



at the UNIVERSITY OF REGINA

## The Newsletter

### "Don't Panic! It's Just Aging": Dr. Sally Chivers Delivers 2025-2026 CAH Distinguished Public Lecture

The Centre on Aging and Health (CAH) hosted the 2025-2026 CAH Distinguished Public Lecture this spring with an audience of over 350 people. Dr. Sally Chivers, a Professor of Gender and Social Justice (Trent University) and former Director of the Trent Centre for Aging & Society, brought both scholarly expertise and a compelling storytelling approach to her much-anticipated Lecture, "Don't Panic! It's Just Aging." on March 5, 2026, marking the 20<sup>th</sup> annual public lecture.

Dr. Sally Chivers' award-winning research on the social and cultural politics of aging resonates in both academic and



Dr. Sally Chivers delivers the 2025-2026 CAH Distinguished Public Lecture

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public spheres and has earned attention from outlets such as *The New Yorker*, *The Guardian*, *The Globe and Mail*, and CBC's *The Current*. Her books, as well as dozens of articles, chapters and short films, amplify the often-overlooked contributions of older adults and people with disabilities in public discourse.

Drawing on insights from her scholarly podcast, *Wrinkle Radio*, which blends academic insight with personal storytelling, Dr. Chivers explored how cultural attitudes toward aging are formed, reinforced, and how they can transform the social and cultural structures that govern our lives. At the heart of her presentation was a simple, but powerful, message that much of our anxiety about aging stems from how the topic of aging is framed in our society, with themes of decline, dependency, and demographic “burdens” dominating media and policy discussions, leading people to fear growing older.

Dr. Chivers challenged these narratives, suggesting that while it is natural to experience uncertainty about aging, fear-based messaging can prevent more balanced and meaningful conversations, which acknowledge both the challenges and value of later life. Dr. Chivers noted the common and understandable fears people may have about aging - fear of falling, fear of isolation, fear of institutional care, fear of dementia, and fear of death and dying - and encouraged us to acknowledge these concerns without succumbing to panic.

By reframing aging as a natural, multifaceted stage of life, Dr. Chivers asserted that society can better support people across the lifespan. She also

emphasized that the stories we tell - in both the public and private domains - have real world impacts, influencing not only our - individual experiences, but also our social structures and policy decisions. Dr. Chivers' engaging lecture serves as a reminder that



Dr. Sally Chivers (Trent University) delivers her lecture, “Don’t Panic! It’s Just Aging.” at the University of Regina

how we think about and discuss aging will shape both our own futures, as well as that of the society we create for generations to come.

The event concluded with a Q & A session, where attendees engaged in discussion with Dr. Chivers reflecting the strong community interest in the topic. Earlier in

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the day, Dr. Chivers also met with a group of older adults from Regina, answering questions about her research on aging, while incorporating the diverse topics of aging studies, literature, and international research on long-term care.

The Centre on Aging and Health wishes to thank Dr. Chivers for delivering her innovative and thought-provoking Distinguished Public Lecture, and for contributing to the CAH's role as a hub for bringing together researchers, students, and the public to share knowledge and to explore critical issues affecting older adults. Dr. Chivers' Distinguished Lecture is available on the [CAH YouTube channel](https://youtu.be/rlf6kdKWszk) at: <https://youtu.be/rlf6kdKWszk>.



Dr. Chivers met with a group of older adults prior to her Distinguished Lecture.

## Participants Wanted for Online Caregiver Support Study

Are you supporting a family member or friend living in long-term care? Researchers at the University of Regina are recruiting informal caregivers for a study examining the effects of two online programs designed to support caregiver well-being. Participants will complete online sessions and surveys focused on symptoms of depression, anxiety, and burden. Your involvement will help us better understand

how to support caregivers and improve available resources. **Participation is entirely online and open to adults living in Canada who have a loved one residing in long-term care.**

If you are interested in learning more or seeing if this study is a good fit for you, please contact Kelsey Haczkevicz at [kmh978@uregina.ca](mailto:kmh978@uregina.ca) or follow this link: [https://uregina.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_2rdshQCOjY9uBcG](https://uregina.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2rdshQCOjY9uBcG). This study has been approved by the University of Regina Research Ethics Board.

## FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



To watch videos of the CAH Distinguished Public Lectures, and to learn more about our research and activities, visit the **CAH YouTube Channel** at: [www.youtube.com/@UofRAgingCentre](http://www.youtube.com/@UofRAgingCentre)



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# Promoting Improved Quality of Life for Older Adults Living in Long-Term Care

Innovation Saskatchewan, in partnerships with the University of Regina, University of Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Polytechnic, organized a research innovation event for MLAs in the provincial legislature. The event was attended by both government and opposition MLAs and cabinet ministers. Hadjistavropoulos, representing the CAH, presented implementable findings of his research aimed at improving quality of life in people living with severe dementia including during individual meetings with the Honorable Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, Seniors and Rural and Remote Health, Lori Carr, and opposition Health Critic, MLA Meara Conway and opposition MLA, Jacqueline Roy.



Dr. Thomas Hadjistavropoulos attends research innovation event at the provincial legislature.

## Seeing Pain and Restoring Dignity in Dementia Care

by Moses Anjorin,  
U of R Development Office

How do we ensure that people living with dementia are not just living longer but living well? At the University of Regina's Centre on Aging and Health, this question drives everything we do.

For many individuals living with dementia, one of the most serious and overlooked issues is untreated pain. When a person can no longer communicate clearly, their pain often goes unnoticed. In fact, research suggests that up to 80% of dementia patients experience pain,

much of it undetected and/or undertreated.

Undertreated pain can lead to distress, aggression, and behavioural changes that are often misunderstood. In some cases, these behaviours are treated with medications that increase the risk of falls, strokes, and further health complications. This is not just a medical issue but a matter of dignity and quality of life.

For more than 15 years, the Centre on Aging and Health has been developing practical solutions to address this challenge. One of the Centre's most impactful contributions is a pain assessment checklist that helps caregivers recognize subtle facial expressions and behavioural signs of pain

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in individuals who cannot speak for themselves. This tool has now been translated into approximately 15 languages and is used around the world.

The work continues to evolve. Researchers at the Centre are currently developing AI-based technology that can detect pain behaviours using computer vision, helping caregivers identify discomfort earlier and respond more effectively.

In long-term care settings, where pain assessments are often only infrequently done, the Centre has also supported the implementation of more frequent assessments, helping to break the cycle of pain, behavioural distress, and medication risk.

This is research that doesn't stay in the lab. It reaches caregivers, care homes, and families here in Saskatchewan and around the world. Today, the Centre stands at an important moment. Funding for the Research Chair in Aging and Health, the role that anchors and advances this work is coming to an end.

Without renewed support, the progress made over the past several years is at risk

of slowing just as the need continues to grow. With Saskatchewan's aging population increasing rapidly, the demand for better dementia care has never been greater.

## Here is How You Can Help

Supporting the Research Chair in Aging and Health means:

- Ensuring vulnerable individuals receive proper pain assessment and care
- Reducing stress and burnout among caregivers
- Bringing proven research into everyday practice in care homes
- Improving quality of life for individuals and families living with dementia.

This is an opportunity to support work that is already making a difference and help take it further.

**Your support can help us see pain more clearly and respond with care, compassion, and dignity.**

To learn more or to make a gift, please contact the University of Regina Giving Office at **UR.Giving@uregina.ca** or call **306-585-4024**.

## POTENTIAL RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Members of the public who are over 65-years of age and are interested in participating in research can sign up by going to <https://research.uregina.ca/cah>, clicking on "Participate in Research," and filling out our simple web form.

The CAH hosts a directory of hundreds of potential research participants for University of Regina Research Ethics Board approved studies conducted by members, associates and trainees of the Centre on Aging and Health.

# CAH Hosts 'Dementia Care in Canada: Can We Do Better?'

The Centre on Aging and Health participated in the Dana Foundation's 23<sup>rd</sup> annual Brain Awareness Week by hosting a public event, "Dementia Care in Canada: Can We Do Better?" on March 19, 2026 at the University of Regina. Brain Awareness Week is an international educational initiative, established by the Dana Foundation, to raise awareness about the importance of brain science and its critical role in supporting people to lead healthier, happier, and more productive lives.

