

Canadian Research Network for Care in the Community e-Newsletter # 3: November/December 2005

Encouraging research and knowledge transfer in home and community care

IN THIS ISSUE:

- [CRNCC LAUNCHES WEBSITE](#)
- [WOMEN IN HOME CARE WORKSHOP – IN BRIEF](#)
- [MOVING FORWARD WITH YOUR HELP](#)
- [ON THE RADAR](#)

CRNCC ([WWW.CRNCC.CA](http://www.crncc.ca)) LAUNCHES WEB SITE AT OCSA CONFERENCE

We are delighted to announce that the CRNCC now has its own web site!

On November 23rd, 2005, Paul Williams (CRNCC Chair) and Janet Lum (CRNCC Steering Committee member) officially launched the CRNCC web site at the Ontario Community Support Association (OCSA) Conference 2005 banquet at the Nottawasaga Inn, Alliston, Ontario.

The OCSA Conference 2005 was extremely well organized and the Wednesday evening banquet, attended by close to 200 delegates, marked a high point in an excellent program. We are very grateful to the OCSA, and particularly to Susan Thorning (Chief Operating Officer), for this terrific opportunity to tell practitioners, policy-makers and consumers about the Network.

In his presentation, Professor Williams emphasized the Network's mission: to encourage research and knowledge transfer on home and community care within the broader continuum of health and social care in Canada. In an environment where evidence is increasingly seen as a basic requirement for decision-making, the Network aims to encourage research that will generate new evidence about the costs and outcomes of home and community care, and to link providers, consumers and decision-makers to existing evidence in Canada and internationally.

With these aims in mind, the CRNCC website is designed to provide easy access to relevant information and to encourage members' participation. Current web pages include:

- **About Us:** CRNCC goals, objectives and contact information. *Membership is free.*
- **Newsletters:** CRNCC publishes a bi-monthly e-newsletter highlighting coming events, new evidence, and research opportunities; past and current editions are archived here. *Members are invited to suggest items of interest.*
- **In Focus Fact Sheets.** Concise 2-page "backgrounders" providing the latest research evidence and links to key web sites on topics of particular importance to members. We hope that these will be useful when planning services, making grant applications, or attempting to influence policy. The first of these, produced in collaboration with *West Toronto Support Services*, focuses on *Falls Prevention for Seniors*. Planned fact sheets will look at managed competition; ethno-racial issues in home and community care; supportive housing; and the

costs and outcomes of preventive community-based care for seniors. *We encourage members to suggest topics for future fact sheets and to help us locate available evidence.*

- **Reports by CRNCC Members.** Current examples include recent reports on home care for children and supportive housing in Toronto. *We hope that members will share reports or working papers that build the knowledge base about home and community care.*
- **Events Calendar.** In November, the OCSA and CRNCC collaborated to organize a very successful seminar on women in home care (see below). *We invite members to give us details of upcoming events highlighting home and community care so that we can tell others.*
- **Presentations by Members.** These currently include Powerpoint presentations by Raisa Deber, Janet Lum and Paul Williams from the recent OCSA/CRNCC women and home care workshop. *Members are invited to tell us about recent presentations on home and community care that they or others have made at conferences, symposia, and workshops.*
- **Research in Progress by CRNCC Members.** This page currently provides information on a project looking at supportive housing in three areas of Ontario. It is being conducted by a research team based at the U of T and Ryerson University, in collaboration with a number of community agencies and consumer groups. *CRNCC members are invited to share information on projects in which they are involved as well as planned research and opportunities for collaboration.*
- **Related Links.** This page provides links to web sites which are particularly useful for finding evidence on home and community care in Canada and internationally. *Members are invited to tell us about other links which they find helpful.*

For more details, see Paul Williams' Powerpoint presentation at http://www.hpme.utoronto.ca/userfiles/page_attachments/Library/1/CRNCC_launch_nov_23_2005_2460495.ppt, or visit the CRNCC website at www.crncc.ca.

OCSA & CRNCC WORKSHOP ON WOMEN AND HOME CARE: THE FACTS, THE ISSUES, THE FUTURE – IN BRIEF

On Monday, November 21, 2005, as part of the OCSA Conference 2005, the OCSA and CRNCC jointly hosted a one-day workshop on women in home care. As people in the field know so well, women continue to play a crucial role in home and community care as health care professionals, family carers, volunteers, and consumers. Changes in home and community care policy thus have a direct and immediate impact on women.

Thanks to the superb organizing skills of Susan Thorning, the workshop was attended by over 100 participants representing providers, consumers and policy-makers.

A strong group of presenters included:

- Keynote speaker, the **Honourable Elinor Caplan**, former Ontario health minister, federal cabinet minister and author of [Realizing the Potential of Home Care](#), the recent review of the competitive bidding process used by Ontario's Community Care Access Centres (CCACs) to

award service contracts to for-profit and not-for-profit providers. While contending that managed competition produces benefits by forcing providers to achieve efficiencies and improve service quality, Caplan also indicated that the current system has problems which impact negatively on women. These include poor wages and employment arrangements such as “elect-to-work” which see workers being hired on a casual basis with few benefits or protections.

