

# Active Healthy Aging in Renfrew County

## Time for Action



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“By simply getting 10% of Canadians with suboptimal levels of physical activity to move more and reduce their sedentary behavior, starting in 2015, the incidence rates for major chronic conditions would be reduced substantially.”

“The economic impact of physical inactivity in Canada in terms of chronic disease, obesity and health care costs is estimated at \$6.8 billion CAN per annum” (4)

The Conference Board of Canada. (2014). *Moving ahead: The economic impact of reducing physical inactivity and sedentary behavior*. Ottawa: Bounajm, F., Dinh, T., & Theriault, L.

Prepared for the Whitewater Bromley Community Health Centre (WBCHC) and Barry’s Bay Home Support Services (BBHSS)

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## **Executive Summary**

### **Introduction**

In partnership with Barry's Bay Home Support Services (BBHSS) and other stakeholders, the Whitewater Bromley Community Health Centre (WBCHC), the need for increased coordination and planning for physical activity services for older adults across Renfrew County has been identified. Developing an Active Aging Community of Practice (CoP) or network for Renfrew County is one option to be considered towards the goal of a more coordinated approach to the planning and delivery of physical activity programs and services for older adults.

The first of the Baby Boom generation turned 65 years old in 2011. Maintaining adult fitness will be an important goal as these adults progress through their retirement years and beyond. A healthy active lifestyle has been correlated with many health benefits while the cost of inactivity is high. Building capacity to provide physical activity programming for older adults (55 years and up) is therefore a priority. Governments are continuing to expand their investment in active aging and this is a priority for Renfrew County given the dramatic increase expected in the population of Renfrew County adults who will reach 55 or older in the next decade and beyond.

### **Methodology**

Several key activities were conducted including: 1) a brief review of the literature; 2) review of practices and programs from other municipalities engaged in physical activity planning for older adults; 3) consultations with 37 key informants from municipal, recreation, health, seniors and community sectors that serve the older adult population and; 4) a review of services, initiatives, and community organizations and networks that serve older adults in Renfrew County.

### **Findings**

Most people interviewed were aware of the Baby Boom generation though few had developed strategic plans relative to the impact of this demographic, specifically the social and economic costs of falls. Municipalities must prepare for an aging society and ensure more opportunities for active, healthy aging.

With a population of 101,326, (2011 Census) spread across an area larger than Prince Edward Island (PEI), special challenges in coordination and communication are a reality. Many networks and organizations are working to address and provide seniors' services and programs in the County. More coordinated planning for seniors would eliminate overlap, better coordinate and increase efficiency across committees as well as fill service gaps relative to physical activity and aging.

Healthy aging in Renfrew County municipalities will require the coordination of several sectors: health care, municipal governments and recreation, community senior citizen centres and seniors' groups themselves. There is widespread support for more coordinated, collaborative planning around active aging. There is also an association of partners interested in increasing physical activity for older adults in the County.

A network supporting active aging should be established to engage in strategic planning and knowledge transfer. This would increase integration and collaboration and also increase opportunities specifically for older adults. A coordinated strategy could address many issues identified in this project including: addressing service gaps for older adults, supporting equity of service, advocating for more publicity and awareness of opportunities of the importance of physical activity and aging and to share best practices.

### **Summary of Recommendations**

1. Ensure consultation between regional representatives with local networks/agencies relevant to active aging prior to implementation of regional programs in Renfrew County;
2. Evaluate potential for the evolution of an "active aging network or Community of Practice" with capacity to coordinate an active aging strategy and audit of resources for Renfrew County;
3. Ensure community members who are older adults are included in the active aging strategy as a key stakeholder group;
4. Support primary care providers through training and resources so they can ensure physical activity is promoted as part of the medical response wherever possible;
5. Establish defined exercise pathways to support active aging for people along the continuum of aging (55 yrs. +) and ability levels (includes Home Support Exercise, Falls Prevention programs, evidence-based, Senior Fitness Classes etc.);
6. Consider capacity to expand Elderly Persons Centres (EPC) as part of an active aging audit to extend reach of EPCs to more communities in the County;
7. Provide evidence-based training, resources and promising practice methods for planning and implementation of community-based physical activity interventions (i.e. Stand UP! Falls Prevention classes; Senior Fitness Instructor Course training for community leaders to facilitate senior fitness classes);
8. Ensure physical activity is a core element of health promotion, prevention and chronic disease self-management tools/programs;
9. Develop and implement policies and funding systems that increase access to affordable physical activity opportunities (i.e. walking, cycling, and hiking) that support an active aging strategy.

