



CCSMH Annual Report to CAGP October 2021 - September 2022

Created 20 years ago in 2002, the Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health (CCSMH)'s mission is to promote the mental health of older adults by connecting people, ideas and resources. The CCSMH reports to the CAGP Board of Directors and is supported by a National Steering Committee (please find a list of our Steering Committee members on our website at www.ccsmh.ca).

We are a multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary coalition with affiliate-members representing healthcare professionals, clinicians, administrators, researchers, caregivers and seniors. Our main strategic goals are to ensure that seniors' mental health becomes a central Canadian health and wellness issue, and to facilitate initiatives related to enhancing and promoting seniors' mental health.

Since its inception, the Coalition has developed much needed resources and education on a range of seniors' mental health issues including on substance use disorders, depression, delirium and suicide prevention among older adults as well as on mental health in long term care.

Some of the things that we've been up to this past year or so include:

Cannabis and Older Adults E-Learning Modules

We are wrapping up our Cannabis and Older Adults project in the coming months. This three-year project funded by Health Canada had us developing a series of 11 individually accredited e-learning modules (MOC and Main Pro+) and knowledge translation tools to support health care professionals to learn more about cannabis and aging. Accredited E-Learning modules and clinician toolkit are available online at www.ccsmh.ca and cover topics including the history of cannabis and legalization; the neuropharmacology of cannabis; drug interactions; how to talk to patients about cannabis; prescribing/authorizing cannabis and safety and risks of cannabis. *(Expert working Group members: Dr David Conn (Chair); Drs Linda Balneaves, Jonathan Bertram, James Chau, Kim Corace, David Gardner, Victoria Grandi, Krista Lanctot and Kiran Rabheru. Expert Reviewer: Dr Mona Sidhu)*

Social Isolation and Loneliness Project

We have embarked on a privately funded project to lead in the development and promotion of Canadian guidelines for health and social service providers to identify and address isolation and loneliness among older adults. We will instigate uptake and action across health and social professional fields ensuring that these professions recognize the impact of loneliness and social

isolation and that they understand and embrace their role and potential to drive change. All project material will identify and promote best practice and practical things that health and social service providers can do to help. *(Clinical Lead: Dr David Conn)*

Anxiety Disorders, Behavioural Symptoms of Dementia, Depression and Substance Use Disorders

We have received a large project grant from the Public Health Agency of Canada's *Supporting the Mental Health of Those Most Affected by COVID-19* fund. This grant will have us advancing work on a number of important topics. We will be developing clinical guidelines on Anxiety Disorders among older adults and also on Behavioural Symptoms of Dementia. This project will also support extensive outreach and knowledge mobilization on these topics as well as on the prevention, assessment and treatment of depression and substance use disorders among older adults. Among other things, this project will have us offering 3 additional series of National ECHO sessions on mental health in older adults. *[Clinical Leads: Dr David Conn (depression and substance use); Drs Andrea Iaboni and Sébastien Grenier (anxiety disorders); Drs Dallas Seitz and Jennifer Watt (Behavioural Symptoms in Dementia)]*

MHCC Rapid Scoping Review on Advancing Quality Services for the Mental Health of Older Adults

We received a small grant earlier this year from the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) to prepare a scoping review in order to help the MHCC develop an older adult mental health action plan. The report provides an overview of the mental health issues and care needs of older adults in Canada, including the rates of older adults living with mental health problems or illnesses across priority populations and settings, as well as access and gaps in mental health services for diverse older adult populations. The report concludes with key recommendations to the MHCC within each of the priority areas as well as recommendations for partnership and policy development. *(Writer/Researchers: Drs Salinda Horgan and Jeanette Prorok; Expert reviewer: Dr Dallas Seitz)*

Long Term Care

Canadian Standards Association Research and Recommendations

The Canadian Standards Association (CSA) contracted the CCSMH to develop a report providing comprehensive guidance with recommendations to support the mental health and well-being of people living in community residential care settings, and that provides a framework for a new standard. [Our report](#) was completed this past fall and has already affected the work of the Health Standards Association towards a national long term care standard that will focus on resident- and family-centred care practices that value the importance of respect, dignity, trust and quality of life; safe and reliable care based on evidence-informed practices; and a healthy and competent workforce to ensure sustainable, team-based, compassionate care. *(Writer/Researcher: Dr Penny MacCourt; Expert Reviewers: Dr Julia Kirkham and Dallas Seitz)*

Public Health Agency of Canada – Suicide in Older Adults Research Project

We received a small fund from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) in 2020 to create a report identifying the current state of the research and resources on suicide and its prevention

among older adults and to identify gaps in basic, applied, and public health research and opportunities for knowledge translation and exchange.

This project was completed for PHAC Fall, 2021. PHAC will use this report as well as similar reports developed by other organizations focusing on other populations of concern to enhance and inform public health efforts to promote mental health and well-being and, ultimately, prevent death by suicide among older Canadians. *[Writing/Research: Christina Gallucci (Lead), Kunin-Lunenfeld Centre for Applied Research & Evaluation (KL-CARE), Rotman Research Institute, at Baycrest; Expert Reviewers Drs David Conn and Marnin Heisel)*

Reminder of Recently Completed Projects

Update to Clinical Guidelines on Depression and Older Adults

Our 2021 clinical guidelines on Depression in older adults update a number of recommendations to align with current evidence. They also now include a number of recommendations focused on preventing depression. The updated Guidelines can be found on our site in English [here](#) and in French [here](#). *(Lead: Dr David Conn; Working Group: Lori Amdan, Dr Daniel Blumberger, Dr. Chris Frank, Dr Cindy Grief, Dr. Robert Madan, Dr. Kiran Rabheru, Anar Dilara, Daniella Minchopoulos).*

Completion of our Substance Use Disorder Guidelines Project

We launched clinical guidelines on the prevention, assessment and treatment of Alcohol, Benzodiazepine, Cannabis and Opioid Use Disorder among older adults in the spring of 2020. The clinical guidelines as well as companion patient brochures and other material are available on our website at <https://ccsmh.ca/substance-use-addiction/>. *[Expert Leads: Marilyn White-Campbell and Dr Peter Butt (Alcohol); Drs David Conn and David Hogan (Benzodiazepines); Drs Jonathan Bertram and Amy Porath (Cannabis); Drs Launette Rieb and Zena Samaan (Opioids)]*

Mental Health in Long-Term Care

Joint CAGP/CCSMH position paper on Mental Health in Long-Term Care During COVID. The paper emphasizes the essential nature of mental health care in LTC and outlines our position on resident's right to care regardless of mental or physical health status and the need for balance between infection control and measures for quality of life and dignity of residents of LTC. Read the full position paper [here](#). *(CAGP Working Group Members: Claire Checkland and Drs Sophiya Benjamin, Marie-Andrée Bruneau, Antonia Cappella, Beverley Cassidy, David Conn, Cindy Grief, Alvin Keng, Julia Kirkham Popuri Krishna, Lisa McMurray, Kiran Rabheru, Marie-France Tourigny-Rivard and Dallas Seitz)*

The CCSMH continues to work closely with organizations such as the Mental Health Commission of Canada, Anxiety Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada supporting their ongoing efforts to elevate the mental health and wellbeing of older adults in Canada.

As always, please feel free to reach out to us if you have any questions or suggestions. Our Executive Director, Claire Checkland can be reached at ccheckland@ccsmh.ca or through our info address at info@ccsmh.ca

Drs David Conn, Kiran Rabheru and Dallas Seitz, CCSMH Co-Chairs
Claire Checkland, Executive Director