

EMBRACE AGING

News from the RTO/ERO Foundation



Update from Joanne Murphy, Board Chair

I am pleased to provide you with an update on the activities of the Foundation over the last couple of months. Thanks to your support, we were able to approve a total granting envelope of \$100,000 for research and community-based interventions into social isolation in older adults. Following our call for letters of intent we received an overwhelming sixty-five letters.

Fifty-five of the letters met basic criteria for review and were forwarded to our expert panel for a first round of reviews. Thirty-five applicants went on to a second round of review, resulting in the top ten applicants being invited to submit a full proposal.

Our expert review panel will score the final proposals and make funding recommendations to the Board of Directors at our meeting on April 30, 2019. Successful proposals will be announced publicly at Spring Senate in late May.

What we discovered through this process is that social isolation in seniors has become top of mind for many researchers and community organizations. We also learned that there is a general lack of knowledge sharing happening across a diverse cross-section of professionals working to address this issue.

Over the coming months we will be reaching out to learn more about their needs and interest in participating in a sharing of best practices across the network. The Foundation is proud to be an influential partner with other organizations addressing social isolation, such as HelpAge Canada and their RISE (Reaching Isolated Seniors Everywhere) Campaign.

We look forward to contributing to the national dialogue on social isolation and as a leader in the funding of research and knowledge translation in this field.

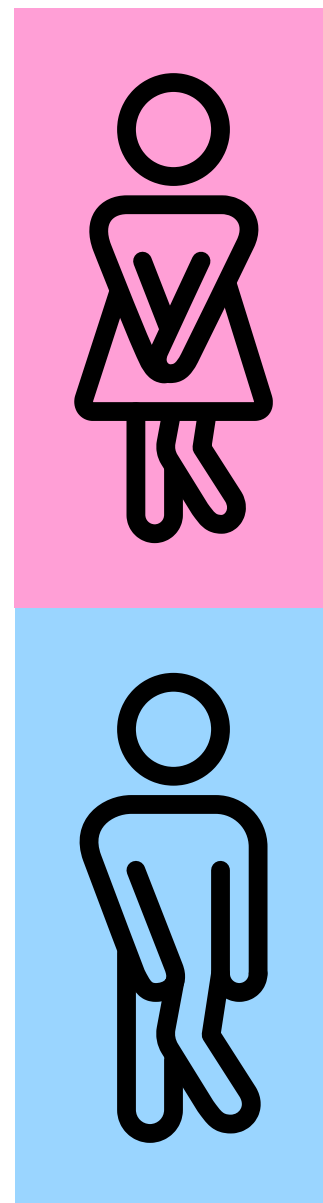
Speak Up for Bladder Health

Urinary incontinence affects 3.5 million Canadians.¹ The condition increases with age; 24% of men and up to 44% of women with urinary incontinence are 60 years of age or older.¹ There are different reasons for the condition but regardless, older adults lose control of when and where they pass urine. For some, coughing, sneezing, laughing, exercising, or lifting something heavy can cause dribbling. Others may have an urgent need to pee but can't get to the bathroom in time.

This condition impacts the older adult's social, mental and physical health and quality of life.² Many older adults do not talk about it because they are embarrassed, think it is a normal part of aging or think it can't be treated. As many as 50% (or more) of older adults with UI have never discussed or sought help from their general practitioner (GP).^{3,4} They can suffer in silence for years before they seek health care. Getting help early prevents the problem from getting worse and improves their quality of life.

A joint UBC (University of British Columbia) Okanagan-Interior Health research study (funded by the Retired Teachers of Ontario Foundation) is testing a way to encourage older adults with urinary leakage to seek help early. Older adults with urinary leakage and living in the community are being invited to participate in the study. Participants are being assigned by chance to one of two groups: a group that receives the test and the other group that will receive usual family practice care. It involves completing some forms at two different times and participation is all done from wherever you live. Similar to other studies involving older adult volunteers, recruitment has been slow.

