



Gerry | connect

Enhancing Social Connection and Independence in Aging Populations



MADE IN ONTARIO

Overview

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Presenters



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Age-Well Challenge Areas Addressed

1) Autonomy and Independence, 2) Staying Connected

- Epidemic of loneliness among older adults:
 - **Research has compared living with social isolation and loneliness equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day** ¹
 - As many as 41% of Canadians aged 50 years and older are at risk of social isolation ²
 - Up to 58% have experienced loneliness ²
- Most older adults **desire social connectivity, but are not technologically-savvy** enough to text and video-call with traditional applications

1. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1745691614568352>

2. <https://shorturl.at/opxy0>

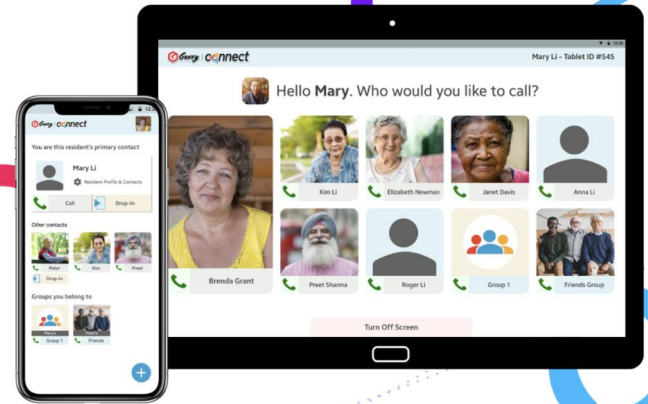
How was Gerry Connect conceived?

- Started in 2020, during the 2nd COVID-19 wave
- Gerry Health Labs as part of Toronto MicroElectronics Inc. was **invited by Ontario Health's Long-Term Care Planning Table to provide a solution for isolation in LTCs**
- Isolation in LTC evident by the cycles of outbreaks of the 1st COVID-19 wave
- Gerry Connect was developed through consultations and **pilot programs in actual LTC homes**
- Has since **expanded to retirement, home care and individuals aging-at home**

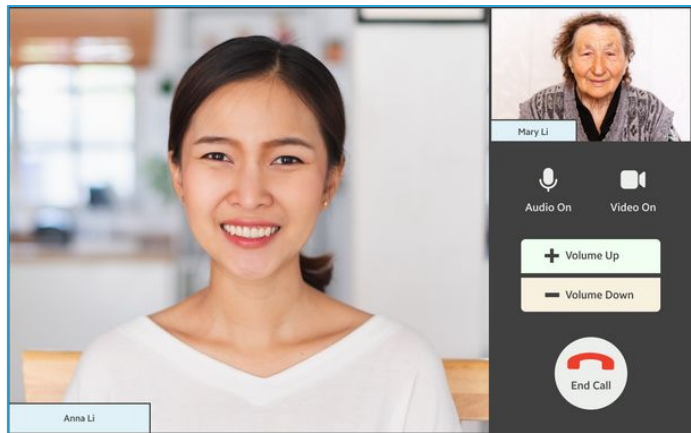
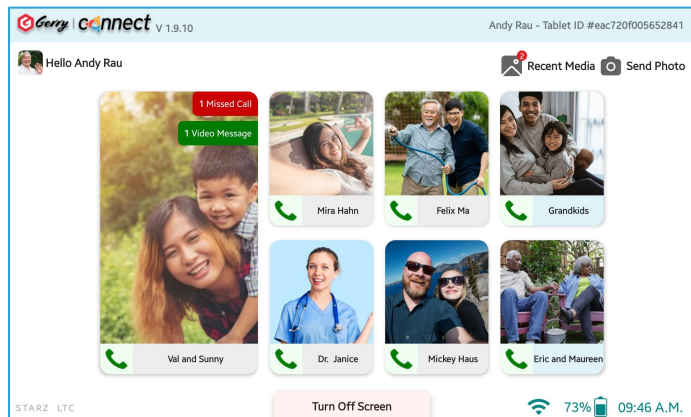


What is Gerry Connect?