## Introduction

The Whitewater Bromley Community Health Centre (WBCHC), a part of Lanark Renfrew Health & Community Services in partnership with Barry's Bay Home Support Services (BBHSS) obtained funding through the Champlain LHIN to achieve the following:

- Collaborate to plan and deliver training to enable the continued support of existing exercise classes for older adults and enable expansion of research-based, best practice seniors exercise classes in more rural areas of Renfrew County;
- Increase physical activity opportunities to reduce the risk of falls among older adults in Renfrew County through increased coordination and communication between agencies/providers offering Falls Prevention programs (e.g. Stand UP! ) with those facilitating exercise classes for older adults;
- Access local expertise of Renfrew County residents and providers in senior exercise programming to maximize resource investments and coordination of exercise programming for older adults, including Falls Prevention programs heavily based on appropriate exercises for falls prevention among older adults;
- Draft report to identify opportunities and actions to enhance capacity and impact of evidence-based, physical activity programs for older adults in Renfrew County.

The first of the Baby Boom generation turned 65 years old in 2011. Due to its size, this generation will impact health planning for the coming decades. Building capacity to provide physical activity programming for older adults is a greater priority given the projected increase in the proportion of people age 65 and older will increase from 16 to 21% by 2025 (2011 National Household Survey and projections from the Ministry of Finance from 2011 Census to current year).

A healthy active lifestyle has been correlated with many health benefits. For example, research has shown that exercise plays a key role in both cancer prevention and cancer control (Stathokostas). According to a new report commissioned by the Ontario Brain Institute, "more than one in seven cases of Alzheimer's disease could be prevented if people who are physically inactive started getting regular doses of exercise" (Ontario Brain Institute, p. 2).

The Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging (CCAA) summarizes the well-documented and many benefits of physical activity including:

Reduced risk of cardiovascular diseases and some types of cancer  
Reduced risk of osteoporosis, diabetes, obesity, hypertension  
Promoting good mental health and reduced risk of depression  
Reduced stress and anxiety  
Many others...

Exercise has been shown to have a protective effect on cardiovascular disease, one of the leading causes of death in Renfrew County. Life expectancy in the Upper Ottawa Valley (78.6 years) is lower than that in our Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) (80.9 years) and lower than the provincial average (80.1 years). Diabetes is also 54% higher in the Upper Ottawa Valley than in the LHIN generally (Champlain LHIN, 2014). Benefits of physical activity include not just overall health but emotional well-being, increased life expectancy, a slowing of premature aging, as well as maintaining independence and mobility (Stathokostas). This evidence underlines the need for local attention to health and fitness.

**60% of Canadians over 65 are inactive making inactivity a greater health risk than smoking or chronic diseases. (Champlain District LHIN, 2014)**

The costs associated with physical *in*activity are high: advancement of chronic diseases, obesity and the high costs of falls for example. In 2013, more than 2,700 seniors in the area covered by the Champlain Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) were admitted to hospital due to a fall: their average hospital stay was 15 days at a cost of \$17.2 million (Champlain LHIN).

The Canadian Physical Activities Guideline for Older Adults recommends that adults 65 years and older should exercise at least 150 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous aerobic activity per week, in periods of 10 minutes or more ([Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology](#)). We are also learning more about what constitutes ‘healthy physical activity’. For example, research has revealed that 30 minutes of activity per day can be just as beneficial if broken up into episodes of 10 minutes each.

**Less than 20% of Canadian older adults are sufficiently active to reap health benefits. –Canadian Centre for Activity & Aging**

For many municipalities older adults will represent half their population or more in the next 10 years. Pembroke and Renfrew (urban Renfrew County) are well-served by many long-term care centres and resources for older adults whereas in rural areas there are fewer resources.

In some municipalities the numbers are quite striking. In Madawaska Valley (Barry’s Bay, Wilno & Combermere) **43% of the population currently is 55 years and older**. In Pembroke **35%** or more than one-third of the entire population of the city is an older adult. Even in a relatively ‘young’ municipality like Petawawa, residents 55 years and older outnumber the youth aged 10 to 19 years (2011 Canadian Census).



**Table 1: Older Adult Demographics: Selected Renfrew County Municipalities**

Municipality	Residents 55 yrs. and older	% of the population	Residents 55 yrs. and older over the next 10 years	% of the population
Pembroke	5,203	35%	6,315	43%
Laurentian Valley	2,850	30%	4,600	48%
Madawaska Valley	1,850	43%	2,540	59%
Whitewater	2,250	33%	3,440	50%
Bonnechere Valley	3,763	41%	2,160	57%
Renfrew	3,245	39%	4,555	55%

Source: 2011 Canadian Census

**Note:** Future projections of populations here is based on the combination of those currently 45-54 years with those currently 55 years and older. These figures do not reflect deaths over the decade.

## Methodology

Several key activities were conducted:

1. a brief review of the literature and of practices of other municipalities engaged in physical activity planning for older adults;
2. an analysis of demographic and socio-economic characteristics of older adults in the County (including population projections);
3. a review of physical activity programs and services affecting older adults; consultations with 37 key informants from municipal & recreation, health, seniors and community sectors that typically serve the older adult population (Appendix A);
4. a review of services, initiatives, and community organizations and networks that serve this population;
5. environmental scan.

