2021-2022

ANNUAL REPORT

AGEWELL | APPTA POPRAVIT

NATIONAL INNOVATION HUB • CENTRE NATIONAL D'INNOVATION

CORPORATE PROFILE

Launched in 2017 with a single goal in mind, the AGE-WELL National Innovation Hub Advancing Policies and Practices in Technology and Aging (APPTA) is putting innovative aging and technology research into the hands of the people who can use it. It takes on average 17 years for research to be translated into action. By bringing together a dynamic team of young professionals to support an integrated network in research, policy, and innovation, APPTA aims to bridge that gap and mobilize aging and technology research in ways that can improve the lives of older Canadians.

VISION

To drive policy innovation that improves the future of aging in Canada.

MISSION

APPTA aims to advance evidence-informed decision-making that positively impacts the lives of older Canadians by mobilizing the power of research & technology, collaboration, and innovation.

VALUES

There is always a way to do it better.
APPTA translates quality aging and technology research into actionable policy options for the federal, provincial, and territorial governments of Canada. Our efforts are aimed at ensuring the best and latest evidence is informing policy decision-making that impacts the lives of older Canadians.

We go further when we work together.
APPTA takes a connectivity approach to complex challenges in aging, bringing people together from east to west, north to south, to share their best ideas and work collectively on potential solutions that will benefit older Canadians.

Everyone has the potential to innovate.
APPTA offers a suite of education programs and learning opportunities that are designed to build the knowledge translation skills needed to bring great ideas to fruition.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A MESSAGE FROM OUR SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR

This year continued the tradition of COVID-19 changing the way we conduct research-related activity at APPTA. With so much change I am pleased that Dalhousie University has agreed to serve as the home of APPTA. Dalhousie is a world-class institution and our new relationship increases efficiency immensely, allowing us to connect with new resources and teams, and letting us focus on promoting evidence-informed decision making.

Our team has a number of new faces, each person bringing a unique skill set and interests. This has allowed us to shape our output, with external experts, to better serve our stakeholders. I simply cannot wait to see what comes of our research collaborations in the next year, where we have engaged with research teams across Canada to put out policy-relevant pieces that would otherwise not exist in the typical academic production model. I am proud of our team and what they have pulled together in this environment, and anticipate this year will be a productive one.

As our country starts to transition back to in-person work (in the short run, at least) I look forward to connecting with decision makers, external experts, and researchers in dynamic settings where innovation can happen. I am looking forward to seeing what the team does this year.

DR. DANIEL DUTTON,
SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR

A MESSAGE FROM OUR MANAGER

This has been another year of significant changes at APPTA as we continue to work and learn in our new realities since COVID began. These changes have brought a lot of excitement and energy to the work that we do as knowledge brokers and I could not be happier with the team and organization. The most prominent change we have made this year is a shift to focus more on research partnerships with researchers and subject matter experts in sectors that relate to our policy priorities. By collaborating with these partners we can really improve the way we bring our government stakeholders relevant and quality evidence in addition to making connections between our stakeholders and research partners. This approach in our new structure allows us to address multiple complex policy topics at a time by engaging the experts doing the work.

We have also continued supporting knowledge translation initiatives at our home base in New Brunswick. At APPTA, we are excited to see the focus funding agencies are taking to support building knowledge translation capacity in the research community, and to be a part of it. Lastly, a major accomplishment this year is the culmination of our Policy Innovation Lab. In reflecting on everything we have done and everything we have learned over the last four years, the one thing that holds true is the value of bringing people together. I look forward to the year ahead with the network we continue to create and engage with in this work.

JENNA RODDICK,
MANAGER

STAFF

Dr. Daniel Dutton,
Scientific Director

Jenna Roddick,
Manager of Operations

Heather Higgins,
Coordinator of Policy &
Knowledge Exchange

Karolina Jalowska,
Digital Media Coordinator

Lynn Ouellet,
Policy Lab Coordinator

Patrick Patterson,
Knowledge Broker

Norma Chinho,
Knowledge Broker

Daniel Smiley,
Research & Logistics Specialist

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Dr. Daniel Dutton,
Dalhousie Medicine
New Brunswick

