Annual report: Driving innovation in aging

2021-22
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A letter from the Executive Director

As my first time writing this letter as RIA’s executive director, I have the pleasure of sharing the incredible growth and success the RIA has achieved in the past 15 months. I would like to acknowledge and thank the RIA team and researchers for their ongoing dedication and for continuing to advance our mission throughout another year of the pandemic. It is a privilege to work with this incredible team and community and to see the RIA make strides in our 2021-2023 strategic plan.

This report features many impactful initiatives that are driving innovation in research, education and practice. Our team launched the Canadian Dementia Learning and Resource Network (CDLRN) with RIA researchers Carrie McAiney and Laura Middleton. This network connects community projects from across the country to share and amplify learnings, change practice and policy, so all Canadians living with dementia can benefit.

Our team is also building much-needed workforce capacity in senior living by optimizing clinical placements in long-term care for students training to become personal support workers and nurses. In early 2022, we launched the Preceptor Resource and Education Program in Long-Term Care (PREP LTC). This $73 million project is led by the Ontario Centres for Learning, Research and Innovation in Long-Term Care (CLRI) at the RIA in collaboration with the Ontario CLRI teams at Baycrest Health Sciences and Bruyère.

As a leader in aging research and innovation, the RIA is often called upon to respond to emerging needs. Our ability to tackle the biggest issues facing an aging population and deliver solutions that truly work is made possible because of our generous donors. I would like to acknowledge the commitment and generosity of the Schlegel family who made a $6 million donation to add critical capacity to the RIA’s home base at the Centre of Excellence for Innovation in Aging in Waterloo. The RIA is well positioned for continued growth and impact.

On behalf of the RIA, I send our sincere thanks to our partners and our donors for your contributions and commitment to changing the way we age in Canada and beyond.

Tina M. Mah, PhD, MBA, BScOT
Executive Director,
Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging
From the Chair of the Board

I would like to begin by acknowledging Tina Mah, RIA’s executive director, and her many successes in her first year taking on this role. Thank you to Tina and the RIA team for your dedication and commitment to enhancing care and quality of life for older adults.

Once again, I am humbled by the growth and success of the RIA. Our ability to impact the lives of older adults and their families is made possible because of our valued partners and donors. I thank you for your continued commitment and look forward to our continued collaboration as we create a brighter future together.

Ronald Schlegel, O.C., PhD, LL.D., BAS (Honorary)
Director and Chair,
Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging

It has been another challenging year as we navigate the ongoing pandemic. The senior living sector is still getting on its feet in the aftermath of the first few waves, and adjusting to a “new normal”. But I am inspired by the resilience I have witnessed, and the RIA has and will continue to address pressing issues with innovative solutions, rooted in evidence, to create a new future for aging Canadians.

This report is full of stories demonstrating how the RIA is changing aging. I would like to highlight one particular success, and that is the national recognition the RIA has received for its efforts in bridging the gap between aging research and practice. The RIA was awarded the 2021 Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) - Institute for Aging Betty Havens Prize for Knowledge Mobilization in Aging. The award recognizes outstanding achievements and excellence in three RIA initiatives that promote best practices in care to enhance the quality of life for older adults.
About the RIA

The Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging (RIA) is a charitable, non-profit organization that enhances the quality of life and care of older adults through partnerships in research, education and practice.

Our goal is to change the way we age in Canada and around the world. We are leaders in aging research and innovation tackling some of the biggest issues facing our aging population.

Our unique approach to innovation bridges the gap between research and impact. Research questions are shaped by the realities and needs articulated by older adults, care partners, health professionals, educators and industry. Then we work together to use what we’ve learned and develop resources, programs, education and training to influence practice and policy.

Ultimately, we drive innovation. We find solutions that truly work and share them to benefit older adults everywhere.

The RIA was founded in 2005 and is a product of the philanthropic spirit and vision of Ronald Schlegel and the Schlegel family. We have core partnerships with the University of Waterloo, Conestoga College and Schlegel Villages, and we collaborate with many other academic institutions and organizations. Additional partners include the Centre for Family Medicine Family Health Team, Conrad Grebel University College, GeriMedRisk, McMaster University, and Sheridan College. The RIA’s annual operating budget of over $33 million is supported by contracts, grants and generous donors.
RIA impact

$27M
Research grant funding, held at various academic institutions*

30
New grants received*

99
New research publications**

$23M
Project and government funding

3
New Living Classrooms in Ottawa, North Bay and Parry Sound

2,579
Trained in LIVING the Dementia Journey and Excellence in Resident-Centred Care through the PSW Education Fund

1,032
New followers on social media platforms

261
Workshops, webinars and events delivered virtually and in person

129,593
Downloads/views of RIA resources.