An environmental scan was conducted to identify existing programs and physical activity opportunities for older adult fitness (55 years and up) in Renfrew County [Appendix B].



Avid cyclists Eileen & Lionel Barber of Pembroke

Informal discussions were also held with existing seniors networks such as the Falls Prevention Coalition, the Aging Safe, Healthy & Strong and the Renfrew County Geriatric Services Network. Further information was gathered through discussions with The Ontario Seniors Secretariat, the Champlain Community Care Access Centre (CCAC), and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. See Appendix A for a full list of stakeholders interviewed and engaged.

## Key Findings

### Introduction

The size of the older adult demographic in Renfrew County surprised many interviewed who were aware of the “Baby Boomers,” but had not translated this into their planning process.

While Canadians in 1960 could expect to live to 71 years of age, the average senior today now lives to 81 years, longer than seniors in Germany, the UK or the USA. The number of Ontarians 65 years and over will double in the next 20 years. Municipalities must prepare for an aging society and ensure more opportunities for active, healthy aging.

In total, over 33,000 persons in Renfrew County or 33% of the population are 55 years and older (Statistics Canada, 2011 Census of Population). However, Renfrew County is a more aged and less healthy population than other areas in Ontario. Older adults account for 50% of provincial government hospital expenditures but are only 14.6% of the population. In Renfrew County the proportion of older adults is even higher at 18.2% (Canadian Community Health Survey).

## **Planning and Coordination**

Key informants revealed that though there are several “networks” in the County that address services and programs for older adults at a broader level, increased collaboration and coordination between these groups, and with others not currently represented, could increase effectiveness of planning and service delivery for active aging. One example, the Falls Prevention Coalition, evolved to facilitate resource and information sharing related to the Champlain LHIN funding for falls prevention programs. This coalition includes members from health and social service agencies in both Renfrew and Lanark counties whose target audience is older adults and many of the issues relevant to the continuum of active aging for older adults (from frail to very active) are being addressed through this coalition.

Seniors themselves and representatives from seniors centres are not specifically represented on most of the existing committees mentioned previously. Many interviewed noted that more outcome-focused planning of local networks would be welcomed. Increased coordination in planning for seniors would eliminate overlap, better coordinate and increase efficiency across committees as well as fill gaps especially around services for physical activity and aging.

Unfortunately, as the consultations showed, the three sectors most integral to active aging (1) municipalities/recreation sector; (2) health care sector; (3) seniors centres and seniors in the communities, do not always interact. Municipal recreation departments (where they exist) do not always know what the local seniors’ centres are providing in physical activity programming and often take an at “arms length” role limited to the management of the physical buildings and surrounding land. Not all municipalities offer a robust choice of physical activities for adults 55 years and up and some smaller municipalities have additional challenges to offering the programs and services they and their residents want. For example, there may be a lack of available instructors and resources to coordinate training and recruit leaders. While some facilities seem to be underutilized (e.g. Pem Ice 2 meeting room was mentioned several times), there are also very creative ways to integrate physical activity in community spaces and below are just a few examples:

- yoga evenings hosted by the Pembroke Public Library;
- biking club in Deep River that hosts day trips and other events;
- outdoor yoga for free offered by the city of Pembroke at the waterfront;
- stand-up paddle boarding offered in partnership by the cities of Petawawa & Pembroke;
- Get W.I.T.H. [Walking in the Halls] It! Indoor Walking programs from Jan. – Mar.;

## **Falls Prevention**

Falls are one of the most common causes of injury and the sixth leading cause of death for seniors (Source: Senior Care Canada). In Canada, 1 in 3 seniors have a fall in any given year and

of these, 20% die within a year (Champlain Local Health Integration Network (LHIN); OECD; Statistics Canada).

In Renfrew County, about 1,700 older adults visit a hospital emergency department each year for care of injuries caused by falls. The incidence of falls in Renfrew County is higher than other areas in the Champlain LHIN and in Ontario (IntelliHealth Ontario, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, extracted September 2014 by Renfrew County and District Health Unit).

Many falls can be prevented using a multipronged approach. Physical activity has been shown to be one of the most effective interventions when balance, strength, flexibility and gait training are incorporated. These are the exercise components that many falls prevention and seniors exercise programs include, for example, the LHIN funded Stand UP! Falls Prevention programs and the Senior Fitness Instructor Course developed by the CCAA.

Pre and post program functional assessment measures are collected which are better indicators of functional ability and for screening. Those interviewed on the Fall Prevention programs expressed concern that the primary outcome measure for reporting was number of falls especially given the fact that root causes are multi-factorial.

