Healthy Aging Strategy
For Older Adults in York Region

Healthy Aging
It’s your move!
Healthy Aging Strategy
FOR OLDER ADULTS IN YORK REGION

HEALTHY AGING
it’s your move!

COMMUNITY AND HEALTH SERVICES PUBLIC HEALTH BRANCH

Seniors Services
Revised January 2010
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments .......................................................................................................................... 4  
Executive Summary ......................................................................................................................... 5  
Introduction ...................................................................................................................................... 6  
Background ........................................................................................................................................ 7  
Older Adults in York Region: Defining a Priority Population .............................................................. 8  
Healthy Aging Strategy for Older Adults in York Region: Theoretical Framework ......................... 9  
  Mission and Vision of Healthy Aging in York Region ......................................................................... 10  
  Determinants of Healthy Aging ........................................................................................................ 11  
  Mechanisms for Action .................................................................................................................... 12  
  Health Promotion Strategies ........................................................................................................... 13  
Highlighted Program Practices of the Healthy Aging Strategy ........................................................... 13  
  Asset Mapping .................................................................................................................................... 13  
  Building Community Capacity ........................................................................................................ 13  
  Inclusivity and Engagement ............................................................................................................. 14  
  Fostering Resiliency ......................................................................................................................... 14  
  Collaborations ..................................................................................................................................... 15  
Additional Guiding Principles and Key Documents ........................................................................... 15  
  Population Health Promotion .......................................................................................................... 16  
  The Ottawa Charter on Health Promotion ....................................................................................... 16  
  Ontario Public Health Standards 2008 ........................................................................................... 17  
  Ontario Injury Prevention Strategy ................................................................................................. 18  
  World Health Organization Active Aging Policy Framework ......................................................... 19  
Taking Action towards Healthy Aging: What Are We Doing? ........................................................... 20  
Healthy Aging: A Sustainable Blueprint for Action ........................................................................ 21  
Conclusion: HEALTHY AGING it’s your move! ........................................................................... 23  
References ......................................................................................................................................... 24-25  
Web Links and Best Practice Information ......................................................................................... 26-27  
  Appendix A ....................................................................................................................................... 28-29  
  Appendix B ....................................................................................................................................... 30  
  Appendix C ....................................................................................................................................... 31  
  Appendix D ....................................................................................................................................... 32-33  
  Appendix E ....................................................................................................................................... 34
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Principle authors:

Allison Bailey, Public Health Nurse, Seniors Specialist
Silvana Farrace-Perry, Public Health Nurse, Seniors Specialist

The authors would like to recognize and thank the following colleagues for their tremendous support and review of the York Region Healthy Aging Strategy for Older Adults:

Loretta Bernard, Manager, Injury Prevention and Seniors Section, Healthy Living Division
Deborah Wood, Manager, Substance Abuse Prevention Section, Healthy Living Division

Injury Prevention & Seniors Services team members:

Emma Basmadjian, PHN, Susan Bonomo, PHN, Ruby Gill, PHN, Sahra Nalayeh, PHN
Mary-Ellen Procher, PHN, Gaylia Roffey, PHN, Alice Yau, PHN, Ruth Milley, RPN
Kathryn Johnson, Health Educator
Pat Baird, PHN, author of the Healthy Lifestyles Youth Strategy
Helen Cerullo, Administrative Clerk Secretary
Christine Grimbly, Administrative Clerk Secretary
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Healthy Aging Strategy for Older Adults in York Region is a foundational document for the Community and Health Services Department, Healthy Living Division. It outlines a healthy aging program delivery model for public health, serving older adults 55+ in York Region. In 2002, Health Canada defined healthy aging as a lifelong process of optimizing opportunities for improving and preserving health and physical, social and mental wellness, independence, quality of life and enhancing successful life-course transitions.

Among urban municipalities in Ontario, York Region has one of the fastest growing older adult populations. By 2031, the number of older adults, aged 65 years and over is projected to be 313,000, which is three times the current number. This means the number of older adults in York Region will grow faster than any other Health Unit area in Ontario. As such, older adults are considered a priority population by the Healthy Living Division. It is the belief of Seniors Services within the division that a healthy aging approach to policy and program development has the potential to address many of the challenges of both individual and population aging.

Seniors Services uses a population health approach when planning, creating and delivering programs, campaigns and policies for older adults. These practices include: asset mapping, building community capacity, inclusivity and engagement, fostering resiliency, and collaborations. The strategies and practices described above are informed by additional guiding principles and key documents including the Ontario Public Health Standards 2008.

There are a number of current and future initiatives Seniors Services is undertaking to work towards Healthy Aging. A blueprint for sustainability will be established through alignment and collaboration with other strategic plans at the divisional, departmental and regional levels. The Healthy Aging Strategy for Older Adults in York Region recognizes the importance of future visioning and opportunities for a sustainable approach to programs and services. Our strategy will support and enhance the lives of older adults living in our community.
INTRODUCTION

The population of older adults is growing at a faster rate than ever before. In 2005, there were approximately 4 million Canadians over the age of 65. By 2031, due to the aging of the large number of baby boomers, there will be about 9 million Canadians over 65 years or 25 per cent of the population. This is almost double the current number (Statistics Canada, 2005). In York Region, by 2031, the number of older adults, aged 65 years and over is projected to be 313,000, which is three times the current number (2009 York Region Public Health Monitor on Healthy Aging, draft).