- **Video-calling** platform designed **for older adults**
- Older adults are equipped with an easy-to-use tablet app
- **With one tap on the screen older adults can connect to those they love** in an easy, fast and secure manner
- **Companion app and Administrative Web Portal available** for family, friends and care providers
- Available on the Google Play and Apple App Store

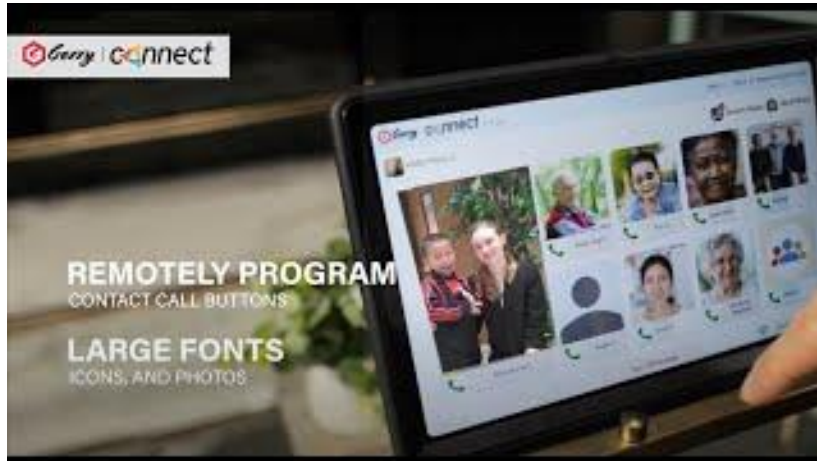


Gerry Connect Features



- Large icons and fonts
- One touch to make and receive calls
- Participate in **1:1 or group calls**
- **"Drop-in"** or leave messages
- **Share photos**, videos and YouTube links
- **Remotely program call buttons**
- Administrators can manage the application and **access call logs and statistics**

Watch Gerry Connect in Action



1-Minute Pitch

<https://youtu.be/KCEPvRhFkv0>

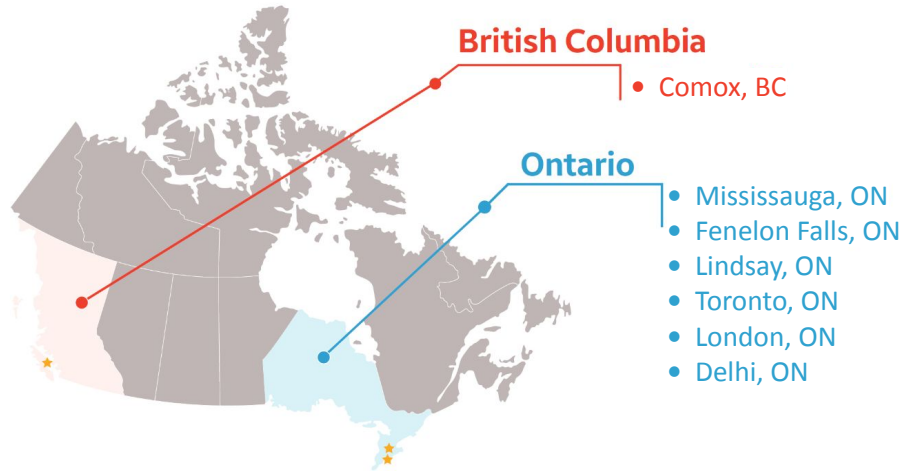


Full Promotional Video

<https://youtu.be/7trIUx4xqX4>

Gerry Connect Impact

- Impact and benefits evident with older adults who have used Gerry Connect
- Participants took advantage of the flexibility to connect on their own schedule



Older adults using Gerry Connect have connected with family and friends worldwide in:

- Alberta
- Manitoba
- Colorado
- California
- Texas
- Arkansas
- Switzerland
- Trinidad & Tobago
- Hong Kong

Gerry Connect Impact

Challenges Prior to Gerry Connect

- **Lengthy Process for Booking Visits:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, LTC staff spent approximately 4 hours a day scheduling resident and family engagement
- **Complicated log-in process and password juggling:** Various programs and devices being used to facilitate calls made for a lengthy process for logging in, and it was difficult to regularly see or hear loved ones
- **Busy staff schedules:** Due to staff competing priorities, older adults were only able to connect with their family and friends once a week

