at Perley Health and both partners were satisfied. Similar partnerships can be used to ease the serious staffing shortages in the LTC sector.

# Heartfelt Knowledge



*Samantha Hallgren,  
GNC(C), CHPCN(C)*

*Psychogeriatric  
Registered Nurse*

Samantha Hallgren is exceptionally dedicated to professional development. Perley Health’s only Psychogeriatric Resource Nurse, Samantha has continually upgraded her nursing skills and knowledge throughout her 25-year career. In November, she completed one of the profession’s most demanding training programs and became a Canadian Certified Hospice and Palliative Nurse.

“I earned my Canadian Nursing Association Gerontological Nursing Certification in 2014,” Samantha says. “And my goal was to complete the hospice palliative care certification next, even though I knew it would be challenging.”

Samantha discovered her passion for gerontological and palliative care early in her career. As a student, her consolidation placement involved caring for seniors and working on a chronic care unit. Among her first clients was a woman with a terminal diagnosis who was trying to care for her young children. “She wouldn’t let anyone in her room, ever, but she’d

let me in and allowed me to care for her in a way that she would not let anyone else,” recalls Samantha. “Sometimes, we would sit quietly in the dark together and connect. That has always stayed with me.”

Samantha was drawn to Perley Health by the organization’s commitment to continually improve quality of care and to support the professional development of staff. Both are made possible by donations to Perley Health Foundation.

“A big part of what sets Perley Health apart is that both the staff and the leadership team are committed to excellence in resident-centred care with a focus on frailty,” she says. “That requires ongoing professional development, along with the ability to identify and adopt evidence-based best practices in care. Establishing the Centre of Excellence in Frailty-Informed Care™ demonstrates Perley Health’s determination to pursue excellence in care. I feel I’m exactly where I should be at this point in my career.”



*Swab Boss, Sam, displays a swab prop for motivation and a few laughs during the pandemic.*



# Webinar Series

Our monthly webinar series aims to inspire meaningful policy and program change by establishing a forum for news and discussions about frailty-related innovation and research, and by nurturing and engaging a broad network of older adults and their families, LTC professionals, researchers and caregivers, along with members of the community.

## Upcoming webinar: Making “nonessential” caregivers and volunteers essential in LTC April 27, 12:00–1:00 p.m. EST

Dr. Annie Robitaille Ph.D.

### Objectives:

- Gain a better understanding of the response to COVID-19 that pertains to family/volunteer/caregiver presence in LTC.
- Increase the evidence about the impact of reduced levels of family/volunteers/caregivers on the emotional and psychosocial well-being of residents and caregivers.
- Generate solutions and recommendations to revisit policies on family/volunteer/caregiver presence to improve the current situation and preparedness of future pandemics and outbreaks.

<https://bit.ly/CoEApr27>



**Annie Robitaille Ph.D.**

*Commissionaires Ottawa  
Research Chair, Perley Health  
Centre of Excellence in Frailty-  
Informed Care™*

*Assistant Professor, University of  
Ottawa*

## Past webinars

You can view any of the archived webinars by visiting this page on the CoE website:  
[www.PerleyHealth.ca/free-webinar-series](http://www.PerleyHealth.ca/free-webinar-series)

- **Why Keep Long-Term Residential Care?**  
Pat Armstrong, PhD. – March 9, 2022
- **Implementation Strategies to Improve Physical Activity Levels Among Residents in Long-Term Care**  
Ariane Séguin Massie – February 24, 2022
- **Addressing Loneliness: COVID-19 and Beyond**  
Kristine Theurer, PhD. – January 26, 2022
- **COVID-19 and Frailty: What happened and what lies ahead?**  
John P. Hirdes, PhD. – November 24, 2021

# Presentations and Speaking Engagements

## Seniors Quality Leap Initiative (SQLI) Innovation Community of Practice

March 31, 2022

How to Engage Leadership and Staff to Create Shared Ownership for Innovation

Jennifer Plant, Director, Clinical Practice

## Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa, MHA Program

March 22, 2022

Tying it all together: A Falls Management Case Study

Melissa Norman, Manager, Quality Improvement & RAI

## Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa, MHA Program

March 8, 2022

Quality and Performance Management in Health Care: Reducing Variation and Run Charts

Mary Boutette, Chief Operating Officer

## Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa, MHA Program

November 4, 2021

Leading Change in Long-Term Care: A pandemic case study

Mary Boutette, Chief Operating Officer

## Best Practice Spotlight Organization<sup>®</sup> Knowledge Exchange Symposium

October 28, 2021

Developing a Culture of Psychological Health and Safety

Rachel de Kemp, Director, Nursing

## AdvantAge Ontario LTC Funding Webinar Series

October 7, 2021

Connecting the Dots: The Effective Use of RAI and CMI Data

Melissa Norman, Manager, Quality Improvement and RAI



# Centre of Excellence – April 2022 Current Research Projects

The Centre of Excellence in Frailty-Informed Care™ provides residents, tenants, families, caregivers and staff the opportunity to become involved in a variety of innovative projects and initiatives. This creates opportunities to engage in meaningful social and recreational activities such as learning a new skill, sharing experiences, and providing input on various issues. Participation also helps contribute to knowledge that can help improve care. All projects follow public health measures related to COVID-19 and the policies set out by Perley Health. Many of the projects listed below are seeking participants. For an updated list of projects, please consult the CoE website.