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University of Toronto

Dr. Michael Wilson,
McMaster University

Dr. Josephine McMurray,
Wilfrid Laurier University

Dr. Tom McIntosh,
University of Regina

Pamela Fancey,
Nova Scotia Centre on Aging

Dr. Jeff Jutai,
University of Ottawa

A **YEAR IN REVIEW**

OUR **OUTPUTS:**

Briefs:
3

Workshops:
2

Webinars &
Presentations:
17

Jurisdictional
Scans:
3

Podcast
episodes:
11

Idea Blog:
11

Meetings with
community partners:
25+

Meetings with
policy stakeholders:
30+

OUR **TRAINING PROGRAM OUTPUTS:**

Presentations:
3

Reports:
3

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWING:

56% INCREASE

41% INCREASE

119% INCREASE

APPTA'S POLICY PRIORITIES

This year at APPTA, we have changed the way we seek and provide research evidence to address policy concerns. We are putting our energy and resources toward identifying and engaging with researchers and subject matter experts in the fields of interest to collaborate on evidence products for our network. This year, we selected five broad policy priorities where research evidence has the potential to influence innovative practices and inform the work of jurisdictions.

The five priority topics are:

Integration of virtual care mechanisms along the care continuum

- Research Partner: Dr. Bruce Wallace and Dr. Frank Knoefel, SAM3
- Research Partner: Dr. Michael Wilson, McMaster Health Forum

Facilitators of Social Isolation and Loneliness

- Research Partner: Lyne Ouellet, PhD Candidate, University of New Brunswick and Dr. Albert Baneerjee, St. Thomas University
- Research Partner: Dr. Tom McIntosh, University of Regina

Investments in Assistive Technology

- Research Partner: Dr. Rosalie Wang, University of Toronto

Stabilizing the health care workforce

- Research Partner: Dr. Arthur Sweetman, McMaster University

Alternative housing and care models to enable aging in place

- Policy Challenge: Adebusola Adekoya, PhD Candidate, University of Waterloo

POLICY ROUNDS

APPTA's & AGE-WELL NCE's Policy Rounds webinar series bring current aging and technology research in Canada to the forefront through policy-oriented briefing presentations. With the goal of enhancing knowledge translation in AgeTech research, Policy Rounds are geared towards government stakeholders, researchers, students, older adults, caregivers, community organizations, and the public at-large so that everyone can explore important topics impacting the lives of older adults and their caregivers.

Occurring on a monthly basis, Policy Rounds has hosted 11 sessions in 2021-2022.

POLICY INNOVATION LAB

In 2020, APPTA began planning a Policy Innovation Lab through a grant from the New Brunswick Innovation Foundation's (NBIF) Social Innovation Research Fund. This lab aimed to explore the question "How might we enhance the adoption and scale of technologies that support healthy aging in New Brunswick?" This process was guided and informed by our Lab Advisory Committee.

In 2021 - 2022 we executed this lab in a series of three workshops from March to July, engaging a variety of stakeholders who represented sectors such as government, industry, academia, and user perspectives. As a result of these workshops, we have a better understanding of the challenges to development, adoption, and scale of health technologies in New Brunswick and have developed some policy oriented solutions that aim to address these roadblocks.

We are also undergoing a series of scans and engagement with stakeholders to validate the development of a policy guide that proposes key recommendations that may open up the space for innovation in New Brunswick.

Empathy building

System mapping

Brainstorming

Prototyping

You can find out more about the lab in our lab report **here.**

POLICY INNOVATION LAB REPORT
ENHANCING ADOPTION & SCALE OF TECHNOLOGIES TO SUPPORT HEALTHY AGING IN NEW BRUNSWICK

"I really enjoyed hearing the perspectives of the group members during these sessions. Each brought a unique set of skill sets and experience. It was apparent how much work the APPTA team put into this project. The content was well researched, the sessions were very organized and the communication was top notch."

POLICY INNOVATION LAB PARTICIPANT QUOTE

RESEARCH ROUNDUP
Social Prescribing

View our Research
Roundups **here.**

AGING IN 2021:

A Report on Political Priorities in Aging across Canada

We wrapped up 2021 with a look back on how the policy landscape has shifted over the past year. Highlights include new supports for older Canadians, expansions to health services, such as more home and community care delivery and health care work force initiatives, and continued efforts to protect vulnerable groups against COVID-19.

