

## How can seniors care not be seen as a 'risky business'?

By Michael Kary

**T**here are times when almost on a weekly basis it seems like the news media in Canada report on the alleged mistreatment of, or substandard care being provided to seniors in long-term care, assisted living or home health. These stories have entered the public's consciousness, helping them to form a negative impression of seniors care.

In particular, the tragic Elizabeth Wettlaufer case in Ontario where a nurse was charged with the murder of eight residents in an Ontario long-term care home has caused shockwaves among seniors, their families, and among care providers themselves. While not on the same scale as the horror surrounding the Wettlaufer case, other stories showcasing elder abuse or mistreatment have also shaped a narrative around seniors care.

For example, while a September 2018 BC Office of the Seniors Advocate report highlighted significant reductions in the use of antipsychotics in long term care (about 31.2% decline over five years), this positive development was largely overshadowed by media reports that showed the use of these drugs as way too high.

Not surprisingly, these news reports feed into a public perception where seniors are being over-medicated, elder abuse is running rampant, and that the care being provided to seniors is of poor quality. Long-term care, in particular, has been challenged by stories describing substandard care. However, it overshadows what most family members and care providers know – that excellent, vital care is delivered daily in the overwhelming majority care homes across Canada.

This does not mean seniors care providers do not have a responsibility to address service gaps where they exist. But the sector does have a role to play in preserving its own reputation.

By not telling a more positive story, there are several implications.

Along with stigmatizing views associated with continuing care, these perceptions can make it more difficult

to recruit much needed health professionals to seniors care.

Overall, many seniors when surveyed are quite satisfied with the care they receive. Care providers themselves work hard to improve the quality of seniors lives, and also say they are happy with their career choice.

Such a narrative may overshadow many of the positive stories – like system wide improvements in providing care, or improving quality of life for seniors including reductions in use of antipsychotics, or the many heart-warming stories that are occurring daily in seniors care.

So how do care providers address the challenge they face from negative stories? Of course, they must ensure that the care is excellent. But what else can the sector do?

BC Care Providers Association (BCCPA) will be diving into a discussion on this topic at a special Care to Chat on November 23, 2018 entitled Risky Business, at the Terminal City Club in downtown Vancouver.

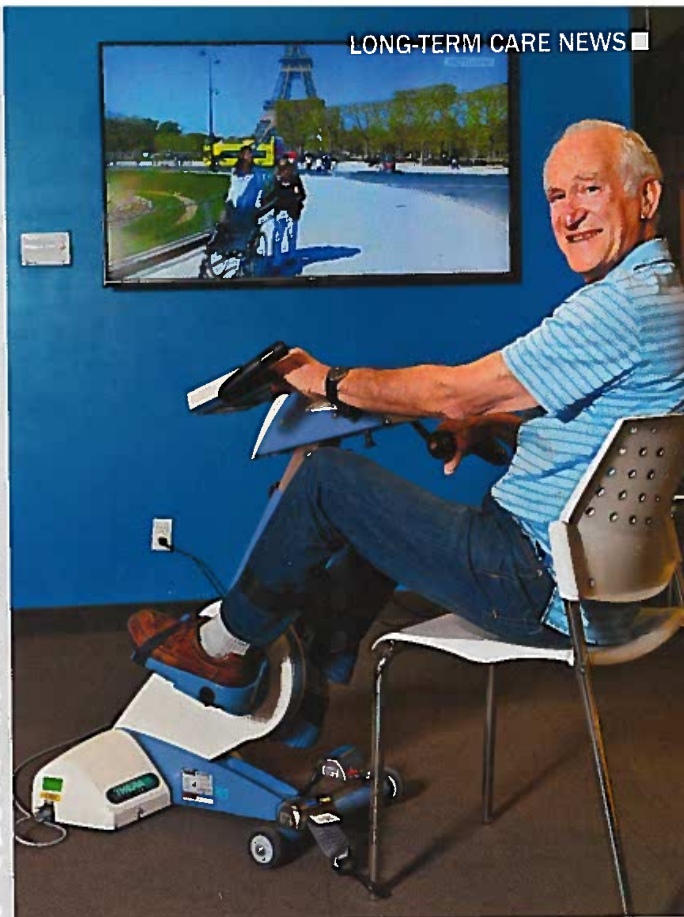
For this Care to Chat, panelists representing both national seniors care companies and the media will have a frank discussion regarding the current state of continuing care in BC and Canada, as well as how it is portrayed in the media.