Recruitment efforts have targeted outreach to seniors groups through short presentations, recruitment tables at seniors events, pharmacies, health fairs, public websites (e.g., Castanet). If you would like to volunteer for this important study, please contact Dr. Kathy Rush at kathy.rush@ubc.ca



1. Canadian Continence Foundation (2014). Retrieved 03-08-2017 from <http://www.canadiancontinence.ca/pdfs/en-incontinence-a-canadian-perspective-2014.pdf>

2. Sinclair AJ, Ramsay IN. The psychosocial impact of urinary incontinence in women. *The Obstetrician and Gynecologist* 2011; 13:143–148.

3. Herschorn S, Gajewski J, Schulz J, Corcos J. A population-based study of urinary symptoms and incontinence: the Canadian Urinary Bladder Survey. *BJU International* 2008; 101: 52-58.

4. Teunissen D, van Weel C, & Lagro-Janssen T. Urinary incontinence in older people living in the community: examining help-seeking behavior. *British Journal of General Practice* 2005; 55: 776–782.

Donor Spotlight

"It's my firm belief that if you support one group, in this case seniors, it has a trickle-down effect on everyone" says Richard Goodbrand, member of District 31, Wellington. Richard has been a supporter of the RTO/ERO Foundation since 2013. "I always look for ways to give back to the community and when I retired, RTO/ERO became my community."

Richard believes in honouring each loved one who passes away with a tribute donation to the Foundation. He also makes a regular monthly gift which helps provide the Foundation with a stable source of revenue. "And it's easier for me as I don't have to prompt my memory every month."

Thank you Richard for your very generous support.



Become a Monthly Donor

Please consider making a donation today to the RTO/ERO Foundation to help reduce the impact of social isolation on seniors.

A monthly donation of only \$10 maximizes your charitable effort, and provides us with a reliable base of support on which to plan our annual programming.

Contact Deanna Byrtus by email at dbyrtus@rto-ero.org or by phone at 1-800-361-9888 ext. 271 to make your monthly gift.

Join the RTO/ERO Foundation in helping end social isolation, and ensuring that aging adults get the care and support they need.

Foundation Staff Update

In the Fall of 2018, the RTO/ERO Foundation bid a fond farewell to Sapna Goel, but was thrilled to welcome Mike Prentice, as our new Director of Communications. Mike has jumped right into the role; working to develop content for print publications and web, managing our newsletter and social media properties and all other internal and external communications. Contact Mike at mprentice@rto-ero.org for all inquiries related to communications or to our social isolation awareness campaign.

The Foundation team also includes: Jo-Anne Sobie (Executive Director) who can be reached at jsobie@rto-ero.org and Deanna Byrtus (Manager, Donor Relations) at dbyrtus@rto-ero.org





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Preventing, Detecting and Reversing Prescribing Cascades

First observed and described 20 years ago, prescribing cascades have now been documented around the globe and continue to gain awareness as healthcare providers work to improve medication safety. Prescribing cascades occur when an adverse drug event is misinterpreted as a new condition, leading to the prescription of an additional, potentially unnecessary medication.

Dr. Paula Rochon, RTO/ERO Chair in Geriatric Medicine, and her team, including trainees supported through the RTO/ERO Chair, published a scoping review in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society that analyzed current resources and identified gaps in knowledge on this emerging concept. Of the 369 resources identified, they found a total of 58 resources in the review on how to prevent,

detect and reverse prescribing cascades. Prescribing cascades are an internationally-recognized problem which have been addressed on a global scale – authors from 14 different countries have published work that spotlights this evolving topic.

Many of the resources included in the review identified strategies to combat prescribing cascades which are still in the initial phases of implementation. Additionally, many resources highlighted the need for shared efforts from both clinicians and patients to successfully tackle the issue. The majority of prescribing cascade resources focused on older adults, who are more likely to have multiple chronic conditions requiring a number of medications and are likely to have adverse events masked by the general aging process.

Leave a Legacy of Life

Including a gift in your will to the RTO/ERO Foundation is one way to create a meaningful legacy. Contact Jo-Anne Sobie at jsobie@rto-ero.org or call **416-962-9463** extension 276, to learn more about how your gift will impact the quality of life for generations of older adults.