To effectively sustain this growth, our programs and services — based on evidence informed practice — must support and promote the health and well-being of older adults aging in York Region. The Healthy Aging Strategy for Older Adults in York Region will provide the Community and Health Services Department, Healthy Living Division with a foundational document that will outline a healthy aging program delivery model for public health serving older adults living, working and playing in York Region. This strategy focuses on key definitions, concepts, guiding principles and best practices for creating the reality of healthy aging for older adults in our communities.
BACKGROUND

Health care costs are strongly associated with the treatment of disease and disability; however, the process of aging does not have to mean the increased use of health resources. In developed countries, evidence shows older adults are not only living longer, and experiencing lower rates of disability, but they are also more active, healthier and more prosperous than previous generations. If this trend were encouraged to continue, there would be fewer ill or disabled seniors consuming health care resources than projected, which would result in a smaller than anticipated impact to the health care system (Masotti et al., 2006).

As defined by Health Canada in 2002; healthy aging is a lifelong process of optimizing opportunities for improving and preserving health and physical, social and mental wellness, independence, quality of life and enhancing successful life-course transitions. This definition takes a comprehensive view of health that includes physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being.

A number of terms have been used interchangeably with “healthy aging”, such as “successful”, “active”, “productive”, or “positive aging”. Productive aging promotes the economic contributions older people through their participation in the labour market (O’Shea, 2005). Whereas, The World Health Organization (WHO) 2002 defines active aging as the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age. The concept of active aging is broader in scope than healthy aging and is meant to recognize the factors in addition to health that affect how individuals and populations age; however, one could argue that healthy aging is a prerequisite for both productive and active aging.

A healthy aging approach to policy and program development has the potential to address many of the challenges of both individual and population aging. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC, 2005), policies and strategies for injury and chronic disease prevention that create supportive environments for safe living, enjoyable physical activity, healthy eating, non-smoking and social engagement are highly cost effective and can have a positive impact on the health of all ages, seniors in particular. The Healthy Living Division Seniors Services supports the creation of healthy environments, the reduction of inequities, and the building of healthy public policies that can sustain healthy aging for older adults living, working and playing in York Region for many years to come.
OLDER ADULTS IN YORK REGION:
DEFINING A PRIORITY POPULATION

Older adults are considered a priority population by the Healthy Living Division. Among urban municipalities in Ontario, York Region has one of the fastest growing older adult populations.

According to the 2009 York Region Public Health Monitor on Healthy Aging (Draft):

- The number of older adults aged 65 years and over living in York Region grew by about 50 per cent between 2001 and 2007. This represents an average increase of seven per cent since 2001. The current number of residents is 102,287.
- By 2031, the number of older adults, aged 65 years and over is projected to be 313,000, which is three times the current number. This means the number of older adults in York Region will grow faster than any other Health Unit area in Ontario.
- Three-quarters (74.7 per cent) of York Region’s older adults, aged 65 years and over, live in the municipalities of Markham, Vaughan and Richmond Hill.
- Less than one-in-five residents aged 65 years and over live alone.
- Less than half of older adults age 65 years and over had a healthy weight.
- There were more falls-related emergency department visits among older adults age 65 years and over than heart disease and stroke visits combined.
- Falls were responsible for 78 per cent of unintentional injury-related hospitalizations among older adults age 65 to 75 years and 92 per cent for those 75 years and older.
- 92 per cent of older adults age 65 years and over were non-smokers.
- 95 per cent of older adults age 65 years and over reported low risk alcohol use.

According to Just the Facts About Your Community-Seniors Living in York Region, 2007:

- 71 per cent of seniors live with their spouse and/or children.
- Italian (30 per cent) is the most common non-official language spoken by seniors at home, followed by Cantonese (21 per cent), Chinese (17 per cent) and Russian and Punjabi (3 per cent each).
- 16 per cent of seniors aged 75 years and over live on low incomes.
- The risk of being poor grows incrementally after age 64, and is highest for older adults age 75 and over. As women age they are more likely to live on low incomes and the gap between men and women increases considerably after age 65 (Just the Facts-Low Income Population Living in York Region, 2007).
- 18 per cent of residents age 65 and over have no knowledge of English or French. This is a significantly higher percentage than all other age groups in York Region (Just the Facts-Languages of Residents Living in York Region, 2008).

Taking into consideration the above data relating to the older adult population of York Region an investment in ensuring healthy and active lifestyles is not a luxury, but an absolute necessity.
HEALTHY AGING STRATEGY FOR OLDER ADULTS IN YORK REGION: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this theoretical framework is to demonstrate the factors that contribute to healthy aging, and strategies Seniors Services utilizes to promote the overall health status of the aging population in York Region. The following diagram (Figure 1) visually demonstrates the effect of the guiding principles and the determinants of healthy aging on the mechanisms for action. This includes the interaction of supportive environments, mutual aid and self care. The mechanisms for action are further defined by health promotion strategies used to achieve the ultimate vision and mission of healthy aging.