2021 recipient of the Betty Havens Prize in Knowledge Mobilization in Aging from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research

* Received by Schlegel Research Chairs and Specialists in the 2021 calendar year
** in the 2021 calendar year.
Our people

Researchers

RIA researchers offer expertise in key areas related to aging and older adults - dementia, workforce development, technology, nutrition, falls prevention, cardiovascular and brain health, geriatric medicine, spirituality, and arts.

The Schlegel Research Chairs and Specialists are leaders in their field and collaborate with RIA research scientists and researchers from around the world.

Schlegel Research Chairs

Veronique Boscart, CIHR/ Schlegel Industrial Research Chair for Colleges in Seniors Care, Conestoga College
Boscart guides the implementation of best practices and education to support competent and collaborative care teams.

Andrew Costa, Schlegel Research Chair in Clinical Epidemiology and Aging, McMaster University
Costa uses health data and technology to develop and evaluate better models of care.

Lora Giangregorio, Schlegel Research Chair in Mobility and Aging, University of Waterloo
Giangregorio investigates ways of increasing safe and effective physical activity in older adults.

Dr. Linda Lee, Schlegel Research Chair in Primary Care for Elders, McMaster University
Dr. Lee improves access to specialized care for persons living with dementia and their care partners.

Dr. Joanne Ho, Schlegel Chair in Geriatric Pharmacotherapy, McMaster University
Dr. Ho researches drug safety in complex older adult patients and supports clinicians to prevent drug-related harm. Dr. Ho moved from an RIA research scientist into a Research Chair position in March 2022.

Dr. George Heckman, Schlegel Research Chair in Geriatric Medicine, University of Waterloo
Dr. Heckman develops and assesses novel primary care and long-term care processes to improve outcomes for frail older adults.

Richard Hughson, Schlegel Research Chair in Vascular Aging and Brain Health
Hughson tests ways to improve brain blood flow to reduce the risk of falls and cognitive decline in older adults.

Dr. Joanne Ho, Schlegel Chair in Geriatric Pharmacotherapy, McMaster University
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Dr. Allen Power, Schlegel Chair in Aging and Dementia Innovation
Dr. Power challenges the status quo to find innovative approaches for supporting people living with dementia.

Welcoming New Schlegel Chair
The RIA is excited to announce the addition of Cosmin Munteanu, Schlegel Research Chair in Technology for Healthy Aging at the University of Waterloo, whose appointment began in July 2022. Munteanu is a leading multidisciplinary researcher in human-computer interaction and his research works at the intersection of aging and technology, focusing on facilitating meaningful and safe interactions between older adults and digital media devices.

Schlegel Specialists
Kate Dupuis, Schlegel Innovation Leader in Arts and Aging, Sheridan College
Dupuis explores how the arts can affect the health and well-being of older adults and their care partners.

Jane Kuepfer, Schlegel Specialist in Spirituality and Aging, Conrad Grebel University College
Kuepfer supports the well-being of older adults and care partners through attention to spiritual needs and resources.

Linda Sheiban Taucar, Schlegel Associate Research Chair, Conestoga College
Sheiban Taucar focuses on improving care for older adults and workforce education.

Notable Awards
Dr. Linda Lee was awarded 2021 KW Oktoberfest Woman of the Year (Health & Wellness category, sponsored by Greater KW Chamber of Commerce).

Alfred Yu, RIA research scientist, was awarded the 2021 E.W.R. Steacie Memorial Fellowship from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada.
Board of directors

These are the members of the RIA Board of Directors at the close of March 2022.

Chair of the Board
Ronald P. Schlegel, O.C., PhD, LL.D., BAS (Honourary), Founder

Members (in alphabetical order)

- Paul Brown, Chief Operating Officer, Schlegel Villages Inc.
- Michelle Chrétien, Associate Vice President, Research, Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning
- Geoff Fernie, PhD, P.Eng, Senior Scientist, University Health Network, Toronto Rehab Institute; Professor, University of Toronto
- Paul Fieguth, PhD, P.Eng, Professor of Systems Design Engineering & Associate Dean (Resources & Planning), Faculty of Engineering, University of Waterloo
- Heather Keller, PhD, RD, Professor & Schlegel Research Chair in Nutrition and Aging, University of Waterloo (Schlegel Research Chair/Specialist representation)
- Dr. Sidney Kennedy, MD, FRCPC, FR Psych, Executive Director, Homewood Research Institute; Professor, University of Toronto
- Lili Liu, PhD, Dean, Faculty of Health, University of Waterloo
- Tina M. Mah, PhD, Executive Director, Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging
- John Milloy, DPhil, Community Representative
- Steven Mock, PhD, Associate Professor, University of Waterloo
- Dr. Cathy Morris, MD, Community Representative
• James Schlegel, MAcc, CPA, CA, President & CEO, R-B-J Schlegel Holdings Inc.
• Dr. Samir Sinha, MD, DPhil, FRCPC, Director of Geriatrics, Sinai Health System
• Dr. Tom Stewart, MD, FRCPC, Community Representative
• John Tibbits, PhD, President, Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning
• Elizabeth Witmer, BA, Community Representative

RIA staff team

These are the RIA team members at the close of March 2022.