### **Supports & Challenges**

Falls prevention and investment in physical activity resources for older adults is a shared priority by many stakeholders in Renfrew County and regionally. Resources directed to falls prevention and other physical activity programming for Renfrew County from the regional level, while needed, would have had a greater impact with purposeful consultation at the local level prior to the direction of funds. This consultation would have resulted in more effective communication and planning, reduced duplication of services and increased impact of those financial investments, in particular in rural areas of Renfrew County. Fortunately, this challenge has been acknowledged and actions have been taken to improve communication. New partnerships have evolved to support ongoing, local consultation of rural partners so that rural resources and concerns are addressed in the decision-making process at the regional level.

**“Given the innumerable benefits of physical activity for the adult population, significant emphasis should be focused on physical activity promotion for this population.”**

**--PARC Physical Activity Resource Centre**



Line dancing is effective exercise and supports social engagement

Other planning considerations highlighted by those interviewed included the recognition of the “changing tastes” of seniors in recreation and physical activity programming. Several municipalities are providing “learn to” sessions for older adults to try new activities including the rental of needed physical activity equipment to sample new activities. Some interviewed also commented on the distinction and implications for planning when considering the needs of what some termed the ‘young old’ (55-70 yrs.) and the different desires and interest in programming this group has compared with ‘the old, old’ group (over 70 yrs.).

Finally, almost all interviewed voiced their concern that transportation is often a barrier for active aging. Reduced social contact, or social isolation, has been associated with a lower quality of life for seniors and can also lead to poor health and depression.

## Key Recommendations

### Planning & Coordination

Some municipalities in Renfrew County are actively looking ahead to plan. During the time-frame of this report (June 2015), four municipalities (Petawawa, The Township of Madawaska Valley, Arnprior, and The Township of Greater Madawaska) were awarded 2015 [Age Friendly Community Planning grants](#) to begin the process of drafting an age-friendly community plan.

Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) have outlined priorities for 2015-2019 that include building capacity to support evidence-based practice and addressing preventable diseases due to lack of physical activity. Enhanced partnerships between the RCDHU and County stakeholders focused on active aging such as recreation staff/volunteers, health care workers and seniors' centres, would achieve greater reach and impact of programs and services for older adults. For example, with leadership from Ottawa Public Health, the city of Ottawa developed an [Older Adult Plan](#) in three stages: 1) background research; 2) consultations with Ottawa older adults; and 3) development of an action plan. This process involved striking an Active Aging Advisory Committee to work with Council in the development of their plans.

One of the roles of an Active Aging Advisory Committee in Renfrew County could be to adapt the process used in Ottawa to conduct an 'active aging audit.' Among other information, the audit could help to identify locations for more active living opportunities for older adults. These spaces may include local shopping malls, schools, church basements, pools, parks and outdoor spaces etc., where more senior-targeted programming could be encouraged.

Another benefit of an active, aging audit would be to identify where seniors already gather so that physical activity opportunities can be planned to coordinate with existing groups. For example, Le Centre Lajoie, the francophone seniors centre in Pembroke is currently looking to introduce physical activity program options in addition to their many social activities.

[Paramedic Wellness Clinics](#) are a good example of outreach to where seniors gather.

Table 2 shows that as participation in sports and physical activities decrease, social participation like religious activities increases. Seniors recreation programming in churches and buildings of faith-based organizations may increase opportunities for older adults to be more active where they are already meeting others. These buildings are a resource for community activities for seniors. Many have meeting rooms, parking, handicap access, elevators, and sometimes a gymnasium or large meeting space suitable for physical activity.

**Table 2: Ontario Seniors' Social Participation: sports & physical activities; religious activities**

Age	Sports & physical activities	Religious activities
55-64 years	42.1%	38%
65-74 years	36.9%	42.6%
75-84 years	24.1%	48.2%
85 years +	13.1%	46.3%

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey – Healthy Aging, 2008/09 data.

### *A Place at the Table*

Building more physical activity opportunities for older adults requires the active support, awareness and involvement of members of every community. Including the older adults in the planning process is essential. Madawaska Valley, for example, identifies seniors as one of its five strategic pillars in their municipal Economic Development Strategy. Petawawa has a Seniors Issues Committee and seniors are listed in their municipal Strategic Plan. One of the 6 strategic priorities for the Champlain LHIN is: “More people involved in planning their health services... involving people as partners in their personal care journey and engaging people in health care system planning. Engaged patients tend to have better health outcomes.” Any coordinated regional and local planning efforts will be more effective with the inclusion of community members who are older adults with the range of stakeholders mentioned previously whose focus is on service and programming for older adults (e.g. RCDHU, Champlain LHIN, CCAC, existing networks/planning committees, recreation dept., seniors centres etc.).