Figure 1. Healthy Aging Strategy for Older Adults in York Region: Theoretical Framework

Adapted from The Alder Group, 2006
Mission and Vision of Healthy Aging in York Region

It is the mission of the Healthy Living Division Seniors Services to promote healthy aging among older adults in York Region. The primary target population will be older adults age 55+ and the secondary target populations will be caregivers, families, health care providers, physicians, community and long-term care agencies, and community stakeholders.

The vision and foundation of this healthy aging strategy, is informed by the comprehensive paper prepared for the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Committee of Officials (Seniors), *Healthy Aging in Canada: A New Vision, A Vital investment from Evidence to Action* (The Alder Group, 2006).

The paper describes a vision of healthy aging that:

- Values and supports the contributions of older people
- Celebrates diversity, refutes ageism and reduces inequities
- Provides age-friendly environments and opportunities to make healthy choices, which will enhance independence and quality of life

We have adopted this vision of healthy aging for older adults in York Region and it is guided by the principles of *dignity, independence, participation, fairness* and *security*. These five principles, first identified by the National Framework on Aging (Health Canada, 1998), should be considered together as they are interrelated in promoting overall health and well-being and were identified as the most important principles for policies affecting older adults. It is the influence of these principles guiding our mission and vision that begin to form the framework of the healthy aging strategy.
Determinants of Healthy Aging

There are a number of social determinants of health impacting the well-being of older adults. The following determinants, while not exhaustive, are the most common among healthy aging best practice publications and should be included when considering program planning initiatives (The Alder Group, 2006; WHO, 2002; Swedish National Institute of Public Health, 2007).

- Injury prevention (falls, road safety)
- Physical activity
- Healthy eating/nutrition
- Substance use/misuse (medication, tobacco, alcohol)
- Physical environment
- Social capital/connectedness

The selection of these determinants are significant regarding their impact on older adults’ health, the availability and efficacy of interventions, the costs associated with treatment for health problems associated with these determinants and their potential to reduce health inequities (The Alder Group, 2006). For example, the major cause of injury among seniors in Canada is falls and the prevention of falls can be directly related to addressing other healthy aging determinants, such as physical activity and healthy eating. According to The Economic Burden of Injury in Canada Report (SMARTRISK, 2009), falls were the leading cause of overall injury costs ($19.8 billion) in Canada in 2004, accounting for 6.2 billion or 31 per cent of total health care costs.

Seniors Services recognizes the determinants are interconnected and “a key aim of government policy should be to enable and encourage people to stay physically active throughout the life course, to remain socially connected in later life; to establish healthy eating patterns and have access to healthy food choices; and to refrain from risky behaviours such as smoking, overeating and activities that can lead to falls and injuries” (WHO, 2005).
Mechanisms for Action

By addressing the determinants of healthy aging, Seniors Services is making a commitment to — and an investment in — older adults in York Region. Based on The Alder Group’s 2006 Healthy Aging in Canada Report, the following are three key mechanisms for achieving our mutual vision of healthy aging:

1. **Supportive environments**: refers to creating policies, services, programs and surroundings that enable healthy aging in settings where older adults live, work, learn, love, recreate and worship.

   Healthy public policies create supportive environments that go beyond the health sector and often involve collaborative action with sectors such as transportation and housing.

   Examples of supportive environments are: age-friendly communities that facilitate social interaction and provide safe, attractive places to walk and be physically active; accessible transportation; smoke-free public places; senior-friendly restaurants/grocery stores that enable/encourage healthy eating; policies that reduces inequalities related to socioeconomic status.

2. **Mutual aid**: refers to the actions people take to support each other both emotionally and physically. The sharing of ideas, information, resources and experiences is also considered mutual aid.

   Encouraging mutual aid means recognizing and supporting the efforts of older adults in volunteerism, self-help groups, care giving, and the informal support that family members provide to each other. Supporting intergenerational relationships becomes important for the health of our society as a whole.

3. **Self-care**: refers to the choices and actions individuals take in the interest of their own health. Culture, gender, socioeconomic status, skill level, relationships and access to reliable, culturally-sensitive information all influence self-care.

   To make healthy choices and carry through with those choices, older people need tailored, accessible information and help learning the skills for healthy aging.

These mechanisms are supported by:

- Training leaders and professionals in health, recreation, urban planning and other sectors that influence opportunities for healthy aging
- Building community capacity for healthy aging among older adult groups, service agencies serving older adults, as well as in intergenerational programs and practices
- Supporting a research and knowledge development agenda, transferring what is learned in ways that policy makers, leaders, older adults and their families can understand and use
Health Promotion Strategies

The role of the Public Health Nurse on Seniors Services is to promote healthy aging and build capacity in individuals, organizations and institutions within York Region using a population health approach. This approach can be achieved through public education and engagement, community partnership and mobilization, safe environments, surveillance and assessment, and healthy public policy strategies and will be used to target older adults 55+ with the aim to deliver a comprehensive healthy aging program.

For further information on population health promotion and health promotion strategies please refer to Additional Guiding Principles & Key Documents beginning on page 13. Information regarding the activities Seniors Services is undertaking, respective to the mentioned health promotion strategies, may be found in the 2010 Seniors Program Logic Model in Appendix A.