• Carrie Briscoe, Education Facilitator
• Susan Brown, Director of Research Coordination and Research-Practice Integration
• Nisreen Castillo, Administrative Assistant
• Tammy Cumming, Senior Director, Operations and Planning
• Elaine de Vries, Education Manager
• Hilary Dunn-Ridgeway, Director of Communications and Public Relations
• Kyla English Leis, Project Officer
• Anil Gosai, Communications Officer
• Jasmin Gow, Communications Officer
• Noel Gruber, Communications Manager
• Holly Hebner, Project Coordinator
• Nathan Honsberger, Project Officer
• Lisa Hughes, Education Developer
• Richard Hughson, Senior Director of Research
• Jocelyn Hunt, Education Facilitator
• Danielle Just, Evaluation Manager
• Kristie Kimmett, Engagement Manager
• Danielle Krisman, Project Manager
• Emily Lambe, Project Officer
• Bernadette Leland, Administrative Assistant
• Andy Mackenzie, Project Officer
• Tina Mah, Executive Director
• Shilpi Majumder, Project Manager
• Kelsey Metz, Education Officer
• Scott Mitchell, Knowledge Broker
• Frances Morton-Chang, Director of Dementia Programs
• Tracy Riley, Office Manager
• Allie Serota, Project Officer
• Paul St. Pierre, Senior Accountant
• Michelle Stillman, Senior Director, Programs and Impact
• Lyra Taylor, Communications Assistant
• Audra Thompson-Haile, Director of Strategic Projects
• Vanessa Vucea-Tirabassi, Project Officer
• Jodie Walker, Education Facilitator
• Dominique Williams, Education Manager
• Neb Zachariah, Project Manager
• Dana Zummach, Evaluation Coordinator

The RIA also supported the following students and short-term contract team members: Camryn Berry, Taryl Bougie, Kristina Devlin, Sheri Gilhula, Navjot Gill, Aryan Golshan, Courtney Hicks, Maryam Iraniparast, Andrea Loncaric, Michaella Miller, Sumit Raghav, Ankush Saini, Jasman Sekhon, Vanessa Trinca, Jessica Vander Vaart and Katelyn Wheeldon.
“Being involved with the RIA has been like opening a door into a world filled with knowledge, respect and interest. It’s incredibly welcoming and rewarding.”

Myrna Norman is living with dementia in Maple Ridge, British Columbia, and shares her experience working with the RIA as a member of the Canadian Dementia Learning and Resource Network advisory committee.
Canada’s largest study on COVID-19 and vaccine effectiveness in long-term care

A $5-million study co-led by Andrew Costa, Schlegel Research Chair in Clinical Epidemiology, and Dawn Bowdish, an immunologist and professor of medicine at McMaster University, has involved more than 1,000 residents, team members and visitors of Ontario long-term care (LTC) homes to measure the impact of COVID-19. The study is exploring how well COVID-19 vaccines work in Ontario LTC residents.

Data from the study provided compelling evidence that is largely responsible for 3rd and 4th booster vaccine recommendations in LTC homes, retirement homes and assisted living settings. More recently, the researchers discovered clear advantages of the Moderna Spikevax mRNA vaccine for older adults.

Researchers are also examining the features of LTC homes that are directly associated with outbreaks, and whether those homes with virus occurrences are likely to have future outbreaks.

“Long-term care homes have been the epicentre of the pandemic across the country - this research is crucial,” said Costa, who took part in a working group of the Ontario COVID-19 Science Advisory Table.

LTC home residents, team members and visitors donated blood and saliva samples to facilitate the study of immunity and infection. Learning about how the immune system works in some residents teaches key stakeholders how to make better vaccines and protect residents from future outbreaks. The research team is working with scientific partners at the Ontario Ministry of Health, Public Health Ontario, University of Toronto, the Health Sciences North Research Institute, St. Mary’s General Hospital and the University of Waterloo.
Costa and Bowdish shared the findings as part of the COVID-19 Immunity Task Force, which is helping guide Canada’s response to the pandemic.

Most recent findings showed a lower risk of an Omicron infection when the LTC home resident had any one of the following:

- three doses of Moderna Spikevax mRNA or a combination including Moderna (vs. three doses of Pfizer-BioN Tech);
- any fourth mRNA vaccine dose; or,
- hybrid immunity induced by three vaccine doses and a COVID-19 infection in the three months before the beginning of the Omicron wave.

The findings from this study informed public health vaccination programs and helped monitor vaccine immunogenicity (how well a vaccine works) in older adults. The results of the research have contributed greatly toward a thorough understanding of COVID-19 in LTC homes and will help residents and team members stay safe and healthy in the future.

The study is funded by the Canadian COVID-19 Immunity Task Force and conducted in partnership with Schlegel Villages, St. Joseph’s Health System, and Health Sciences North Research Institute.