### *Continuum of Aging*

Aging doesn't begin at 65. As one senior said, “sometimes becoming a senior citizen just creeps up on us!” There is a continuum of aging and ‘active aging’ is important to consider in the decade before 65, if not sooner. Beginning earlier to prepare for the next phase of life will mean aging well with good health and maintaining independent living. Generally, Canadians used to retire at 65 years. Now we are living beyond 80 but need to ensure those extra years are healthy ones. We are living longer but we must work at living well.

### *Older Adults Still Working*

Physical activity for older adults in the workplace is important to consider as well in reaching those in the 55-65 or older age group. Existing opportunities for older adults still in the workforce and new opportunities could be identified through the active aging audit mentioned previously. This group of older adult employees is an important demographic for an active aging advisory committee and other groups to consider in their planning efforts.



### Exercise is medicine!

Physicians and health-service providers have an important role to play in influencing their older adult clients to consider the role of physical activity on their mental, social and physical health now and into the future. The contribution and role of medical professionals are important considerations for a broader planning process. With current information on quality physical activity programs and services for older adults, medical providers will be more effective in connecting their older adult clients to local opportunities to be physically active which contributes to good social, mental and physical health.

“Regular enjoyable exercise is currently the most significant route to better health and is a more straightforward and economical means to lifelong health than medication and acute care. In light of the strength of the evidence on the benefits of physical activity, the focus of future action resides mainly in the identification and implementation of successful interventions for older adults”  
*Alberta Centre for Active Living. (2006). Helping older people be active at home: The effectiveness of the home support exercise program.* Edmonton: O’Brien Cousins, S., Dechaine, J., & Gengoechea, E.

### Older Adult Centres

Ontario is currently reviewing its Elderly Person Centres (EPC)—five of which are located in Renfrew County, exclusively in the larger cities like Pembroke, Petawawa and Renfrew. EPCs provide “social and recreational programs to promote wellness for seniors.” Many EPCs also offer “preventive health education and support services that help keep seniors healthy, active and independent for as long as possible” (OSS). Ninety-one percent of EPCs offer physical activities (OSS).

Ontario’s Action Plan for Seniors recommended that Ontario: “*explore ways of expanding the network of Elderly Persons Centres, ensuring that our seniors have ready access to places in their community that promote healthy, active aging and wellness*” -- (OSS, 2013).

<https://dr6j45ik9xcmk.cloudfront.net/documents/215/ontarioseniorsactionplan-en-20130204.pdf>

However, many Renfrew County seniors reported the centres are invaluable and well supported by volunteers but not well funded and typically provide services with less than one full-time staff person. Some centres must pay high rent which reduces the available resources to provide programs and activities. Many EPCs are open five days a week with additional special activities on week nights and weekends and some serve a membership of up to 600 seniors (Pembroke seniors centre). Opportunities exist for these centres to be expanded to more communities in

the County and to be able to extend program into more rural areas, to be better promoted and to play a larger role in physical activity programming for older adults.



### **Developing a Seniors Active Aging Network**

County-wide consultations have shown there is widespread support for coordinated, collaborative planning around active aging. Many interviewed were supportive of the possibility of developing a network or Community of Practice (CoP) focused specifically on healthy, active aging for Renfrew County and exploring the representation and process of engaging stakeholders to develop this network. While key respondents support more networking, coordination and building linkages, thoughts of attending “another committee meeting” were off-putting. Many suggested that a strategic approach to developing this type of network or CoP would be needed.

A network, with support from the existing planning groups, could better coordinate resources and services for older adults in the County but with a more specific focus on physical activity and older adults. For example, the town of Griffith had a location identified and interested participants for fitness classes that were facilitated by a regional agency but no one with appropriate training to lead the class. The development of a model for effective delivery of fitness classes for older adults is successfully operating in many Renfrew County communities which could be coordinated and expanded by a network. The network could collectively leverage resources to expand the existing model to ensure availability of more qualified, seniors fitness instructors closer to home and in local communities like Griffith.

The Champlain LHIN approved one-time funding to train and support new volunteer instructors in Renfrew County in January 2015 using an evidence-based training model developed by the [Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging](#) (CCAA).

This training has been delivered in the County by the Whitewater Bromley Community Health Centre (WBCHC) to support its’ fitness class program for older adults, lead by trained, volunteers Senior Fitness Instructors. Building on the successes of the WBCHC model and with the support of WBCHC staff, Eganville and District Seniors Needs Association has developed and delivered a similar model. Barry’s Bay Home Support Services (BBHSS) and Rainbow Valley Community Health Centre (RVCHC) are sharing the management of senior fitness volunteers based on the same model.

Currently, there are 3 Certified Trainers to teach the Seniors Fitness Instructor Course (SFIC) in Renfrew County to facilitate ongoing refreshers/recertifications, coordination of fitness classes, assure quality control and train future volunteers.