HIGHLIGHTED PROGRAM PRACTICES OF THE HEALTHY AGING STRATEGY

Seniors Services incorporates a variety of practices as part of a population health approach when planning, creating and delivering programs, campaigns and policies for older adults.

Asset Mapping

Community mapping is a type of inventory that starts by identifying and locating what already exists. It looks for opportunities to use and build on existing resources. It is an important beginning step for projects that work for community transformation (Human Resources Development Canada, 2003).

Asset mapping is considered a key assessment method to determine and document strengths and opportunities that exist within York Region. It focuses on strengths rather than needs. When considering an environmental scan of agencies and institutions working with older adults in York Region, an asset based approach was taken and an assessment tool was created to help form a “map” of assets and strengths existing in the community. Asset mapping continues to be a practice that Seniors Services will utilize when conducting assessments.

Building Community Capacity

When looking at building community capacity of older adults, we consider the strengths, skills and assets the population or community has already and then build upon it. Building community capacity essentially involves rethinking the use of community resources. It entails scoping out the broad range of resources available in any given community and understanding that these resources are assets to be harnessed for building stronger communities (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993).

The Healthy Aging Strategy for Older Adults in York Region will strive to build capacity for healthy aging among the older adult population by providing services through advocacy, education and awareness.
Inclusivity and Engagement

Social connectedness and engagement have a positive effect on health. People who remain actively engaged in life and connected to those around them are generally happier, in better physical and mental health and more empowered to cope effectively with change and life transitions (The Alder Group, 2006).

Programming and policies that support and promote the inclusivity and engagement of older adults are key considerations in this healthy aging strategy. It is important for older adults to be key participants in the planning, development and implementation of programs and policies in order to foster inclusivity and engagement that is meaningful and hence promoting health.

Fostering Resiliency

Resilience describes the process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences, especially highly stressful or traumatic events. Being resilient does not mean life’s major hardships are not difficult and upsetting. Instead, it means these events, though difficult and upsetting, are ultimately manageable.

Those who will be most resilient are likely to be people who have a positive outlook and a sense of personal mastery, actively engage in coping with the stressor, and find meaning in the events. Many of these qualities tend to increase with age, and research has found that, on average, older adults display greater resilience in response to difficult or challenging life experiences, and they are better able to maintain a positive emotional state under stress than younger persons. When older adults experience a stressful event, they generally report less distress than do younger individuals (Zeiss et al., 2004).

York Region Seniors Services recognizes resiliency of older adults’ as an asset that could be mobilized during stressful situations.
Collaborations

An interdisciplinary approach with multiple community stakeholders, agencies and institutions will provide opportunities for a collaborative, innovative and comprehensive approach towards Healthy Aging in York Region. These collaborations collectively have the possibility to advocate for a coordinated approach to reorienting health services. We can strengthen efforts for positive policy changes that create supportive environments to achieve healthy aging for older adults in York Region.

There are many existing and promising collaborations that can promote the Healthy Aging Strategy for Older Adults in York Region:

• Maintaining active membership on existing committees such as: Healthy Aging Working Group of York Region, Bringing an Awareness of Senior Safety Issues to the Community (BASSIC), Greater Toronto Area Falls Prevention Networking Committee, Senior Services Provider Network of York Region, and Vaughan Community Health Centre Seniors Community Advisory Panel

• Exploring the creation of an internal York Region Healthy Aging Alliance, with the common interest of providing sustainable and age-friendly services that impact and influence the health of older adults. For example, Transit (accessible transportation & mobility); Housing and Long-Term Care (supporting health, wellbeing and independence); Strategic Service Integration and Policy (collaborative planning to support healthy and active living); Healthy Schools (intergenerational activities & social connectedness); Workplace Wellness and Active Communities Program (supporting older adults in the workplace through healthy public policy); Regional Planners (sidewalk & road safety); Alternative Community Living Program (ACLP) (aging at home & managing disabilities); Smoke Free Ontario (comprehensive tobacco control); Sun Safety (exposure to ultraviolet radiation); Substance Misuse (safe alcohol & medication use); Nutrition (Healthy eating/healthy weights) and Emergency Preparedness (older adults issues); York Regional Police (safety & security)

• Developing new collaborations as required by the Ontario Public Health Standards 2008 and the Community and Health Services Department Multi-Year Plan (MYP) 2010-2015 (Draft)

ADDITIONAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND KEY DOCUMENTS

The Healthy Aging Strategy for Older Adults in York Region is based on a number of additional guiding principles and key documents including:

- Population Health Promotion
- The Ottawa Charter
- Ontario Public Health Standards
- Ontario Injury Prevention Strategy
- World Health Organization Active Aging Policy Framework on Health
**Population Health Promotion**

The Public Health Agency of Canada (2001) defines population health as an approach that aims to improve the health of the entire population and to reduce health inequities among population groups. It looks and acts upon the broad range of factors and conditions that have a strong influence on our health — the full spectrum of social, economic and environmental health determinants.