To learn more, visit covidinltc.ca
Examining the health impacts of bedrest from head to toe

We know that being sedentary isn’t ideal for our health, but sometimes it’s necessary. Many adults have been required to stay in bed because of illness or injury at some point in their lives.

Richard Hughson, Schlegel Research Chair in Vascular Aging and Brain Health, and his team explored the health impacts of bedrest with an interdisciplinary study funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Canadian Frailty Network and the Canadian Space Agency. Hughson’s expertise lies with cardiovascular function; he found that older adults are more susceptible to the impacts of bedrest, though the full study analysis has not been completed.

While bedrest is an essential and common practice in health care, it can take a toll on many other aspects of our health. That’s why numerous RIA researchers are involved in this study:

- Heather Keller, Schlegel Research Chair in Nutrition and Aging, will study the effects of bedrest on hunger and feelings of satiety, to see if diets can be altered to better support health.
- George Shaker, RIA Research Scientist and Hajar Abedifirouzjai, PhD student, are developing radar technology to non-invasively measure heart rate, respiration rate, cadence and speed when walking.
- Other RIA researchers involved include Veronique Boscart, Dr. Linda Lee, Andrew Costa, Dr. George Heckman, Lora Giangregorio, Jennifer Boger, Joanne Ho, Danielle Greaves, Jane Kuepfer, Laura Middleton and Alfred Yu.

Expertise from various disciplines - nutrition, spirituality, muscular function and more - gives us a comprehensive understanding of what happens to us during bedrest.

- Richard Hughson

The team aims to use the results of this study to shape guidelines to maintain health when bedrest is needed in hospitals and community care settings.
A better way to support end-of-life planning

A team of researchers, led by Dr. George Heckman, Schlegel Research Chair in Geriatric Medicine, and Dr. Allan Garland from the University of Manitoba, has published the results of a clinical trial to improve end-of-life care discussions in long-term care (LTC) homes. The novel approach, Better tArgeting, Better outcomes for frail ELderly patients (BABEL), was co-developed with input from residents, care partners, and multiple other stakeholders.

The new approach was found to be more comprehensive than the usual manner in which LTC homes conduct advance care planning. BABEL uses a tailored, person-centred approach based on best practices, and was designed with stakeholder input. BABEL was tested in 29 LTC homes across Ontario, Manitoba, and Alberta.

“Often people assume that a non-capable resident can’t participate in decision-making, but there are other ways of communicating and understanding an individual’s preferences,” said Dr. Heckman.

Advance care planning is a critical process that ensures individuals’ values, wishes and preferences are understood and honoured at the end of life. BABEL achieves that by involving residents as active participants and putting their values and wishes first.
The study, authored by Dr. Heckman, the University of Manitoba’s Allan Garland and a team of Canadian researchers, was published in the journal Age and Ageing. Schlegel Chairs Veronique Boscart and Heather Keller collaborated on the project. The research was funded by the Canadian Frailty Network and Research Manitoba.

Wet your Whistle with Water: Improving hydration in senior living

Dehydration is common among older adults living in retirement, assisted living, and long-term care (LTC) homes. The best way to identify dehydration in this population is through a blood test; however, this is not feasible for all residents on a routine basis. Promotion of fluid intake is the only reliable way of preventing dehydration.

Through the Centre for Aging + Brain Health Innovation (CABHI) Spark-ON Program, Heather Keller, Schlegel Chair in Nutrition and Aging, will implement an intervention across 19 Schlegel Villages. Wet your Whistle with Water (W3) is co-designed by LTC home team members and residents, and implementation specialists to promote water intake in older adults. The program includes training materials and proven team-based strategies to support water intake developed in collaboration with Schlegel Villages staff and residents. Team members at Schlegel Villages received training on the importance of water and hydration through an online training portal. In two test homes, Innovation Champions implemented environmental changes and team behaviour change strategies with the support of the research team. The research team believes that if staff are aware of resident hydration needs, they will identify individualized ways to improve the intake of water in the residents they know and care for.

“We recognize that an intervention developed with LTC home team members is more likely to be accepted, and strategies are more likely to be feasible.”

- Heather Keller
New $73M program supports optimal clinical placements in long-term care

The need for a highly-skilled workforce in long-term care (LTC) is more urgent now than ever before. The pandemic has amplified existing staffing issues. By improving clinical placements and better preparing students, they can seamlessly transition into rewarding careers in LTC and support residents with the highest quality of care and support.

A new $73 million project, the Preceptor Resource and Education Program for Long-Term Care (PREP LTC), is providing Ontario LTC homes with education and financial support to enhance clinical placements for students training to be personal support workers, registered nurses and registered practical nurses. Over the next three years, eligible homes will receive funds to support more than 15,000 student placements and train more than 17,000 preceptors in homes across the province.