- Next, a panel of three women, each with years of experience as consumers and carers, talked from different perspectives about women in home care.
 - **Bea Levis**, a long-time advocate for comprehensive community-based services for seniors, emphasized that in spite of changing gender roles over her life time, women continue to play a central role in home care, and they continue to experience difficulties accessing the care that they and their family members need.
 - **Melanie Collum**, a Personal Support Worker, talked about her career in home care which began as a way of paying for her work as an artist, and then became a vocation with a strong focus on helping others.
 - **Camille Orridge**, Executive Director, Toronto Community Care Access Centre, talked about her long experience in home care, about the crucial role that home care can play in keeping people independent, and about the sometimes divisive politics within the field which make it more difficult to convince policy-makers that home and community care should get higher priority in funding decisions.
- **Janet Lum**, Associate Professor, Department of Politics and Public Administration, Ryerson University, used her recent research findings to emphasize the importance of providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services to an increasingly diverse elderly population. She identified multiple jeopardies for loss of independence including gender, frailty, living alone, poverty, social isolation, differences in cultural backgrounds, and lack of fluency in English. Janet’s presentation can be found at http://www.hpme.utoronto.ca/userfiles/page_attachments/Library/1/Janet_Lum_OCSA_presentation_777695.ppt
- **Margaret Denton**, Director of the Centre for Gerontological Studies, McMaster University, reported on her research examining the effects of work and work environment on homecare workers' mental and physical health, and on their recruitment and retention. She has found high rates of turnover among workers tied to dissatisfaction with pay, hours of work, lack of organizational support, workload and work-related stress.
- **Allison Williams**, Associate Professor, School of Geography and Earth Sciences, McMaster University, presented findings from her study on the home as the place of care and the role of women within the home. Allison noted that changes in health care delivery have resulted in the transfer of care from formal spaces such as hospitals and institutions towards informal settings such as home with the burden of care often transferred to women.
- **Susan Braedley**, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Sociology, York University, assessed the different roles that women and men have traditionally played in the provision of home care: men as managers, and women as direct carers. Susan concluded that gender analysis

must be central to policy and everyday practices, rather than maintaining a political correctness that obscures and reinforces the gender relations status quo.

- **Pat Armstrong**, Professor, Department of Sociology, York University, and CHSRF/CIHR Chair in *Women and Health Services: Policies and Politics*, commented from her perspective as author of multiple books and publications touching on women and home care. She emphasized that instead of focusing solely on who pays for home care, we also need to consider the multiple tensions which characterize the field, including those around the role of women.
- **Raisa Deber**, Professor, Department of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation, University of Toronto, and Director, Medicare to Home and Community (M-THAC) Research Unit, wrapped up the workshop. She identified a major political hurdle for the sector – while decision-makers continue to support universal access to publicly funded hospital and doctor services under Medicare, they are relatively ambivalent about public funding for home and community care. Evidence can help to move beyond rhetoric to build a new political consensus in support of home and community care. Raisa's presentation can be found at http://www.hpme.utoronto.ca/userfiles/page_attachments/Library/1/Raisa_Deber_OCSA_presentation_1608322.ppt

MOVING FORWARD, WITH YOUR HELP

In a few short months the CRNCC has generated considerable interest and stimulated important synergies among individuals and organizations in home and community care. The CRNCC is committed to expanding an open dialogue with consumers, practitioners, providers and policy-makers with the aim of raising the profile of the sector as a whole and building awareness of the crucial role of home and community care in the broader continuum of health and social care in Canada and internationally.

The more we talk, the more we are convinced that in addition to all the research that could be done, there is already a lot of relevant knowledge out there which can positively influence decision-making -- but it needs to be located and made accessible. That's where the CRNCC comes in.

To do this, we need your help. We would like to engage members in any or all of the following ways:

- **By becoming a member**; membership is free. In politics and policy-making, numbers count.
- **By telling others about us – please feel free to forward this newsletter to others.**
- **By telling us about topics and issues that are important to you.** At the very least we can communicate what you and others are thinking
- **By helping us to prepare *In Focus* fact sheets**, our 2-page backgrounders on topics of key importance to the field. We want these fact sheets to be a resource for planning, writing funding applications (since most funders demand thorough reviews of available evidence), and influencing decision-makers.
- **By telling us about upcoming events** so that we can tell others and generate interest.

- **By collaborating to organize events** including seminars, workshops and presentations of interest to the field. We view our collaboration with the Ontario Community Support Association (OCSA) around the Women and Home Care workshop as a model for future events
- **By joining our Steering Committee** which meets about once a month.

CRNCC Membership

Membership includes, but is not limited to, academics, providers of community care, policy-makers and other interested stakeholders from across Canada and abroad. Benefits of membership are:

- **Information:** Free access to current academic literature.
- **Engagement:** Participation in an ongoing exchange of academic, grey and other community care literature.
- **Development:** Encouragement of students to work and/or undertake research in the community care sector.
- **Legitimacy:** Ability to demonstrate interest in, and evidence related to, the community care sector.

ON THE RADAR

The Older Persons' Mental Health and Addictions Network of Ontario (OPMHAN)

We are pleased to announce an emerging collaboration with *OPHMAN*. This Network aims “to improve the Ontario system of care for older persons in the community who are at risk of, or coping with mental illness and addictions – and support those who care for and about them.” Possibilities under discussion include an *In Focus* fact sheet on mental health and addictions for older persons, and a workshop in the spring focusing on current research and evidence. For information about *OPHMAN* or to become a member, e-mail Randi Fine at rfine@sympatico.ca or call her at 416.782.1601.

THE FINE PRINT

The CRNCC is a knowledge translation activity of the Medicare to Home and Community (M-THAC) Research Unit at the University of Toronto.

M-THAC is funded under the Community Alliances for Health Research Programme of the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR). You may also visit its web site at www.m-thac.org.

If you would like to be removed from this listserv, or know someone who would like to be added, please contact us at crncc@utoronto.ca

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