The population health promotion approach:

- Focuses on the health of populations
- Addresses the determinants of health and their interactions
- Bases decisions on evidence
- Invests upstream
- Applies multiple strategies
- Collaborates across sectors and levels
- Engages the public

**The Ottawa Charter on Health Promotion**

The 1986 *Ottawa Charter on Health Promotion* took a comprehensive view of health determinants, referring to them as prerequisites for health. It defined the fundamental prerequisites for health as peace, shelter, education, food, income, a stable eco-system, sustainable resources, social justice and equity. It also recognized that access to these prerequisites cannot be ensured by the health sector alone. Rather, coordinated action is required among all concerned, including governments (health and other social and economic sectors) non-governmental organizations, industry and the media (Appendix B).

The *Ottawa Charter* called for action in five areas:

1. **Build Healthy Public Policy** to ensure policy developed by all sectors contributes to health-promoting conditions (e.g., healthier choices of goods and services, equitable distribution of income).

2. **Create Supportive Environments** (physical, social, economic, cultural, spiritual) that recognize the rapidly changing nature of society, particularly in the areas of technology and the organization of work, and that ensure positive impacts on the health of the people (e.g., healthier workplaces, clean air and water).

3. **Strengthen Community Action** so communities have the capacity to set priorities and make decisions on issues affecting their health (e.g., healthy communities).

4. **Develop Personal Skills** to enable people to have the knowledge and skills to meet life’s challenges and to contribute to society (e.g., life-long learning, health literacy).

5. **Reorient Health Services** to create systems which focus on the needs of the whole person and invite a true partnership among the providers and users of the services (e.g., homecare, child development services).

To facilitate effective programming for older adults Seniors Services is adopting a comprehensive population approach to health promotion in York Region. This model ensures actions from the *Ottawa Charter*, such as reorienting health services, are addressed at various levels.
Ontario Public Health Standards 2008

The Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS) 2008 have set requirements for public health programs and services, which include assessment and surveillance, health promotion and policy development, disease and injury prevention, and health protection. Under the Ontario Public Health Standards, healthy aging is influenced by the following program standards and protocols: Prevention of Injury and Substance Misuse and Chronic Disease Prevention. These standards fall under the Healthy Living Division of the Community and Health Services Department.

According to the standards, the goal of the Prevention of Injury and Substance Misuse standard is to reduce the frequency, severity and impact of preventable injury and of substance misuse. The areas of focus within this standard are:

• Alcohol and other substances
• Falls across the lifespan
• Road and off-road safety and
• Other areas of public health importance for the prevention of injuries

The goal of Chronic Disease Prevention is to reduce the burden of preventable chronic diseases of public health importance. The areas of focus are:

• Healthy eating
• Healthy weights
• Comprehensive tobacco control
• Physical activity
• Alcohol use
• Exposure to ultraviolet radiation

A key component of the requirements outlined in the Ontario Public Health Standards 2008 is to identify and work with local priority populations. Priority populations are identified through surveillance studies such as in the 2009 York Region Public Health Monitor on Healthy Aging (draft). These populations are at risk and public health interventions may be reasonably considered to have a substantial impact at the population level. The Healthy Aging Strategy for Older Adults in York Region includes population-based activities designed to promote the health of the older adult population of York Region and reduce health inequities by working with community partners.
Ontario Injury Prevention Strategy

The 2008 Ontario Injury Prevention Strategy (Appendix C) is a comprehensive, coordinated plan which aims to reduce the frequency, severity and impact of preventable injury in Ontario. By working with key stakeholders and partners, the Ministry of Health Promotion focuses attention on where there is the greatest need and where we can have the most success:

- Community partnerships and mobilization
- Public education and engagement
- Safe environments
- Healthy public policy

York Region Community and Health Services, Seniors Services, is responding to Ontario’s call to action by incorporating the above strategic directions in their theoretical framework for healthy aging. In the Seniors Services logic model a comprehensive list of actions and activities that promote healthy aging are listed under the above strategic categories.
World Health Organization Active Aging Policy Framework

The following are the key health policy proposals and selected examples from the WHO’s 2002 report on *Active Aging* which have guided and influenced the *Healthy Aging Strategy for Older Adults in York Region*.

I. Prevent and reduce the burden of excess disabilities, chronic disease and premature mortality.

- *Age-friendly, safe environments*: prevent injuries by protecting older pedestrians in traffic, making walking safe, implementing fall prevention programs, eliminating hazards in the home and providing safety advice. Stringently enforce occupational safety standards that protect older workers from injury. Modify formal and informal work environments so that people can continue to work productively and safely as they age.

II. Reduce risk factors associated with major diseases and increase factors that protect health throughout the life course.

- *Tobacco*: provide older people with help to quit smoking

- *Physical activity*: inform and educate people and professionals about the importance of staying active as one grows older

- *Healthy eating*: support improved diets and healthy weights in older age through the provision of information

- *Psychological factors*: build self efficacy and capitalize on experience and strengths

- *Alcohol and drugs*: put practices and policies into place to reduce misuse and abuse

- *Medications*: inform and educate people about the wise use of medications

III. Develop a continuum of affordable, accessible, high quality and age-friendly health and social services that address the needs and rights of women and men as they age.