### **Communication, Promotion & Awareness**

Key informants reported that they are not aware of “who is doing what” relative to offering physical activity programs for older adults across the County. Often people find out after the fact about events or programs. Service providers were unaware of what was happening within

agencies in the same municipality. For example, the Pembroke Seniors Centre was unaware of the free seniors fitness classes happening at four different locations in the City offered through the Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) by Family Physiotherapy Ottawa. Community dwelling seniors were not always aware of all that was offered at the local seniors centre itself. Some respondents suggested the Centre was just 'older folks playing cards' rather than the site of diverse fitness and other programming. Some seniors centres are considering a name change to better reflect their clientele (55 yrs. +) and services they provide. "Active Living Centre" paints a much broader and welcoming picture.

Assuming that all seniors are on the Internet is doing seniors a disservice. Less than half --only 48% --of seniors are 'silver surfers' (Bingham, 2012) or frequent internet users. Further, 40% of Canadian seniors aged 65 to 74 years reported not using the internet at any time in 2010 (Statistics Canada, 2013). Public awareness campaigns built solely or mostly on internet use and website information are not effective. Many key respondents said seniors find out what's happening in their community by word-of-mouth or posters at the local grocery store. Another role of a proposed healthy active aging network could be to develop a County promotion and marketing strategy for healthy, active aging. This strategy would consider the different options available in the County for communication with community members and the most effective mix of activities using different types of media communication options including radio, print ads, internet and other resources.

### **Forum on Active Aging**

Two main priorities relative to a forum on active aging were identified during the consultation with stakeholders:

1. raising awareness of the need for activity and aging planning;
2. Invite a range of stakeholders together for engagement, networking and planning sessions at a Forum on active aging in 2016.

While Renfrew County used to have a Council on Aging, no such umbrella planning and advocacy body for all seniors currently exists. There are many different "networks" in the County whose focus is older adults. Some of these integrate physical activity for seniors into their work. The Physical Activity Network of Renfrew County (PAN-RC) has achieved some excellent results for Renfrew County. Many of the accomplishments of PAN-RC apply to older adults, however, a senior specific strategy or network has not evolved.

Several agencies (Whitewater Bromley Community Health Centre (WBCHC), Eganville & District Seniors Needs Association (EDSNA), and Barry's Bay Home Support Services (BBHSS) cooperate to offer annual training in support of their fitness class programs. Discussions with stakeholders such as Rainbow Valley Community Health Centre (RVCHC) and other community members

have confirmed an interest in expanding the opportunity to offer fitness classes for older adults in other areas of Renfrew County. Further, both Arnprior Recreation and Madawaska Valley Recreation wish to share their best practices with other colleagues on Age Friendly Community and recreation planning for seniors.

This community of interest has gained momentum over the course of this stakeholder engagement process (May to June 2015). Many key informants from all sectors volunteered to organize and support such a Forum. This reflects a growing energy around active aging.

#### *Goals of an Active Aging Forum*

1. Raise awareness of the need for collaborative planning in the short and longer term for active aging in Renfrew County;
2. Bring recreation, municipal, health sector and seniors/community/family members and other stakeholders together for engagement, networking and facilitated discussions and planning sessions;
3. Showcase healthy aging through a Seniors Health Fair during the proposed Forum including demonstration sessions encouraging healthy active living;
4. Build support for an Active Aging Network or Community of Practice (CoP);
5. Identify existing resources and strengths, service and communication gaps, and ideas for improvement from Forum participants relevant to healthy, active aging;
6. Showcase municipal successes in Age Friendly Communities planning (e.g. Petawawa & Madawaska Valley) and Seniors Recreation Planning (Arnprior);
7. Encourage active aging community champions (agencies and individuals) in every municipality to attend the Forum;
8. Offer a draft of an older adult action plan template for Renfrew County including actions (short, medium and long term) to support healthy, active older adults in Renfrew County;
9. Showcase intergenerational programming with local high school students;
10. Facilitate the involvement of the University of Ottawa's Interdisciplinary School of Health Sciences and other County schools e.g. Algonquin College, County elementary and high schools.



### Proposed Audience

- Elected officials (County & Municipal), recreation, health, retirement, seniors and community sectors throughout Renfrew County;
- Community individuals, clubs and related organizations (e.g. Alzheimer's Association, Tai Chi Club etc.);
- Business partners;
- Fellowes High School student body, staff and parent council.

### Planning Process

The agenda for a Forum would be decided by a Forum Planning Table in conjunction with a HC Link ([Healthy Communities](#)) consultant. The decision to engage a consultant from HC Link to assist with planning a community engagement Forum was supported by the membership of the Aging Safe, Healthy & Strong Committee facilitated by the Renfrew County & District Health Unit (RCDHU). This Committee has representation from many stakeholders who provide service for older adults and who have had some initial discussion and interest to initiate planning steps for the proposed Forum.