RESEARCH ROUNDUPS

As knowledge brokers, translating relevant and timely literature and programming information is at the forefront of how we support our network. This year, we were delighted to launch a new product that supports our stakeholders and brings forward relevant evidence from the literature and programs being implemented across the globe.
Our Research Roundup series will continue to bring forward work that aligns with our five priority areas on a bi-monthly basis.

AGING IN 2021
A REPORT ON POLITICAL PRIORITIES
IN AGING ACROSS CANADA

Read the full
report **here.**

IDEA BLOG

For our Idea Blog, we interview incredible CEOs, researchers, students, and others making an impact in aging and technology research and innovation in Canada and beyond. We believe that by telling their stories, showcasing the impact of their work, and understanding how they've overcome challenges, we can provide an authentic account of today's technology and aging experts.

POLICY CHALLENGE

Winners of this year's Policy Challenge had the exclusive opportunity to work closely with policy experts and learn firsthand how to align their research findings with a Canadian policy priority. This year, we were fortunate to mentor three research trainees in our program:

Amika Shah, University of Toronto PhD Candidate working on the question "How have older adults been considered in the shift to digital mental health as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and what changes are needed to improve access to care for this population?"

Viviane Josewski, University of British Columbia post-doctoral fellow working on the question "How can government rapidly increase access to mental health and addictions supports for Indigenous older adults residing in urban (off-reserve) areas?"

Adebusola Adekoya, University of Waterloo working on the question "What alternative housing and care models to long-term care exist that are effective in supporting older adults to remain in their communities?"

" The Policy Challenge program has provided me with an opportunity to hone my policy writing skills, widen my strategic network and amplify the dissemination and impact of my research. I especially enjoyed the individual support and tailored feedback I received from the APPTA Policy Challenge Team. I am very grateful to AGE-WELL and the AGE-WELL National Innovation Hub – APPTA for this amazing and rewarding experience."

- DR. VIVIANE JOSEWSKI, POST-DOCTORAL FELLOW

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE UPDATE

APPTA relaunched its Community of Practice, which allows government stakeholders with a vested interest in the aging population to come together on a recurring basis. This virtual community aims to stimulate knowledge exchange between government stakeholders across jurisdictions by sharing expertise in a safe and collaborative environment. Each session includes shared learnings from a guest speaker and is followed by a roundtable discussion to foster exchange and inform evidence-based policy change.

This year's topics focused on:

Reablement programming

Frameworks for continuing care

Equitable access to assistive technologies

LONG-TERM CARE CONNECTS

Implementation Science Team: Presence of family and informal caregivers in long-term care during COVID-19

This year, we are delighted to support the knowledge translation of the project *"Presence of family and information caregivers in long-term care during COVID-19"*, lead by Dr. Natasha Gallant at the University of Regina. This implementation project aims to develop, enforce, and evaluate interventions to successfully re-integrate caregivers into long-term care homes during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. Engaging with long-term care homes in New Brunswick, Ontario, and Saskatchewan, this project will contribute valuable lessons for practice and policy change in long-term care.

For more information about the project, **click here**.

PARTNERSHIPS

One of our core values at APPTA is that we go further when we work together. We know that the best approach to solving complex challenges is to work collaboratively toward new solutions. Over the past year, our team has formed important new partnerships in knowledge translation to ensure that research in aging and technology is accessible to larger audiences.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT:

Healthy Seniors Pilot Project

This year, APPTA and the Monitoring, Evaluation and Knowledge Transfer Unit launched a Healthy Seniors Pilot Project podcast series to highlight some of the amazing pilot projects being funded through the program. These projects include: Zoomers for All, Forward with Dementia, iGenNB Home Sharing, Stroke Navigation and much more!

Visit the podcast series page **here!**

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT:

New Brunswick COVID-19 Research Fund

In the summer of 2020, the New Brunswick Innovation Foundation (**NBIF**), the New Brunswick Health Research Foundation (NBHRF), and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) announced $846,707 in funding for 27 research projects across New Brunswick that would explore new ways to detect and treat COVID-19 and to assess its effects on people, communities and the economy. This past year, APPTA continued its support of this fund as a knowledge translation partner with ongoing KT support to project proponents, webinars focused on knowledge translation and informing policy with research, and sharing of other resources.

THE APPTA TEAM

THANKS YOU

FOR YOUR SUPPORT!