

SENIORS HEALTH INNOVATIONS HUB

SHIH

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE REPORT

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BACKGROUND

The demographic landscape in Ottawa is shifting rapidly, with older adults emerging as the fastest-growing age group. Most want to stay in their homes as they age.

About four years ago, Seniors Watch of Old Ottawa South (SWOOS), a committee of the Old Ottawa South Community Association, undertook the challenge of identifying services for healthy aging in place. Navigating the health and social care systems available to older adults was complicated, so they developed an online guide to assist people.

At the same time, SWOOS realized that interest and desire to participate was growing in neighbouring communities. So, they developed a comprehensive online "Guide to Healthy Aging in the Community" with input from several central Ottawa communities. This guide is a resource for older adults in central Ottawa, providing information on local services and support networks.

The expanded group of volunteers evolved to become the Seniors Health Innovations Hub (SHIH), which is working to establish a nurse practitioner clinic to serve seniors in central Ottawa as well as to develop other health innovations that build on existing community services.

Funds from a New Horizons Grant allowed the SHIH to develop and print 17,000 copies of an abbreviated Guide to Healthy Aging in the Community. Importantly, the guide contained a Community Feedback Questionnaire (CFQ) designed to solicit input from older residents on their preferences for support services, housing arrangements, and technological advancements to enhance their quality of life as they age. It was also intended to attract volunteers. This report presents the findings gleaned from the CFQ.



COMMUNITY FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

In response to Ontario Health's call for proposals in May 2023 aimed at fostering innovative, team-based primary care, the SHIH submitted a funding request to establish a health hub focused on serving unattached older adults (i.e., those who do not have a primary care provider) in central Ottawa. Specifically, the proposal outlined the creation of a health hub staffed by two nurse practitioners, with the capacity to scale up to six, dedicated to providing primary care services tailored to the unique needs of an older demographic.

In October 2023, the printed "Your Guide to Healthy Aging in the Community" containing the CFQ was distributed through local Ottawa newspapers (the Mainstreeter, the OSCAR and the Glebe Report), as well as on newsstands and in community centres in Alta Vista and Heron Park. The goal of the publication was three-fold:

- To make community members aware of the challenges faced by older residents and the efforts of the SHIH to address these challenges
- To draw attention to the more comprehensive online Guide providing valuable information for older adults in central Ottawa
- To receive feedback from the community (see Appendix 1) about what is missing for healthy aging in place. At the same time, names of those interested in participating in the SHIH were solicited.

Recognizing that access to primary care is fundamental to promoting healthy aging, the SHIH initiated outreach efforts targeting older adults without access to a doctor or nurse practitioner, inviting them to provide their contact information in anticipation of the potential funding of the proposal.



COMMUNITY FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

In parallel, the CFQ delved into respondents' preferences regarding their ideal housing arrangements as they age.

The SHIH is also actively engaged in discussions with various organizations specializing in support for independent living, encompassing home care, community services, personal support, and home adaptation. There is a pressing need for collaborative efforts in this domain, and the SHIH is encouraged by the interest expressed by numerous community and health service organizations to partner in addressing these challenges.

Moreover, recognizing the pivotal role of technology in enhancing the lives of older adults, the SHIH embarked on collaborations with research experts spanning various disciplines aimed at improving older adults' quality of life, enhancing home security and safety, alleviating caregiver responsibilities, and fostering social and physical engagement as individuals age.

The SHIH remains steadfast in its commitment to leveraging technology to empower seniors and promote their overall well-being.



A photograph of a city river scene. In the foreground, two people are kayaking on the water. A bridge spans the river in the middle ground. In the background, there are city buildings and a clear blue sky with some clouds. The left side of the image is overlaid with a dark blue vertical bar containing white text.

IN SUMMARY:

230

Older adults responded to the Community Feedback Questionnaire.

21

Different neighborhoods in Ottawa responded.

30%

Of respondents indicated that they are not on the roster of a regular primary care provider (i.e., family doctor or nurse practitioner).

A NEED FOR COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

When asked what additional supports older adults would like to see in their community, five themes emerged;

HEALTHCARE SERVICES

- Access to foot doctors and foot care.
- Reliable and quality at-home care services, especially for those recovering post-surgery or experiencing mobility issues.
- Mental health support and counselling services

CAREGIVER SUPPORT

- Support groups and services to alleviate burden of care.
- Specific support groups for caregivers of autistic young adults.
- Respite care for primary caregivers, particularly for those without familial support.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

- Platforms that address and discuss safety issues pertaining to older adults.

INFORMATION AND AWARENESS

- Lack of awareness or information about available services and support systems.
- Desire for more comprehensive and easily accessible information about services aimed at aging in place.

GENERAL SERVICES

- General desire for more support services, including housekeeping, personal support workers, and handyman services.
- Home care services and local housing arrangements beyond long-term care.



A NEED FOR HOUSING

When asked what ideal housing arrangements older adults would like to see in their community, six themes emerged:

PREFERENCE FOR INDEPENDENCE

- Many respondents expressed a desire to live independently but with access to community spaces and services. This includes amenities like communal rooms, social activities, health care services, and meal provisions.
- Examples include living in an apartment with community spaces and services, senior community housing projects, or rental units with access to health care services.

ACCESSIBILITY AND SAFETY

- There was a strong emphasis on accessibility and safety features, such as single-floor units, walk-in showers, non-slip flooring, and minimal risk for falls.
- Preferences also included locations within walking distance of amenities and services, as well as proximity to hospitals and clinics.