An initial meeting of the Forum Planning Table is proposed for Fall 2015 to determine a forum date, reserve a location, engage planning table members, develop a budget and itemize next steps. This [Forum Event Planning Guide](#) resource may be of value to support the forum planning process.

### Seniors Health Fair

The Pembroke Seniors Centre staff has agreed to hold a Health Fair in conjunction with an Active Aging Forum. The venue already under consideration for the Seniors Fair was Fellowes High School in Pembroke. The staff member of the Pembroke Seniors Centre has graciously agreed to this merger in support of the broader community goals. An experienced Health Fair

Steering Committee through the Pembroke Seniors Centre already exists and has some dedicated funds for this event.

#### Other potential activities for Seniors Health Fair

- “Seniors Fair” (see above) throughout the day in the school gyms and in public spaces at Fellowes High School (recreation, community clubs, commercial);
- Ongoing demonstrations and participation sessions (Tai Chi, chair yoga, healthy cooking etc.);
- Demonstrations of Nordic Walking on trails behind Fellowes; ‘seniors bicycle;’ demonstration and riding opportunity in the back parking lot;
- Displays of activities in the playing fields at Fellowes High School;
- Celebration of Older Adults through entertainment interludes throughout the day (Red Hot Mamas, Community Choir, Aging Well theater group from Deep River, step dancing seniors & youth etc.);
- Second vendors market and seniors showcase at Pembroke Mall (just down from the high school);
- Classic Movie matinee at Algonquin Cinemas, Pembroke Mall (2:30 pm to 4 pm);
- Tours of the newly renovated Carefor/Marguerite Centre;
- Some partnership activity at Riverview Heights just next door (wonderful solarium style lounge; dining room; lower level meeting areas; parking, handicap access etc.).

#### Intergenerational and community organization of the Forum

It is proposed that Fellowes High School in Pembroke be the recommended venue, chosen for reasons that include an existing connection to the Pembroke Seniors Health Fair, its centrality, support of the initiative, nominal cost, facilities which include ground floor access to gyms, cafeteria, auditorium, washrooms, classrooms, ample parking, bus drop off zone to ground floor facilities, and its location beside a Retirement Home and in the vicinity of five local area retirement homes. The Pembroke Mall, a short distance away has been identified as a partner and potential complementary site for a further seniors showcase. Intergenerational programs can be developed with Fellowes High School teachers and students including those in healthcare, civics, cooking, and French immersion students. The University of Ottawa’s Nursing program and Algonquin College’s Social Work, Practical Nursing, Tourism and related programs could be invited to participate.

#### Funding Recommendations

- Development and submission of grant applications to support the planning of the Forum and to develop the active aging network or Community of Practice (CoP) is recommended. (Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund (see Appendix B) or [New Horizons for Seniors Program](#));

- Revenue is available through Vendors payment for those booking display tables at the Seniors Health Fair: \$25.00 per display table;
- Local business chain stores like Giant Tiger are good community partners and could be invited to participate in a program to benefit low income seniors to 'get in the game' in the way Canadian Tire corporately has supported the Jumpstart program. They could launch this initiative at the Forum;
- Community Futures Development Corporation: can assist with the Forum according to a municipal source.

#### Community commitment

Based on the consultations for this report, a broad community consensus exists for a Forum event and the following have offered support:

- Recreation Director, Paul Nopper (**Barry's Bay**) agreed to speak on community planning for Age Friendly cities;
- **Petawawa** Councilor Theresa Sabourin has agreed to speak on the municipal role in planning for active aging for seniors;
- **Petawawa** recreation programmer, Colin Coyle (Coordinator of the ROAR Conference) agreed to be a lead forum organizer;
- Recreation Director, Glen Arthur (**Arnprior**) volunteered to speak on municipal recreation programming for seniors;
- The mayor of **Pembroke** is fully behind a Forum and would welcome it to the city. The mayor of **Petawawa** also agreed to host the event in his municipality at Valour School;
- Jayne Brophy, Manager, Pembroke Mall, has agreed to pay for a free bus to bring participants in from the Madawaska Valley area. She also volunteered an extended vendors market in the mall on the day of the Forum;
- Full day use of [Chartwell](#) mini buses has been offered. Money for food and Music & Movement demonstrations have been offered by Chartwell;
- Free meeting space including classrooms, auditorium, two gymnasiums, and cooking class/kitchen and Freddy's restaurant have been offered by Principal Dean Zadow of Fellowes High School in Pembroke (total cost of only \$100 custodian fee);

- CPR demonstrations have been discussed with Joanne Caldwell of **Renfrew** recreation;
- Intergenerational programming with Fellowes High Scholl in **Pembroke** has been considered and could be integrated in the Forum planning;
- The Aboriginal participation by **Pikwakanagan** has been confirmed;

## **Conclusion**

In the next 10 years, 1 in 5 residents in Renfrew County will be 65 or older. For many municipalities in Renfrew County the numbers of residents age 55 and older are projected to be much higher and may be as high as 1 in 2 or 50%. This changing demographic and the costs of physical inactivity compel us to plan for the needs and consider the contributions of older adults in our planning processes at the local, County and regional levels.