<https://www.perleyhealth.ca/ongoing-research-projects>

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## Psychosocial Impacts of Reducing Non-Essential Visitors in Long-Term Care in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic (Structured Interview Matrix)

Principal Investigator: Dr. Annie Robitaille, Interdisciplinary School of Health Sciences, University of Ottawa

This study aims to gain a better understanding of the emotional and psychosocial well-being (e.g. psychological distress, loneliness) of family/friend caregivers and volunteers. Healthcare professionals, family/friend caregivers and formal volunteers will share their experience on the impacts of reducing non-essential visitors in LTC through a virtual structured interview matrix (group discussion) expected to take up to 3 hours. Participants will be compensated \$20 per hour. The data gained from this project can be applied to improve the current COVID-19 situation in addition to improving pandemic preparedness for the LTC homes during future outbreaks across Canada and internationally.

## Social Inclusion of People Living with Dementia and Their Caregivers Using an Intergenerational Program

Co-Principal Investigators: Dr. Annie Robitaille, Interdisciplinary School of Health Sciences, University of Ottawa; Dr. Linda Garcia, Faculty of Health Sciences, LIFE Research Institute, University of Ottawa

Older adults (long-term care residents and tenants) living with dementia can receive friendly one-on-one visits from university student volunteers, providing them with an opportunity to engage in social and recreational activities and meaningful conversations. The caregiver of the person living with dementia will be asked to complete a 20-minute questionnaire on 4 occasions.

## Testing Online Meaning-Centered Groups (OMG) in Promoting Psychological Well-Being and Reducing Distress in Ontario Retirement Home Residents

Co-Principal Investigators: Dr. Marnin Heisel, Psychiatry, Epidemiology & Biostatistics Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, Western University, Lawson Health Research Institute; Danielle Sinden, Centre of Excellence in Frailty-Informed Care, Perley Health

Older adults over the age of 60, living in a Retirement Home (RH) or senior living community in Ontario who have been feeling lonely, socially-isolated or stressed will participate in an online peer support group that promotes social connection, emotional health and well-being and explores meaning in life in the face of the

pandemic. Participants will participate in an online interview (40-75 minutes) to determine eligibility. If eligible, participate in an 8-week series of online group discussions (75-90 minutes/week) with 8-12 participants living in RH across Ontario and 2-3 group facilitators and complete up to 4 additional online research interviews (60-120 minutes) throughout the year to evaluate the groups.

## Java Music Club

Principal Investigator: Dr. Annie Robitaille, Interdisciplinary School of Health Sciences, University of Ottawa

The Java Music Club is a research-based peer support group that involves Perley Health recreation staff, volunteers and residents facilitating peer support group activities to other LTC residents targeting social isolation. During group activities, participants are able to provide support to one another by sharing vulnerabilities and strengths. The intervention creates a safe environment that allows residents to engage in interactive discussions and participate in a variety of activities such as interpreting photography, listening to music and reading articles. The main focus is residents helping residents which adds purpose and meaning in their lives.

## Role of Management in Health IT Adoption in Long-Term Care Homes: An Exploratory Study of Key Factors Affecting Health IT Decision-Making

Principal Investigator: Danielle Cruise; Supervisor: Dr. Mirou Jaana, Telfer School of Management; University of Ottawa

Health information technology (HIT) provides opportunities to support long-term care (LTC) staff and residents. Yet, LTC homes lag significantly behind other areas in healthcare in relation to the adoption of HIT. This research aims to explore the factors that managers consider in their decision to adopt technology in their respective LTC homes. Managers and clinicians of LTC homes will be asked to answer 3 survey questions online (each 10 minutes long) on the factors that inform their decision-making. The findings will be helpful from the LTC managers' perspective as they can be used as a benchmark of key factors to consider in their decision to adopt HIT solutions.

## COVID-19 Immunity Study

Co-Principal Investigators: Dr. Amy Hsu, Bruyère Research Institute and Dr. Marc-André Langlois, University of Ottawa

This study involves residents, staff, students, volunteers and caregivers in long-term care homes across Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia. The aim of this project is to gain a better understanding of COVID-19 prevalence in LTC homes across Canada and to examine the level and duration of protection COVID-19 vaccines. Participants will be asked to complete an online baseline survey (15 minutes) and provide blood spot samples collected at several time points over the next 12 months. Participants can access their antibody results through a secure web-based portal. Also, participating LTC homes will be given the aggregate data which will provide valuable information about a home's overall level of immunity and risk.