- *Aging at home and in the community*: provide policies, programs and services that enable people to remain in their homes as they grow older

- *Partnerships and quality care*: provide a comprehensive approach to care that stimulates collaboration between the public and private sectors and involves all levels of government, civil society and the not-for-profit sector

IV. Provide training and education to caregivers.

- *Informal caregivers*: provide information and training on how to care for people as they grow older

- *Formal caregivers*: educate health and social service workers in enabling models of primary health care that recognize the strengths and contributions of older people
TAKING ACTION TOWARDS HEALTHY AGING: WHAT ARE WE DOING?

The following is a list of the Seniors Services current and future initiatives:

- Actively promote the creation of age-friendly communities within York Region that support older adults and healthy aging

- Collaborating with the Seniors Health Research Transfer Network (SHRTN): Supports capacity building and knowledge transfer on healthy aging evidence-based literature required to guide policies and practices

- Utilizing results of the 2009 Environmental Scan of community agencies to strengthen existing collaborations and engagement with older adults

- Continuing to support the Healthy Aging Working Group of York Region (a network of community stakeholders working with older adults) to collaborate and advocate for the promotion of healthy aging through policies and accessible health services

- Providing consultation to community agencies interested in adopting Healthy Aging and/or Falls Prevention policies and practices

- Conducting local surveillance and epidemiological analysis of our target population including monitoring trends over time and emerging trends according to the Ontario Public Health Standards 2008

- Increasing awareness of falls prevention strategies through education and skill-building

- Creating tele-practice guidelines for healthy aging and physical activity for Health Connection staff based on best practice literature

- Supporting local intergenerational programs serving older adults and youth by providing consultations and educational resources

- Advocating for the enhancement of falls prevention education in the personal support worker (PSW) curriculum and as a requirement of practice for this vocation

- Supporting community-wide campaigns that target older adults (e.g., BASSIC Calendar promotion and distribution, and Senior’s month events)

- Maintaining active membership on committees and coalitions in order to collaborate and promote healthy aging

- Supporting healthy aging in the workplace through active participation in Workplace Wellness Program activities and events

- Fostering more integrated service delivery among internal departments in York Region that supports healthy and active living
HEALTHY AGING: A SUSTAINABLE BLUEPRINT FOR ACTION

The Healthy Aging Strategy for Older Adults in York Region complements and is in line with strategic plans at the divisional, departmental and regional levels. The commonalities among strategies are highlighted in the following discussion and a plan for sustainable action is outlined.

The Healthy Aging Strategy is consistent with several goals outlined in both Vision 2026 and the York Region Official Plan (ROP) as they pertain to responding to the needs of residents and fostering strong, healthy communities.

When considering sustainable healthy aging in York Region, Seniors Services, as supported through its mandate, can influence and provide opportunities for action within the following primary areas of the Region’s sustainability strategy: Healthy Communities and Education, Engagement and Partnerships.

The Community and Health Services Department MYP 2010-2015 (Draft) is a review of and guide for programs to better meet the needs of York Region residents. This plan reflects Regional strategic goals related to human services from Vision 2026, the Sustainability Strategy and the Regional Official Plan.

These goals consist of the following:

- Contribute to Regional economic vitality by helping low income residents with access to basic needs, and with finding and keeping jobs

- Support healthy communities through a broad range of housing choices and supports to meet the diverse needs of residents

- Optimize the health of the community for all ages and stages through health protection, prevention and promotion initiatives

- Strengthen neighbourhoods now and in the future by supporting children, families and youth to fulfill their potential

- Foster social inclusion and economic opportunities by addressing the needs of a growing and diverse community

- Deliver a more integrated human service system that supports effective community planning and quality services
Seniors Services is actively engaging with community agencies and interested stakeholders in York Region. The objective is to create an external network of individuals working with older adults to build capacity, enhance engagement and foster collaboration. Including and seeking the input of older adults is a necessary part of the process, which will add richness and contribute to the healthy aging of our residents. By encouraging more sustainable actions specifically addressing the needs of older adults and thereby creating a healthier community, York Region will be ready to support the current and emerging aging population.

The Healthy Lifestyles Strategic Framework 2008-2011 (Appendix E) recognizes older adults as a target population when considering a vision for healthy living. The framework’s goals are based on The Ottawa Charter and support the guiding principles and strategic directions of the Ontario Public Health Standards 2008. They align with the above mentioned strategic plans of Vision 2026, York Region Sustainability Strategy, ROP and the MYP. These goals include reduced social inequities in health and the promotion of healthy lifestyles, through a comprehensive population health approach that respects diversity and promotes asset development. Healthy Aging within the Healthy Living Division can be achieved through implementation of the existing Ontario Public Health Standards 2008, fostering resiliency through asset development and supporting the built environment through the promotion of age-friendly communities.

Opportunities to promote Healthy Aging also exist for Seniors Services of the Healthy Living Division to collaborate with Community and Health Services Branches, Regional departments and community stakeholders. These include Housing & Long Term Care Program, Seniors Community Programs (i.e., Alternative Community Living Program), Planning and Development Services, and York Region Transportation Services. An internal coordination of programs targeting older adults could be created to provide a more comprehensive and age-friendly approach to services for older adults living in York Region. This will reduce duplication and lead to a more streamlined and cost-effective mode of service delivery, building on each program area’s strengths, assets and capacities.