This report focused on active aging and the importance of collective effort in Renfrew County to address active aging given the evidence demonstrating the many benefits of physical activity on health and reduced health system costs. Though there is more to be done to increase coordination and use resources more effectively, there exists the desire, the momentum and effective program models to build on. A proposed active aging network or Community of Practice, specifically focused on physical activity and aging, could provide leadership, coordination and planning to ensure that older adults in Renfrew County are active and age well in the next decade.

## APPENDIX A (List of Community Interviews)

### **RECREATION:**

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### **GOVERNMENT & MUNICIPAL :**

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**9. CARMEN GOOLD**

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**10. CHRIS COBUS**

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**11. CLAIRE LUDWIG**

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**12. MAYOR JANICE VISNESKI-MOORE**

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**13. MAYOR MIKE LEMAY**

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**14. MAYOR BOB SWEET**

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**15. COUNCILOR THERESA SABOURIN**

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**23. AMBER SCHIECK BSc, MPH**

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**26. STAN SAMBEY**

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**SENIORS & SENIOR GROUPS:****27. SHELLY MCLEOD**

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**30. GWYNNE FOSTER**

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**31. MIEKE MAHOOD**

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**32. FAYE ARNOLD**

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**33. CHRISTINE BRUNT**

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**34. EILEEN BARBER**

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**35. RON NEEDHAM**

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**36. LIONEL BARBER**

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## APPENDIX B (Resource List)

1. LOCATION OF CCAC SENIORS PHYSICAL FITNESS CLASSES  
<http://www.champlainhealthline.ca/libraryContent.aspx?id=20751#Renfrew>  
The following exercise classes are open to the public. These exercise classes are free of charge to seniors through the Champlain LHIN funding. The provider for the exercise classes is Family Physio for all sites;
2. LOCATION OF COMMUNITY/MUNICIPAL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROGRAMS:  
[http://www.champlainhealthline.ca/healthlibrary\\_docs/ChamplainFallsPreventionResourceInventoryRenfrewCounty.pdf](http://www.champlainhealthline.ca/healthlibrary_docs/ChamplainFallsPreventionResourceInventoryRenfrewCounty.pdf)
3. HEARTWISE LOCATIONS RENFREW COUNTY  
<http://heartwise.ottawaheart.ca/locations/renfrew-county/map>
4. OLDER ADULT CENTRES ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO  
<http://www.champlainhealthline.ca/displayService.aspx?id=164161>  
Older Adult Centres offer educational, recreational and social programs for seniors. Activities can include fitness programs, day trips, cards, crafts, and guest speakers among others. OAC receive some funding from the province
5. [AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES](#)  
Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide and Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities. The eight key features were also identified in the Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities: A Guide
6. 8-80 CITIES: [www.8-80cities.org](http://www.8-80cities.org)
7. ONTARIO SPORT & RECREATION COMMUNITIES FUND (OSRCF)  
<http://www.grants.gov.on.ca/GrantsPortal/en/OntarioGrants/GrantOpportunities/PRDR006918> East Region: 1-800-267-9340 / 613-742-3360;
8. *Physical Activity Promotion for Older Adults: A Step-by-Step Guide* (2013) Physical Activity Resource Centre and OPHEA <https://www.ophea.net/product/physical-activity-promotion-older-adults-step-step-guide>
9. RENFREW PARAMEDIC SERVICE FREE WELLNESS CLINIC SITES  
613-735-3675 Extension 500  
[2014 Paramedic Wellness Clinics Schedule](#) (Locations)

## APPENDIX C (Resource List)

### Research Institutes on Aging

1. Canadian Centre for Activity & Aging, U. Western Ontario <http://www.uwo.ca/ccaa/>
2. National Institute for the Care of the Elderly (NICE) <http://www.nicenet.ca/>
3. Research Institute for Aging, University of Waterloo <http://www.the-ria.ca/>
4. Seniors Health Knowledge Network <http://seniorshealthknowledgenetwork.ca/>
5. Centre for Studies on Aging & Health [http://www.sagelink.ca/about us](http://www.sagelink.ca/about_us)
6. Physical Activity Resource Centre <http://parc.ophea.net/>
7. Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Institute of Aging <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/8671.html>
8. Aging Links: Canada <http://umanitoba.ca/centres/aging/links/canada/659.html>
9. Global Aging Institute <http://www.globalaginginstitute.org/>
10. International Institute on Ageing, United Nations <http://www.inia.org/mt/>



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