There are currently 700,000 Canadians living with dementia, which is projected to rise to 1.7 million Canadians by 2050, underlining the urgency with which our country needs to prioritize, improve, and invest in care for both citizens with dementia and their caregivers.

Over 100 people attended the public screening of three documentary-style news segments about dementia and innovations in long-term care. The screenings explored innovative approaches, models and technology for improved dementia care.

'Lessons Canada can learn from Sweden's long-term care facilities' (CBC) identified

strengths from Sweden's model, in which spouses have the right to continue to live together in long-term care homes when one spouse faces a diagnosis such as dementia and the need for increased care. This model benefits spouses with increased companionship, improved relationships, care from both their spouse and professional caregivers, and apartments designed specifically to ease the effects of dementia.



Attendees watch 'Lessons Canada Can Learn from Sweden's Long-Term Care Facilities' (CBC)

'Canada's First Dementia Village' (Global News) explored a 5-acre 'de-institutionalized' gated dementia-village model in British Columbia with purposefully-designed amenities such as a grocery store, a hair studio, a farm, and a community centre that allows freedom within the village for people with dementia. A small-scale dementia 'village' in the Netherlands, based on scientific research that small-scale

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**JOIN THE CENTRE ON AGING AND HEALTH**

Applying is quick and easy.

Apply on our website: [www2.uregina.ca/cah](http://www2.uregina.ca/cah)  
and click on Quick Links: **"Become a Member"**

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living concepts benefit people with dementia, was also profiled. While the Netherlands' village is subsidized by the government, with the cost to residents based on a sliding scale according to income, the Canadian model is private and less accessible, with no sliding scale.

The final screening, 'Dementia Tech' (Global News), explored technology designed to increase independence, maintain routines, provide therapies, and to provide care and support to people living at home. As there is currently no cure for Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, and much left to learn about dementia prevention, researchers are working to develop ground-breaking technology to help people manage and support people with increasingly complex needs as the disease progresses.

The screenings were followed by a panel discussion and Q & A with the audience. Panelists Kaleta Strain (CEO, Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan), Don Ross (Person with Living Experience as a Caregiver), and Kelly Chessie (Executive Director, Santa Maria Senior Citizen's Home) brought introductory remarks from both their professional and personal experiences on the opportunities and challenges that we face in Canada.

Topics covered included standards of care, guidelines, timely and accurate diagnosis of dementia, training for health care professionals, access to education and support for caregivers, increased funding for the provision of home care, and the importance of continuity of care with



Left to right: Panelists Kaleta Strain, Kelly Chessie and Don Ross.

consistent nurses and caregivers.

Following their remarks, the panelists led the audience in a very engaged discussion on dementia care in Canada. Some of the areas identified as opportunities for growth and improvement included: for government to prioritize dementia care with improved strategy and increased funding, the importance of reducing stigma associated with dementia, and an emphasis on the importance of relationships and routines for people living with dementia.

The Centre on Aging and Health thanks the panelists for sharing their valuable insights and experience, all those who attended and participated in the event, as well as the Dana Foundation for bringing attention to the importance of brain health and to research and innovations to support it. To learn more about Brain Awareness Week, please visit [www.dana.org/brain-awareness-week/](http://www.dana.org/brain-awareness-week/).

## CAH Newsletter Accepting Submissions

Your announcements, member updates, research updates, and CAH-related news items are welcomed. Please email submissions to: Kathryn Smart, CAH Administrator at [Kathryn.Smart@uregina.ca](mailto:Kathryn.Smart@uregina.ca)

## CAH Announcements

The Centre on Aging and Health is pleased to share that Mir Nabila Ashraf has successfully completed her Master of Aging Studies at the University of Regina. Her thesis project, Digital Health Recommendations for Aging Populations Managing Chronic Disease (DReAM Chronic Disease), aimed to develop actionable recommendations for digital health interventions to enhance the quality of life of older adults managing chronic conditions in Saskatchewan, Canada.

During her studies, Nabila was recognized as an AGE-WELL Policy Challenge Fellow (2024-2025) and participated in the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Summer Program in Aging (2025), where she disseminated her research and engaged in national-level knowledge exchange. Her work has also been presented at leading conferences, including AGE-WELL and the Canadian Association of Gerontology.