Gerry Connect Impact

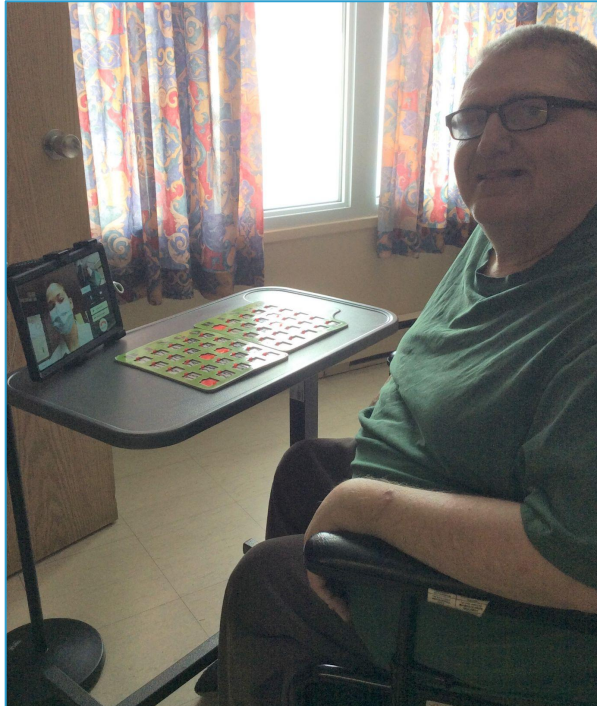
Ways Gerry Connect Has Enhanced Quality of Living



- **Increased Autonomy:** By making tech more comfortable and welcoming, older adults enjoyed more freedom to connect with loved ones independently
- **Decreased Levels of Loneliness:** Participants are more likely to have open and fun conversations because of the visual feedback

Gerry Connect Impact

Ways Gerry Connect Has Enhanced Quality of Living

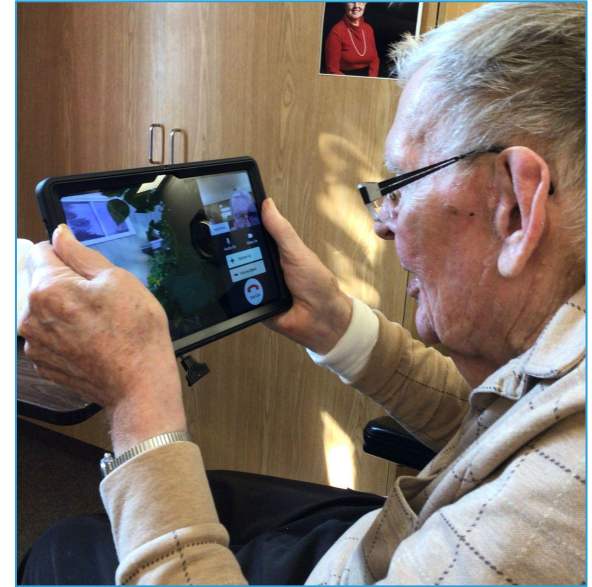


- **Reduced Stress Levels:** Older adults and their loved ones, as well as care providers felt more comfortable being away from each other, knowing they could connect quickly
- **Encourage Participation Despite Barriers:** Older adults can virtually participate in recreational activities from the comfort of their own rooms, even during outbreaks

Gerry Connect Impact

Ways Gerry Connect Has Enhanced Quality of Living

- **Decreased Burden of Staff Members:** No assistance required for making video-calls, and reduced requirement for arranging visits helped lower need for expensive staff resources
- **Primary Contacts or Administrators Can Verify Social Connectedness:** Call statistics can be viewed via the Administrative Web Portal to understand how often older adults are staying connected socially, and a care plan can be adjusted accordingly



What Makes Gerry Connect Different?

Gerry Connect

- ✓ Clean home screen: just photos & names
- ✓ One-tap to call
- ✓ Safe and secure: no need to worry about spam, scams, or robo-calls!
- ✓ Unique “drop-in” feature
- ✓ Remote programmability

Zoom/FaceTime/WhatsApp

- ✗ Small icons and names
- ✗ Multi-step process to start call
- ✗ Spam calls or messages may get past filters
- ✗ All calls require screen to be tapped
- ✗ Cannot be managed remotely

Testimonials

“With Gerry Connect, connections made through one simple tap can give residents back their **independence and strengthen their support system**. All features are designed for seniors and residents with **large fonts and an accessible display**. I believe Gerry Connect is the solution to social isolation issues residents face today. The chance to see a loved one through video calling can reconnect and improve everyday life for residents in long-term care.”