Preceptors act as mentors to students and play an essential role in successful placements. PREP LTC is developing eLearning and mentoring tools to equip preceptors with the necessary skills to support positive and successful student placements. The PREP LTC team will build on the success of the existing Preceptor Education Program at the University of Western Ontario and Fanshawe College to develop eLearning specific to LTC.
PREP LTC will also strengthen and establish new partnerships between homes and educators to increase opportunities for placements. With the additional financial support, homes will have the capacity to meet the growing demand.

PREP LTC is funded by the Ministry of Long-Term Care and led by the Ontario Centres for Learning, Research and Innovation in Long-Term Care (CLRI) at the RIA in collaboration with the Ontario CLRI teams at Baycrest Health Sciences and Bruyère.

“We are thrilled to lead this project and support successful student clinical placements in long-term care,” said Tina Mah, Executive Director of the RIA. “This project supports students in gaining much-needed skills and experience in working with older adults and encourages them to pursue meaningful careers in the long-term care sector.”

To learn more, visit clri-prepltc.ca

Engaging youth to pursue promising careers in long-term care

The number of people needing long-term care (LTC) has been rising steadily and won’t be slowing down anytime soon. Unfortunately, the number of team members available to support care and services in an LTC home has not kept pace to meet the demand.

Adequate staffing is critical to ensure quality care for residents, including the appropriate mix of roles and skills needed to address residents’ complex needs. Having the right team resources to support care needs, mealtimes and a wide variety of recreational and leisure activities can make all the difference in a resident’s quality of life.

The Ontario Centres for Learning, Research and Innovation in Long-Term Care (CLRI) at the RIA is addressing priority workforce challenges in the sector. Through a variety of initiatives, we are engaging with young talent to teach them about careers in LTC and the immense value working with older adults in long-term care can add to their lives.

Through the many resources available online, youth are exposed to various LTC career opportunities including social work, recreation, nursing, personal support work and more. The dedicated outreach team connects with Ontario school boards to include profiles of different careers on the platforms ChatterHigh and Blueprint. Together with LTC team members, the outreach team also presents to co-op students and those who access YMCA employment services.

To engage LTC homes, the Ontario CLRI has created a guidebook to establish meaningful and impactful partnerships and co-create experiential learning placements for students. Learning placements include cooperative education placements and Specialist High Skills Major placements.

In response to interest from students, the Ontario CLRI at the RIA will continue to grow online resources and will produce a “Day In the Life” video that follows a resident to show how various LTC team members build different relationships with residents.
International conference addresses spirituality and aging

In June 2021, spiritual care providers, researchers, senior care leaders, older adults and others interested in spirituality came together to discuss the importance of building connections, communicating and listening at the 9th International Conference On Ageing And Spirituality. The conference theme was *Vital Connections – Claiming voice and learning to listen*.

The event was chaired by Schlegel Specialist in Spirituality and Aging Jane Kuepfer and highlights the importance of spirituality as the aging population grows globally. This international conference went virtual due to the pandemic and welcomed speakers and delegates from around the world including those from Australia, United States, Hong Kong, Israel and Singapore.

Covering topics from embracing dementia, inspiring intergenerational relationships, how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the spirituality of seniors, and cultural and religious practices that can care for the soul, this conference highlighted that supporting spirituality in later life is a vital part of care and quality of life.

“Our international colleagues can teach us so much about how we interact with older adults and how we support their spiritual growth,” said Kuepfer. “We’re encountering common spiritual needs and issues in different parts of the world. Coming together means our work and learning can be shared for the benefit of all.”

Kuepfer will once again host this international event in 2023, tentatively planned as an in-person conference.
Bringing generations together with music

Music and the arts have a powerful way of building connections and strengthening relationships between generations. Schlegel Innovation Leader Kate Dupuis has been studying the benefits of the Intergenerational Jamboree music therapy program (the Jamboree) at the Village of Riverside Glen in Guelph. The Jamboree brings residents in senior living settings together with young children and their parents from the surrounding community to sing songs and play instruments. During the pandemic, the Jamboree was able to move online after the project received a second Centre for Aging and Brain Health Innovation grant.

The Jamboree is a music therapy program (typically 8 or 12 weeks) facilitated by an accredited music therapist and has been shown to have many benefits for all involved. For older adults, spending time with young people can improve health outcomes and increase well-being.

“It’s incredible to see the connections being made. The kids are running into the room to greet the older adults, and the children’s parents tell us they love to see their ‘adopted grandmas and grandpas’,” said Dupuis.

Dupuis collaborated with Schlegel Villages team members to develop a toolkit so other homes can bring this innovative program to their residents. The guide is available on the RIA website and provides steps for team members to organize a virtual or in-person Jamboree and recruit participants from the community, as well as example session plans.