Beyond academia, Nabila is actively contributing to community initiatives, including Age-Friendly Regina and other local organizations, supporting efforts to enhance the quality of life for older adults. She is currently involved in a multi-provincial research project on end-of-life care options, further advancing policy-relevant research in aging.

Nabila's long-term vision is to work within the health promotion sector, focusing on raising awareness and delivering health education on chronic disease management and end-of-life care. Her work reflects a strong commitment to bridging research, policy, and community impact.



Mir Nabila Ashraf, M. Sc.

## NOMINATIONS OPEN FOR 2026/2027 CAH AWARD FOR INNOVATION IN HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The CAH for Innovation in Health and Wellness recognizes Regina-based individuals, groups, or organizations offering health or wellness services to older adults. Services may be related to healthcare, mental health, exercise, nutrition, social participation and inclusion, and/or community support. Award recipients must have introduced an innovative approach to service provision or have conducted field research to evaluate services or programs for older persons. Winners will be presented with an Award certificate at a CAH public event, will be offered formal affiliation with the CAH, and will be featured in the CAH Newsletter and CAH website.

**If you know of a person or organization deserving of this award, nominations may be submitted at any time until October 15, 2026 for the 2026-2027 Award.**

Please submit nominations using the Online Nomination Form ([www2.uregina.ca/cah](http://www2.uregina.ca/cah) > About CAH > CAH Award); or by completing a paper or PDF nomination form (on website or email [cah@uregina.ca](mailto:cah@uregina.ca)).

For more information on eligibility, adjudication, or about how to apply, please visit: <https://research.uregina.ca/cah/about-cah/innovation-in-health-wellness-award> or contact Kathryn Smart, CAH Administrator, at [Kathryn.Smart@uregina.ca](mailto:Kathryn.Smart@uregina.ca)

# APPLY FOR THE M.A./M.SC. AGING STUDIES PROGRAM

**“Seniors make up the fastest growing age group...  
By 2051, about one in four Canadians is expected to  
be 65 or over.”**

**– *Statistics Canada***

- Exciting inter-disciplinary, research-oriented graduate degree program.
- Provides research training and specialized gerontology knowledge to health professionals and students.
- Emphasizes both the physiological and psychosocial aspects of aging.
- The collaboration of the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies and the Faculty of Social Work and coordinated by the University of Regina’s Centre on Aging and Health.

## **Admission Requirements:**

4-year undergraduate degree in areas such as, nursing, kinesiology, psychology, social work, health studies, sociology, biology, or a health professional degree.

**Applications Due: March 31st, 2027**  
**(for Fall 2027 Admissions)**

## **For More Information:**

Dr. Abigail Wickson-Griffiths  
Program Co-coordinator  
306-337-2135

[Abigail.Wickson-Griffiths@uregina.ca](mailto:Abigail.Wickson-Griffiths@uregina.ca)

Dr. Natasha Gallant (on leave)  
Program Co-coordinator  
306-585-4219

[Natasha.Gallant@uregina.ca](mailto:Natasha.Gallant@uregina.ca)

Kathryn Smart  
CAH Administrator  
306-337-8477  
[cah@uregina.ca](mailto:cah@uregina.ca)

# Apply now for the 2026/2027 CAH Small Grants Research Award!

Amount Available: \$1,500

Application Deadline: December 15, 2027

This award is intended to fund pilot projects or other work aimed to lead to the preparation of a major national application in the area of health and aging.

To apply, or for more information:

Visit <https://research.uregina.ca/cah/about-cah/cah-grants-programs/>  
or contact [cah@uregina.ca](mailto:cah@uregina.ca) or 306.337.8477

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Full: \$100 Half: \$50 Quarter: \$35

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Contact CAH Administrator at: 306.337.8477

or [cah@uregina.ca](mailto:cah@uregina.ca) for more information.



To watch videos of the CAH Distinguished Lectures, and to learn more about our research and activities, visit the **CAH YouTube Channel** at:  
[www.youtube.com/@UofRAgingCentre](http://www.youtube.com/@UofRAgingCentre)

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