

PRIMARY CARE FOR OLDER ADULTS: AN URGENT NEED

June 18, 2025 FORUM BIOGRAPHIES

Dr. Benoît Robert

Benoît Robert completed his medical training at the University of Ottawa in 1986 and has been practicing comprehensive family medicine at the Greenboro Family Medicine Centre since 1988. His practice has been comprehensive and included pediatrics, obstetrics, surgical assisting, emergency room work at CHEO.

He worked with the Regional Pediatric Palliative care team, and was a coroner. As part of his day to day work, he continues to include in-patient care, long-term care as well as housecalls for the frail elderly, including home palliative care visits.

He is the Chief Medical Officer at Perley Health.

He has and continues to sit at local and provincial tables and groups in matters impacting health care.

Monica Armstrong

Monica has extensive experience in social and health care services, with a background in operational, system, and strategic leadership across the health sector. She holds a master's degree from the University of Victoria, with a focus on healthcare policy and practice. She is currently the Director of the Ottawa Ontario Health Team – Équipe Santé Ontario d'Ottawa, working to strengthen collaboration and integration within health and social services. Her focus is on improving access and outcomes, particularly for equity-deserving populations.

Shelley Horrocks

Shelley is the Decision Support Lead at the Ottawa Ontario Health Team--Équipe Santé Ontario d'Ottawa. She brings her diverse experiences—from her work on the frontlines in the harm reduction sector to her master's degree in public health—into her role at the Ottawa OHT. Her strong belief that 'evidence' is not only numbers on a page, but stories from our communities guides her work as she supports decision making and evaluation across Ottawa OHT-ESO's partnered initiatives.

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Margaret Tansey, RN (retired); BSN; MSc(A)

Margaret is a Registered Nurse (retired) who has held numerous senior health care positions while receiving multiple awards and special accreditations over an outstanding career. Although she worked in Nepal and Montreal early in her career, Margaret has had a long-term relationship with Ottawa especially with the Royal Ottawa Health Care Group where she initiated and practised as a Nurse Practitioner. Her most recent position there was Vice-President Professional Practice and Chief Nurse Executive. Her special interest has been the mental health of older adults. Since her retirement Margaret remains very active including several board memberships. Margaret recently retired as Board Chair, Perley Health. Margaret is the Chair of the Seniors Health Innovations Hub, and Lead on the Primary Care Team of the SHIH.

Hoda Mankal, NP

Hoda Mankal is a seasoned Nurse Practitioner with nearly 20 years of experience delivering high-quality care across diverse primary care settings. She is passionate about improving health equity and expanding access for underserved communities.

In addition to her clinical practice, Hoda has demonstrated significant leadership within the healthcare sector. She has served on the board and as Director of Communications for the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario, playing a key role in advocacy and professional development. Her governance experience includes contributions to the North Muskoka Board and active involvement in the leadership group of the Ottawa Health Team. Most recently, Hoda led the launch of Ottawa's first Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic, where she currently serves as Executive Director, advancing innovative, community-based primary care.

Blending clinical expertise with strategic leadership, Hoda is committed to empowering nurses and NPs to lead transformative change in healthcare. She is also a proud wife, mother of three, and dog lover who brings warmth and laughter to everything she does.

Nancy Edwards, BScN, MSc, PhD, FCAHS

Nancy Edwards is a Distinguished Professor and Professor Emerita, School of Nursing, University of Ottawa. She obtained her undergraduate nursing degree from the University of Windsor and completed graduate studies in epidemiology at McMaster University and McGill University. She has received three honorary doctoral degrees.

Dr. Edwards' professional interests are in the fields of public and population health. She has conducted research on fall prevention for nearly thirty years with a particular focus on preventing falls in the community by modifying the built environment. Currently Nancy is a board member with, and chairs the fall prevention working group for the Ottawa Chapter of the Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP). She co-chairs S.A.F.E. (Stopping All Falls Everywhere) Ottawa, a collaborative of organizations

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aiming to reduce falls in our municipality. Nancy represents the Canadian Public Health Association on the Advisory Council for Harmonized Construction Codes.

Nancy enjoys cycling, swimming, cross-country skiing, and spending time with her young grandson. Nancy's book *Not One, Not Even One: A Memoir of Life-altering Experiences in Sierra Leone, West Africa* was released by Friesen Press in 2022 (www.nancyedwards.ca) and she debuted her play "Rethinking Good Intentions" in 2024.

Christine Bidmead, MSc., Grad Dip PT

Christine is a UK trained physiotherapist, qualifying in 1972. She and her husband (a primary care physician) emigrated to Canada in 1977 and she worked in hospital, community rehabilitation and primary care settings during the 1980s and 1990s. On returning to the UK in 1997 for family reasons, she gained her MSc in Health Management in the UK and was the Deputy Director for Clinical Services in Somerset Coast Primary Care trust which provided services across community hospitals, domiciliary services and some allied health services in primary care. In 2004 she returned to Canada as Director of Rehabilitation, Geriatric and Cardiopulmonary Services at Queensway Carleton Hospital in Ottawa.

She retired in 2011, but in 2012, she found the idea of working to develop and implement a system-based Fall Prevention Strategy for the region of the Champlain LHIN, was too tempting and was lucky enough to be able to continue to do this until 2022, when she retired again.

She is the Vice Chair of the C.A.R.P. Ottawa Chapter Fall Prevention Working Group (of which Nancy Edwards is the Chair), and has time to enjoy village life, pickleball, gardening, family and friends.

Nathalie Lafrenière

Nathalie Lafrenière is a community-health leader with 30 years of experience advancing safe, equitable supports for older adults, adults with disabilities, and survivors of gender-based violence. As Regional Director of CSS Shared Resources / AccessCSS for Ontario East, she co-created the Aline Chrétien Health Hub in Orléans and helped launch the Archipel Ontario Health Team—two integrated models that bring primary care, community programs, and social supports together under one roof. Guided by a deep commitment to the social determinants of health, Nathalie mobilizes partners and resources so Ottawa-area seniors can age well in their own communities.