“We hope that by sharing the information in the guide, many homes will be able to start their own Jamboree,” said Dupuis. “The incredible benefits to residents, children and their caregivers and to team members show us exactly how important intergenerational connections can be. We’re excited to see how other homes bring the magic of the Jamboree to their own communities.”

To access this guide, visit the-ria.ca/resources/intergenerational-jamboree

Funding for the formal evaluation of the Jamboree and the creation of this guide was provided by an Ontario Trillium Foundation Seed Grant [SD102775] and a Centre for Aging and Brain Health Innovation Spark Grant [4-00246].
Enhancing quality of life for people living with dementia

Nearly half a million Canadians are living with dementia, and that number will grow as the population ages. The RIA is committed to enhancing the quality of life for people living with dementia and the care partners who support them, and is advancing several initiatives to change practice and policies in dementia care.

In January 2022, the RIA announced the official launch of the Canadian Dementia Learning and Resource Network (CDLRN), a national initiative supporting community-based projects to share learnings and help inform dementia policy and programming across Canada. Funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), the network has been building a nationwide community of practice that brings together researchers, care providers, individuals living with dementia and family care partners.

The community of practice supports community-based projects that are funded under PHAC’s Dementia Community Investment initiative. The learnings, resources and best practices developed by projects and through CDLRN collaborations are shared broadly so all Canadians can benefit.
Each community project takes a unique approach to build a community of belonging for youth and people living with dementia:

- The African Family Revival Organization, in partnership with Family and Children’s Services of Waterloo Region, is reducing social isolation among New Canadian/Black/African Origin older adults living with dementia. Youth are paired with older adults to participate in cultural activities such as music, singing, food, and oral traditions.

- Fairview Mennonite Homes and Parkwood Mennonite Homes, in partnership with Wilfrid Laurier University, are matching students with isolated residents to provide virtual programming and social interaction.

- Conestoga College and Eastwood Collegiate Institute are bringing together college and high school students, faculty, community partners, and people living with dementia and care partners to participate in a 10-week program with virtual group activities such as storytelling and teaching each other new skills.

- The Alzheimer Society of Waterloo Wellington, Waterloo Public Library and YMCA of Three Rivers are engaging high school students and older adults living with dementia in social/recreational activities, for example creating an art piece and participating in a storytelling film to share their voices, experiences and history.

“The RIA is proud to take a leadership role and drive change in our community and across Canada to enhance the quality of life for people living with dementia,” said Michelle Stillman, Senior Director, Programs and Impact.

► To learn more, visit cdln.the-ria.ca and intergenerationalpartnerships.ca
Forward with Dementia: new resource to support diagnosis and beyond

Research shows that when a dementia diagnosis is made the supports provided often aren’t enough. Most people feel overwhelmed, and they don’t get the resources and help they need. Forward with Dementia was created to address this issue.

The University of Waterloo and the RIA are part of a five-country collaboration that created Forward with Dementia, an initiative to improve the diagnostic experience and post-diagnosis care for people living with dementia and their care partners. The Canadian arm of the project is co-led by Carrie McAiney, Schlegel Research Chair in Dementia at the RIA.

An advisory group consisting of persons living with dementia, care partners, and health- and social-care providers give ongoing feedback to best help those diagnosed with dementia through a variety of supportive resources. Topics include managing symptoms, supporting well-being and everything in-between.

Some of the most popular resources are a checklist of questions to ask health-care providers, a guide for sharing a diagnosis with family and friends, and strategies to stay physically, cognitively and socially active.

The stories combined with evidence-based research aim to help people living with dementia choose their own path forward, with a core message of hope.

forwardwithdementia.ca
RIA researchers appointed to National Long-Term Care Standards Technical Committee

Since the RIA opened its doors in 2005, we have supported research and initiatives that enhance the quality of life and care of older adults who call long-term care (LTC) their home. The COVID-19 pandemic forced many to face the long-standing challenges in Ontario’s LTC system and the need to do better. RIA researchers are supporting a national effort to make a change and set LTC standards based on evidence-informed and person-centred practices.

Schlegel Research Chairs Heather Keller and Veronique Boscart were selected as members of the National LTC Service Standards Technical Committee. The committee works with the Health Standards Organization (HSO) to co-develop national standards that provide best practices for LTC homes.

The committee includes leaders in the LTC sector, direct support workers, care partners and LTC residents from 11 of Canada’s provinces and territories. The committee brings both lived experience and expertise covering a broad range of topics, including policy, dementia, mental health, palliative care, ethics, nutrition, and infection prevention and control.

The new standards will provide LTC homes across Canada with best practices to provide high-quality, culturally safe and appropriate care that is rooted in compassion and dignity and enhances residents’ quality of life. HSO standards are planned for release at the close of 2022.
Protecting team members’ mental health in long-term care

There is a pressing need to protect the mental health and well-being of team members in long-term care (LTC). Workers face heavy physical and emotional demands that contribute to high rates of stress, injury and disability — factors associated with absenteeism, high staff turnover and recruitment challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic has magnified these issues.