AFFORDABILITY

- Affordability was a significant concern, with preferences ranging from social assistance and pension support to rental units within specific price ranges.
- Some respondents mentioned alternatives like life leases, co-housing, or naturally occurring retirement communities as potentially cost-effective options.

CUSTOMIZATION

- Respondents expressed the importance of tailoring housing arrangements to their specific needs, such as space for hobbies, shared facilities for personal care or medical assistance, or accommodations for pets.
- Preferences also included features like green spaces, balconies or small gardens, and access to recreational activities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Many respondents valued opportunities for social interaction and community engagement through shared activities, communal spaces, or connections with neighbours.
- Preferences included living in neighbourhoods with engaged communities, access to public amenities, and the possibility of organizing social and health-related activities.

MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENTS

- Some respondents envisioned mixed-use developments or resort-like arrangements with various amenities, including gyms, pools, restaurants, grocery stores, and medical clinics.
- There was interest in integrating different levels of care within a single complex to accommodate changing needs over time, along with the potential for these amenities to be accessible to the wider community.

A NEED FOR TECHNOLOGY

When asked what technology could improve the lives of older adults, many suggestions were provided.

HEALTH MONITORING AND SAFETY

- Temperature control
- Safety:
 - Monitoring for falls and alert technology
 - Smoke and gas detection
 - Flood and heater monitoring
 - Time reminders for meals and medication
- Monitoring physical activity and blood pressure
- Audio assistance
- Lifeline medic alert
- Devices to help those with disabilities communicate

EASE OF LIVING AND INDEPENDENCE

- Technology aimed at developing independence
- Devices for assistance with daily tasks like bathing, cleaning, transportation, and cooking

SOCIAL CONNECTION AND ISOLATION

- Increased ability to contact family and emergency services
- Virtual visits with doctors, friends, and local events
- Technology aimed at preventing social isolation

PRIVACY AND SECURITY

- Safe door cameras with microphone
- Blocking known fraudsters
- Devices that cannot be easily hacked
- Concerns about invasion of privacy and lack of personal contact



CONCLUSION

While the CFQ was designed primarily to enlist contact information for older adults without primary care and volunteers in other areas related to community services, the responses collected provide valuable insights into the diverse needs and preferences of older adults in Ottawa. This diversity is unsurprising. Respondents differ with respect to health, means and supports. One consistent message was the concern that supports were insufficient to meet the needs now and will only worsen.

From healthcare access and caregiver support to community safety, information awareness, and technological advancements, it is evident that a multifaceted approach is necessary to promote healthy aging and enhance the quality of life for older adults in our community. We can create inclusive and supportive environments that empower seniors to live fulfilling and independent lives as they age in place.

By leveraging these insights and working together, the SHIH hopes to develop innovative approaches, as has been done in other countries, so that people can spend their final years where they want with the services they need.

With about 190 names of volunteers from the CFQ, the SHIH is now putting together teams of volunteers to bring these services to life.

If you would like to volunteer, please connect with us!



www.seniorshhealthinnovationshub.com



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APPENDIX 1. COMMUNITY FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK FORM

We respect your privacy. Personal information will only be used for the purposes stated.

Respondents are welcome to answer some or all questions. You may respond to this survey multiple times however, please note it will be taken offline on January 31, 2024.

OPTIONAL: We would like to track the area associated with the feedback we receive. Consolidated postal code information may be shared with community organizations. Please provide your postal code:

To proceed through the questions, click the green box with the word "NEXT" on this and every page.

Next

1. Primary Care

We are creating a list of names to use for advocacy and to identify potential clients should our proposal for a nurse practitioner-led clinic for older adults be approved.

Eligibility criteria to be on the list.

You are over 65 and "uncertainly attached" to primary care, in one of the following categories:

1. Are not on the roster of a regular primary care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner); OR
2. Have a regular primary care provider who is expected to retire in the next 2-3 years; OR
3. Have a regular primary care provider but have difficulty getting service because of long wait times or travel issues.

If you meet the eligibility criteria, please provide your name and email address

Name

Email Address

2. Home Care and Supportive Services

At this time, the Senior Health Innovations Hub (SHIH) has not developed proposals to improve home care and supportive services in central Ottawa. With sufficient interest from the community, a group may be formed.

If you would like to discuss ideas for improvement of those services with others, please provide your contact information.

Name

Email Address

3. Caregivers

With sufficient interest from the community, a group may be formed of those who are interested in talking informally to other caregivers. If you want to be on that list, please provide your contact information:

Name

Email Address

What additional support would you like to see offered?

4. Housing

If you are interested in being on an email distribution list for Abbeyfield Riverside or interested in having your home turned into an Abbeyfield residence, **please email** riverside@abbeyfield.ca. Information about the Abbeyfield model is available at <https://abbeyfield.ca/>

If you are interested in exploring other housing options for older adults in central Ottawa, please add your contact information. With sufficient interest from the community, a group may be formed.

Name

Email Address

Blue Sky Question: What would be the ideal housing arrangement for your next move? Think of where you would like to move, ideal ownership arrangement, space needed, number of other residents, amenities, supports and price range.

5. Technology

If you are interested in learning about and/or participating in testing new products (sensors, alarms, communications devices, wellness apps, etc.) that assist with healthy aging in place provide your contact information:

Name

Email Address

Blue Sky Question: How might technology make your life easier as you get older?

6. Seniors Health Innovations Hub

It's time for innovation! We plan to incorporate a Seniors Health Innovations Hub (SHIH) whose purpose is to create initiatives that will support aging in the community and benefit seniors for decades to come.

If you would like to know more about the SHIH or get involved in its activities, please provide your name and email and we will contact you.

Name

Email Address