## Program to Accelerate Technologies for Homecare (PATH)

Co-Principal Investigators, Ottawa site: Dr. Jeffrey Jutai, Interdisciplinary School of Health Sciences, University of Ottawa; Dr. Jason Millar, School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, University of Ottawa

PATH is a multi-partner initiative to increase the understanding of the potential role that home-based technologies can play in the care and well-being of older adults. Groups of older adults will be provided various devices and technologies (e.g. blood-pressure monitors, pressure-sensitive mats that track sleep patterns, wearable devices that can detect falls, etc.) and their experiences monitored. Researchers will share the data

with industry to test, validate and potentially commercialize products. The CoE is recruiting LTC residents, families, staff and tenants of the independent-living apartments to participate in various studies associated with the PATH project.

### Using Participatory Design to Develop Ethical Data Sheets for the Research and Design of Ambient Assistive Living Technologies

Co-Principal Investigators: Katherine-Marie Robinson, Dr. Rachana Devkota; Supervisor: Dr. Jason Millar, School of Engineering Design and Teaching Innovation, University of Ottawa

The purpose of this project is to learn more about the thoughts, opinions, questions, and concerns that Perley Health community members have regarding consumer health technology such as wearable smart devices and smart cameras. Perley Health tenants, residents, family members, and healthcare professionals (PSWs, nurses, Clinical care managers, Physicians, etc.) will provide feedback that will be used to develop a design tool that engineers, designers, and researchers can use to help them design and develop future consumer health technology.

### Identifying the Factors Associated with Older Adults' Acceptance of Virtual Reality Games

Principal Investigator: Marjan Hosseini, School of Rehabilitation Science, University of Ottawa; Supervisor: Dr. Jeffrey Jutai, Interdisciplinary School of Health Sciences, University of Ottawa

This study aims to explore factors that affect long-term care residents' acceptance of virtual reality (VR) games. Virtual reality technology can be used to enhance physical ability and reduce sedentary behaviors. Perley Health residents and tenants will be asked to participate in three 20-minute gaming sessions with a physical activity VR game for two weeks. They will also be invited to complete a questionnaire and a voluntary interview to provide feedback about their gaming experience in order to understand their interaction with VR games. Staff will be interviewed to share their thoughts about residents' acceptance of technology (staff do not play the VR games). The feedback collected will be used to develop a conceptual model of acceptance that is inclusive of seniors living in long-term care.

### Health Surveillance of Community-Dwelling, Person-with-Dementia and Caregiver Dyads

Principal Investigator: Dr. Annie Robitaille, Interdisciplinary School of Health Sciences, University of Ottawa

This project aims to increase understanding of the trajectories of individuals living with dementia and their caregivers (dyads) from diagnosis to the move into LTC. Information will be collected from dyads over extended periods of time and the results used to inform policies, programs and areas of future research in Canada.

### COVID-19, Precarity and the Counternarratives of PSWs: Photovoice and Change

Principal Investigator: Veen Wong, Public Health Sciences, University of Waterloo; Supervisor: Dr. Patricia Van Katwyk, School of Social Work, Renison University College, University of Waterloo

This project will shed light on the work perspective of Personal Support Workers (PSWs) during the pandemic. During group and individual virtual interviews, PSWs will be encouraged to describe their experiences, particular whether they consider their work as essential, precarious and/or unseen, and how various policies and systems shape their work experiences. Each participant will then be encouraged to create images based on these discussions – a technique known as photovoice. The identity of the image-takers will remain anonymous and the images will be analyzed and shared. Each participant will receive an honorarium of \$50.



# Thank you!

Thank you to True Patriot Love Foundation and to the Ontario Government for this generous funding!

Perley Health received \$50,000 to help fund research in evaluating the impact of the Özerdinc Grimes Family Therapeutic Recreation & Creative Arts Program on the well-being of older Veterans!

We hosted Merrilee Fullerton, MPP Kanata-Carleton, Lisa MacLeod, MPP Nepean, and Nick Booth, CEO True Patriot Love Foundation, for a site tour and special announcement that the Ontario government will be funding more than \$1.2 million in support of Veterans' access to mental health services!



*“The knowledge generated will be shared widely, to help ensure Seniors and Veterans can access person-centered, compassionate care and enjoy meaningful recreational and creative arts programs.”*

- Danielle Sinden,  
Director, Centre of Excellence  
and Research Operations

*(L-R) Nick Booth, CEO True Patriot Love Foundation,  
Lisa MacLeod, MPP Nepean, Merrilee Fullerton, MPP  
Kanata-Carleton and Danielle Sinden, Director,  
Centre of Excellence and Research Operations.*

## Contact Information

If you are interested in participating or would like to learn more about a particular project, please contact:

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