By building strong internal and external networks the Healthy Aging Strategy for Older Adults in York Region is a sustainable blueprint for action that will ensure a coordinated and comprehensive population health approach to addressing the needs of older adults in the community.
CONCLUSION: HEALTHY AGING IT’S YOUR MOVE!

Healthy Aging, based on its definition, is a concept the staff of Seniors Services would like all older adults in York Region to adopt and experience as they age. The Healthy Aging Strategy for Older Adults in York Region recognizes the importance of future visioning and opportunities for a sustainable approach to programs and services. Given the rapid growth of the region and the projected demographic shift of older adults, the time for action is now.

Seniors Services of the Healthy Living Division is proactively reducing inequities, reorienting health services, decreasing the burden of injury and illness and building the capacity of key stakeholders, organizations and populations that support healthy aging. As evidenced in our current Logic Model (Appendix A), we will meet our mandate. Our strategy will support and enhance the lives of older adults living in our community.
REFERENCES

1. Community and Health Services Department Multi-Year Plan 2010-2015 (Draft)


22. 2009 York Region Public Health Monitor on Healthy Aging (Draft)


26. Antonette M. Zeiss, PhD; Joan M. Cook, PhD; & Dorothy W. Cantor, PsyD (2004) Fostering Resilience in Response to Terrorism: For Psychologists Working With Older Adults Senior Editor: Laura Barbanel, EdD
WEB LINKS AND BEST PRACTICE INFORMATION

1. Further information on York Region Human Services Planning Coalition, Strategic Plan can be found at: http://www.york.ca/Departments/Planning+and+Development/Human+Services/HSPC/default+HSPC.htm


16. Manitoba Healthy Living A Review of Best Practices: Preventing Falls and Fall-related Injuries in Manitoba
http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthyliving/injury_bestpractices.html

17. Public Health Agency of Canada-Aging and Seniors
http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/index_pages/whatsnew_e.htm

18. Alberta’s Healthy Aging and Seniors Wellness Strategic Framework


APPENDICES

Appendix A: Seniors Program 2010 Logic Model

Appendix B: Ottawa Charter on Health Promotion: A Call for Action Diagram

Appendix C: Ontario Injury Prevention Strategy

Appendix D: York Region Sustainability Strategy

Appendix E: Healthy Lifestyles Strategic Framework 2008-2011
## Healthy Lifestyles Division
### 2010 Seniors Program Logic Model

### Mission / Purpose of the program
To promote healthy aging among the older adults of York Region

### Target Population
Seniors 55+ living in York Region, caregivers, families, health care providers, physicians, community/LTC agencies, community stakeholders

### Inputs
Human, financial and physical resources e.g. staff, IT support, materials, supplies, community partners, etc

### Health Promotion and Policy Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Community partnership / mobilization</th>
<th>Safe environments</th>
<th>Healthy public policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Activities |...
- To launch the 3rd phase of Make a Splash campaign
- To provide Step Ahead educational training to health care & allied health care professionals
- To submit Healthy Aging newsletter articles and informational resources to community agencies
- To review, update and develop program resources and website
- To explore the development of a Healthy Aging curriculum targeting older adults
- To contact Health Connection re: RAN & prerecorded messages & update as needed
- To participate in Rogers Daytime for Seniors Month in June
- To provide workshops and displays to at risk seniors/caregivers on healthy aging and falls prevention
- To develop HA telepractice guidelines for Health Connection
- To maintain active partnerships on committees and coalitions in order to collaborate and engage them in various health promotion strategies
- To plan and participate in the annual Workplace Wellness networking session to promote Healthy Aging in the workplace
- To collaborate with the Geriatric Outreach Team and GEM nurses in order to:
  a) Promote access to Falls Prevention & Healthy Aging resources
  b) Engage them in strategies that support falls prevention and healthy aging
- To collaborate with the Building Healthy Communities working group to promote safe walkable/age friendly communities
- To provide educational resources to Neighbourhood Network to support their snow removal and yard maintenance programs
- To plan and author a committee report & resolution to council related to Healthy Aging Strategy
- To provide consultation to community agencies interested in adopting Healthy Aging and/or Falls Prevention policies
- To analyze and summarize results collected from the environmental scan conducted in 2009 related to the community consultation
- To identify potential internal partners who currently provide services to the older adult in our community
- To administer participant feedback surveys
- To review current literature on issues for older adults
- To review relevant statistical data and reports for the seniors program

### Surveillance & Assessment
...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outputs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 3rd phase of campaign launched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• # people exposed to launch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• # &amp; type of resources developed for campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• # &amp; type of media venues reached through launch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• # workshops delivered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• # staff in attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• # &amp; type of articles/resources submitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• website updated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• # resources updated, revised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Curriculum explored with GTA committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• # &amp; type of RAN/ prerecorded messages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• # people reached through RAN/ prerecorded messages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Calendar developed &amp; launched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Participated in Rogers Daytime &amp; topic covered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Types of at risk groups reached</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• # of people in attendance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Telepractice guidelines developed |
| • # & type of coalitions & committees |
| • # of sub-committee forms completed in database/documenting committee work |
| • Participated in Workplace Wellness networking session |
| • # of people in attendance at session |
| • # & type of resources developed for session |
| • # & type resources distributed |
| • Type of strategies used by Geriatric Outreach Team & GEM Names |

| # of partnered activities with Building Healthy Communities working group |
| • # & types of resources provided to Neighbourhood Network |
| Committee report authored |
| Healthy Aging Resolution developed |
| # & type of agencies supported with their Healthy Aging and falls prevention policies |
| Types of policies |

| Environmental Scan results analyzed and summarized |
| Potential internal partners identified |
| # feedback surveys completed |
| Current literature and statistical reports reviewed |

**Short Term Outcomes**

By the end of 2010, key community stakeholders will have increased awareness of health promotion for older adults.