With this reality, the Ontario CLRI at the RIA launched a new initiative in 2021 to help leaders in LTC protect the mental health of all team members. We collaborated with provincial LTC associations, mental health experts, researchers, occupational health and safety organizations, and others to develop the Workplace Mental Health in LTC program. Our goal is to support homes across the province to adopt the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace.

A dedicated group of leaders and mental health champions from 15 LTC homes participated in a series of training workshops and coaching sessions during our eight-month Early Adopters pilot project. Their feedback will help us refine the program and begin scaling it up to reach more homes across the province in 2022-2023 and beyond.

RIA awarded 2021 Betty Havens Prize in Knowledge Mobilization in Aging

The RIA was awarded the 2021 Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Institute for Aging Betty Havens Prize for Knowledge Mobilization in Aging. The prize recognizes outstanding achievements and excellence in bridging the gap between aging research and practice.
“We are thrilled to receive the Betty Havens Prize and honoured to be recognized as an organization for bridging the gap between research and impact,” said Ron Schlegel, Chair of the Board at the RIA. “The RIA’s research and staff team work collaboratively with many partners to put research into practice so it can benefit the lives of older adults across Canada.”

This award recognizes the contributions of three RIA initiatives addressing nutrition, dementia care and infection control respectively, all of which promote best practices in care to enhance the quality of life for older adults.

The CHOICE+ resources support senior living team members in providing person-centred care at mealtimes and creating environments that promote proper nutrition. The resources were created in response to research that showed the type of support provided and the mealtime environment in long-term care (LTC) make a difference to overall well-being.

Addressing a gap in dementia education, LIVING the Dementia Journey is a training program for those who support people living with dementia. Participants gain awareness and understanding that changes the way they view dementia and the way they support people living with it.

The third initiative highlighted is a collection of education modules on infection prevention and control for team members in LTC. The education was developed by the Ontario Centres for Learning, Research and Innovation in Long-Term Care at the RIA to address a pressing need during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The award was presented virtually at the 2021 Canadian Association on Gerontology conference.

Adopting the National Standard can help LTC leaders to:

- identify and eliminate workplace hazards that pose a risk of psychological harm;
- assess and control workplace risks that cannot be eliminated (for example, stressors due to reasonable job demands);
- implement structures, policies and practices that support psychological health and safety in the workplace; and,
- foster an organizational culture that promotes and protects mental health.
# Financials

## Summarized Statement of Financial Position as of March 31, 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>$ 1,881,767</td>
<td>$ 932,588</td>
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<td>Short-term investments</td>
<td>15,011,979</td>
<td>2,661,809</td>
<td>501,372</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short-term investments - endowment</td>
<td>210,774</td>
<td>209,874</td>
<td>209,874</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government remittances recoverable</td>
<td>45,196</td>
<td>15,954</td>
<td>1,119</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepaid expenses</td>
<td>61,801</td>
<td>73,021</td>
<td>197,236</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Current</strong></td>
<td>20,227,873</td>
<td>4,615,382</td>
<td>4,980,997</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Capital assets</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>278,994</td>
<td>362,585</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Research facility deposit</strong></td>
<td>13,235,039</td>
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<td>7,235,039</td>
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<td></td>
<td>13,514,033</td>
<td>7,597,624</td>
<td>7,590,395</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Capital Assets</strong></td>
<td>$ 33,741,906</td>
<td>$ 12,213,006</td>
<td>$ 12,571,392</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Liabilities</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts payable and accrued liabilities</td>
<td>$ 14,896,377</td>
<td>$ 789,247</td>
<td>$ 706,419</td>
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<td>Amount repayable to Ministry of Long-Term Care</td>
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<td>Deferred revenue</td>
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<td><strong>Total Current</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Fund balances</strong></td>
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<td>General Fund</td>
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<td>Restricted Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restricted Ministry Fund</td>
<td>174,898</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAREP Endowment Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Fund</td>
<td>13,032,519</td>
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<td>Restricted Geri-Med Risk</td>
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<td>295,118</td>
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<td>Federal Fund</td>
<td>21,166</td>
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<td><strong>Total Fund balances</strong></td>
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<td>9,647,850</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities</strong></td>
<td>$ 33,741,906</td>
<td>$ 12,213,006</td>
<td>$ 12,571,392</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The RIA underwent a change in the fiscal year-end for our organization, from December 31 to March 31. A time period of three months that represents the time period between 2020 year-end (December 31, 2020) and the start of the next fiscal (April 1, 2021) is shown above in addition to the standard fiscal year for 2021-2022.
Thank you to our donors

The RIA sincerely thanks our valued donors who have generously given in support of our mission. Listed below are the donors whose gifts were received from January 2021 to March 2022.