The panel will also discuss ways to proactively represent the positive side of the work happening in seniors care, including through crisis management, as well as better dealing with the stigma and misconceptions of continuing care.

This event also builds on an April 2015 Care to Chat BCCPA hosted, which looked at some of the prevailing myths and misconceptions of BC's continuing care sector following a major public survey undertaken by BCCPA earlier that same year.

We hope you can join us November 23rd for what is expected to be a very engaging and productive discussion. In particular, we hope you will join us and the panel to share your ideas on how we all can work together to address reputation challenges facing the sector. ■

Michael Kary is Director of Policy & Research at BCCPA.



A demonstration of Motview

## Want to innovate in seniors' care? Collaborate

By Rebecca Ihilchik

**C**anada is undergoing an extraordinary demographic transformation. By the year 2036, those aged 65 or over will make up 25 per cent of the population, according to Statistics Canada. And we're far from alone. The World Health Organization predicts that by 2050, the

world's population aged 60 years and older will double from about 900 million to more than two billion. As the population ages, so does the number of older adults with dementia. Nearly 7.7 million new cases of dementia are diagnosed every year worldwide.

As existing healthcare approaches struggle to keep up with this demo-



■ LONG-TERM CARE NEWS

graphic shift, an exciting innovation boom is occurring in seniors' care. But in order for innovation to have a broad and lasting impact, healthcare professionals, industry, and medical and technology-based organizations can't work in silos. Innovation thrives through collaboration.

How can this be accomplished? At the Baycrest-led Centre for Aging + Brain Health Innovation (CABHI), we make sure good ideas get the exposure they deserve by building strong partnerships.

CABHI helps innovators in Canada and around the world to develop, test, validate, and accelerate their promising innovations in the field of aging and brain health, ensuring the brightest solutions in seniors' care are shared and adopted across borders. CABHI currently supports more than 195 projects, including international innovations from the United States, Portugal, Norway, Israel, and Taiwan, amongst other countries.

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One such CABHI partner is Norwegian company Motitech, which is the creator of Motiview: a motivational device that encourages exercise in older adults and people with dementia. Users are positioned on a stationary bicycle in front of a screen that simulates views of landscapes from around the world.

The technology has been in use in Europe since 2012, but Motitech faced obstacles engaging an unfamiliar North American market. CABHI matched Motitech with three leading seniors' care organizations in Canada in order to validate the technology in a North American setting. The scientific evi-

dence gathered from these trials will be used to accelerate the product to the Canadian market.

The partnership also benefits the seniors' care organizations and older adults in their care, who are now able to access a cutting-edge technology they may not have otherwise had an opportunity to explore.

One trial site resident who used the technology mentioned that she "loved" using Motiview to exercise. "Usually, it's so boring that I would get off one of these bikes," she said. "But I spent a good five minutes on the bike, which is great considering my lung capacity."

This Norwegian-Canadian CABHI collaboration is one of many. CABHI projects have engaged more than 500 partners and collaborators, and CABHI is continuously forming strong new partnerships — all of which result in healthier patients, better-equipped healthcare professionals, and a stronger, diversified healthcare system.

Many older adults, caregivers, healthcare professionals, and innovators face similar types of challenges when it comes to aging and providing care for an aging population. By taking advantage of the expertise, intellectual capital, and original thinking from around the globe, CABHI can innovate together with our partners to tangibly impact health outcomes for the world's aging population. Most importantly, we can provide each older adult with the best aging experience the world has to offer.

Interested in learning more? Visit [www.cabhi.com](http://www.cabhi.com) or get in touch at [info@cabhi.com](mailto:info@cabhi.com). ■

Rebecca Ihlichik is the Marketing & Communications Specialist at the Centre for Aging + Brain Health Innovation (CABHI).



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