By the end of 2010, telepractice guidelines will promote consistent sharing of resources and information based on best practice between regional staff and the community.

By the end of 2010, there will be an increase in the development and implementation of healthy policies, programs and changes to create safe and supportive environments for older adults.

100% of staff will continue to utilize epidemiological data and evidence based literature to guide development of programs and services.

By the end of 2010, 50% of at risk seniors & caregivers who attended the workshops will demonstrate an increase in knowledge of healthy aging &/or falls prevention practices.

By the end of 2010, 50% of at risk seniors & caregivers who attended the workshops will state their intent to adopt behaviours that will minimize risk factors in an effort to prevent falls and promote healthy aging.

By the end of 2009, 50% HCPs/allied HCPs/service providers who attended the training will have increased knowledge in falls prevention practices.

By the end of 2009, 25% of HCPs/allied HCPs/service providers who attended the training will implement falls prevention practices into their practice.

**Short Term Indicators**

- # & % of community partners who are engaged in healthy aging strategies
- # and type of initiatives focused on advocacy issues, and health practices supportive of Healthy Aging
- # and type of efforts to increase public awareness
- # of older adults reached through various health promotion strategies
- % change in awareness of staff implementing telepractice guidelines
- % of staff using epidemiological data to guide development of programs and services
- # of at risk group service delivery requests
- # & % of at risk seniors & caregivers who report an increase in knowledge
- # & % of at risk seniors & caregivers who report they will change their behaviour (self-efficacy / stages of change scores)
- # & % of HCPs/allied HCPs/service providers who report implementation of falls prevention practices

**Long Term Outcomes**

Reduced frequency, severity and impact of falls among older adults

Expanded network of stakeholders implementing changes in their practices related to Healthy Aging

**Long Term Indicators**

- Decreased frequency, severity and impact of falls among older adults
- Increased number of stakeholders implementing changes in their practices related to Healthy Aging

June 1, 2010
Appendix B

Ottawa Charter on Health Promotion Emblem

First International Conference on Health Promotion,
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada,
17-21 November 1986
Principles

Shared Responsibility & Government Leadership: Government leadership, and partnerships and alliances across sectors are required to address our shared responsibility for injury prevention.

Evidence-based: Ongoing assessment, surveillance, research and evaluation must be undertaken to support the development of effective programs, policies and practices.

Integrated Practices: Leverage, link and integrate the efforts of individuals, communities, organizations and governments to reduce the burden of injury across settings.

Recognize Diversity: Engage leaders to design relevant, culturally appropriate approaches to address the varied needs of Ontario’s diverse communities.
Appendix D

York Region Sustainability Strategy

In November 2007, Regional Council approved the York Region Sustainability Strategy. The Final Sustainability Strategy and all Regional initiatives represent the first of many steps towards stronger sustainability and will position the Region as a leader in this field.

Click [here](#) to download a copy of the Final Sustainability Strategy.

*Sustainable development is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”*

- United Nations Brundtland Commission, 1987

According to the report, **Sustainability means:**

- Leaving our communities, our Region, our World in a healthy state for our children and grandchildren.

- Evaluating the community, environmental and economic effects of our actions.

- Thinking differently, being more innovative and collaborative.

- Making smarter decisions about our lifestyle, community design, infrastructure and financial decisions.

- Practising prevention and adaption so that our communities become more resilient to long term social, economic and climate change.

The **Sustainability Strategy provides a new approach to decision-making** integrating the environment, economy and community, as well as, emphasizing engagement, monitoring and continuous improvement.

This **Sustainability Strategy will inform Regional initiatives** to address the dynamic growth forecasted for the Region by using the nine principles of implementation.
**Principle 1:** Provide a long-term perspective on sustainability

**Principle 2:** Evaluate using the triple bottom-line elements of environment, economy and community.

**Principle 3:** Create a culture of continuous improvement, minimizing impact, maximizing innovation and increasing resiliency.

**Principle 4:** Identify specific short-term achievable actions that contribute towards a sustainability legacy.

**Principle 5:** Set targets, monitor and report progress.

**Principle 6:** Foster partnerships and public engagement.

**Principle 7:** Create a spirit of stewardship, shared responsibility and collaboration.

**Principle 8:** Raise the level of sustainability awareness through education, reassessment.

**Principle 9:** Promote sustainable lifestyles and re-evaluation of our consumption and expectations.
Appendix E

Healthy Lifestyles Strategic Framework 2008-2011