Visionary

Dr. Ronald and Barbara Schlegel and Family

Founding Partners

University of Waterloo
Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning

Innovator: $500,000 - 999,999

CareRx Corporation

Builder: $100,000 – 499,999

Gloria Becker
Jobson Family Foundation
Stephen Menich and Mary Ellen Cullen
SGP Purchasing Partner

Accelerator: $25,000 – 99,999

Cornerstone Architecture Incorporated
Delta Elevator
John and Lorene Donaldson

Mobilizer: $10,000 – 24,999

Brent Ballantyne
Josie and Francis d’Avernas
EBS Geostructural Inc
Rob Schlegel
Kerri Townson

Friend: $1,000 – 9,999

Terry Ballantyne and Family
Lindsay and Ruth Duffield
Tom Galloway
Lora Giangregorio
Peter Hannam
Robert and Christine Henhoeffer
Richard and Nadia Hughson
The Right Honourable David Johnston
K. Jane Laman
Brent Landers
Tina Mah
Robert McCauley
Michael McFaul
James Muir
Dr. Robert Norman
Don and Sheila Pether
Dr. Allen Power
Werner Schmidt
David Seyler
Jacqueline Sharratt
Douglas and Ruth Wagner
Elizabeth Witmer

Supporter: Up to $999

John Alati
David and Fern Allen
Marilyn Armstrong
Earla Atkinson
Ruth Atkinson
Reta Baechler
Keith Baechler
Harold and Audrey Bender
Our sincere thanks to the friends and family who donated in memory of the following individuals:

June Ashley, Aden Brubacher, Lorraine Cheverie, Sherrill (Sherry) Graham, Eric Michael Kennedy, Jean McLean, Catherine Plomske, Anna Sachs, Michael Sharratt, Kathleen (Kay) Sweeney
Honouring
Barbara Schlegel

Barbara Schlegel was a strong supporter of the RIA and sadly passed away on March 8, 2022. Barb and her husband of 58 years, Ron Schlegel, along with their three sons Rob, Brad and James, have given generously to drive research and innovation in aging. The family’s philanthropy enabled the RIA to open its doors in 2005 and has continued to support our mission to enhance care and quality of life for older adults in our community, our country and beyond. Most recently, Barb and Ron presented the RIA with a $6M cheque to add critical capacity to the RIA’s home base at the Centre of Excellence for Innovation in Aging.

Barb gave generously of her time and talent to her community, and for all those that knew her, she was a bright light at every gathering. Following her passing, the Schlegel family identified the RIA as one of the charities near and dear to Barb should anyone wish to donate in her memory. The community’s response and generosity was exceptional, with $39,150 donated. Our sincere thanks to the family and friends who donated in memory of Barb. The RIA is deeply grateful and will forever be inspired by Barb’s drive and passion to enhance care and quality of life for older adults.
MisterFit: reducing falls and fractures in older men

Research Chair Lora Giangregorio and Suzanne Morin at McGill University were recently awarded a $600,000 Canadian Institutes of Health Research grant for a 4-year study, Multifaceted Intervention Using Telehealth to Reduce the Risk of Falls and Fractures in Older Men (MisterFit). MisterFit will explore whether a combination of medication, exercise and nutrition education strategies can reduce fracture risk in men, who often don’t receive proper osteoporosis screening and treatment.

Transforming ultrasound technology

RIA Research Scientist Alfred Yu earned the prestigious 2021 E.W.R. Steacie Memorial Fellowship from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) for his transformative work. Yu is developing new ultrasound technologies such as vector flow imaging (VFI) that provides information on blood flow to the brain and stroke risk. This information has never been available before and provides new insights into the vascular systems and health of older adults.
Enhancing dementia data monitoring in Canada

Schlegel Research Chairs Dr. George Heckman and Carrie McAiney are co-leading a dementia surveillance research project, Comprehensive Approach to Dementia Data Monitoring in Canada (CADDM), with $987,866 in funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada. CADDM will greatly enhance the information collected about dementia nationwide. The team has created a new holistic model of dementia with feedback from persons living with dementia and care partners from across Canada. The model will be tested using existing national and provincial datasets, and recommendations developed to address data gaps and improve dementia data surveillance in Canada.

Making waves: changing the culture of aging

In May 2022, the RIA once again co-hosted Walk with Me, a national conference that brings together older adults, care partners, educators, policy makers, students and researchers from all over the country to challenge ageism and change the culture of aging and senior living. The conference was delivered virtually for the first time, drawing participation from over 300 delegates representing over 100 organizations and eight provinces.

The RIA is also launching new additions to the CHOICE+ education program, including an Instagram account (@choice.ria) and an e-learning module to support teams in senior living to change the current culture of dining and make the most of mealtimes.
I think what is different about this organization is that its thinking is outside the box a little bit.... It’s supporting resources that we [people with lived experience] have designed...And that’s the difference that I can see.

A Community Advisory Committee member that helps guide the work of the Canadian Dementia Learning and Resource Network reflects on the value this program brings to older adults across Canada.