- Jenny S., Former Recreation Staff at Ontario LTC

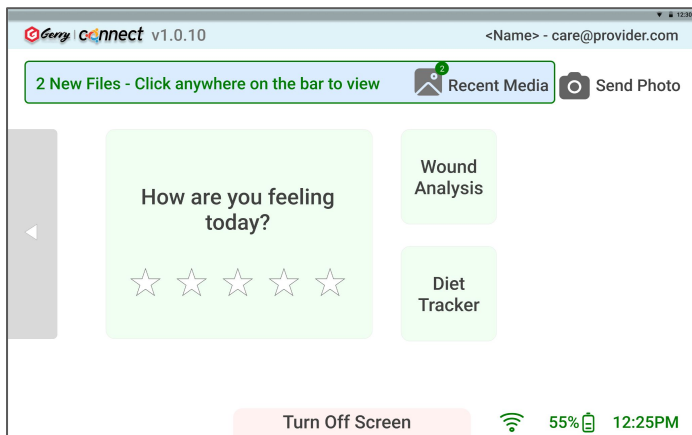
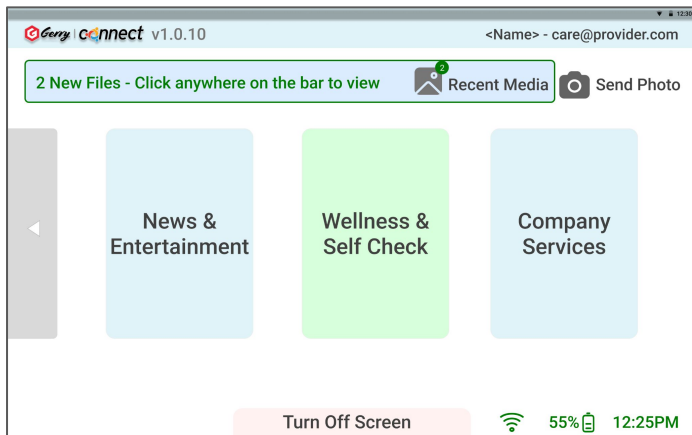


Testimonials

“We love using Gerry Connect with our dad. It is a great way to connect with him, not only because of the pandemic restrictions but because it is a 3 hour drive for us. My husband, had a stroke and his **mobility issues make travel a challenge**. Gerry Connect has been a great way to connect with his father-in-law.” - **Family Member in Ontario**

“Thanks for taking on Gerry Connect. With decreasing agility, it is wonderful for mom to **just press one button and be connected!** I love the “drop in” option as she doesn’t have to press any buttons!! This is a great tool, especially during this difficult pandemic time! Thanks again!”
- **Family Member in Ontario**

Looking Ahead - In Development



- Estimated Release: July 2024
- **One-stop service hub for older adults**
- **Connecting older adults to:**
 - **Health care providers** (e.g. wellness checks, wound-care analysis)
 - **Services** (e.g. food delivery)
 - **Entertainment** (e.g. Bingo)

Qualitative Workshop with VHA

- **VHA Home Healthcare is conducting ongoing trials** of our technology
- **Hosted a workshop with VHA** care providers and clients to uncover key challenges they face
- Primary challenges faced fell into 3 categories Gerry Connect can work towards addressing:
 - **Accessibility** (e.g. voice control)
 - **Inclusive Tech Add-Ons** (e.g. offline news)
 - **Integrating Clinical Info** (e.g. care plan)



Qualitative Workshop with VHA



Qualitative Workshop with VHA

- **Positive ratings for ease-of-use**
 - Both the Older Adults application (for tablets) and Companion application (for smartphones) were well-received
 - Drop-in feature was highly regarded as convenient
- Participants found that the app was useful and suggested adding such features as:
 - An **emergency-call button**
 - A **daily check-in** feature for care providers to note duties performed
 - Users want **more features for accessibility** to address a wide range abilities (e.g. for visual impairment)

Policy Considerations

- Understanding the distinction between social isolation and loneliness is crucial for effective policy interventions
 - **Social isolation** can be understood as a measurable lack in the number of relationships a person has
 - **Loneliness** is more subjective and can be understood as the feeling we get when our social relationships are lacking in terms of quality or quantity compared with what we expect them to be ³

3. <https://shorturl.at/fnpW1>

Policy Considerations

Why Are These Issues Important to Address?

- Approximately **50% of individuals aged over 60 are at risk of social isolation** ⁴
- One-third will experience some degree of loneliness later in life ⁴
- Policymakers must recognize the **critical health risks associated with these conditions**, including cognitive decline, depression, heart disease, and premature death ⁵



4. <https://shorturl.at/cCW08>

5. <https://rb.gy/zdl344>

Policy Considerations

- Research regarding the negative health effects of social isolation and loneliness **social isolation significantly increases the risk of premature death from all causes, comparable to risks like smoking, obesity, and physical inactivity** ⁶
- **Poor social relationships are linked to isolation or loneliness are associated with a higher risk of dementia** ⁶
- Policymakers are encouraged consider the diverse impacts of social isolation on health outcomes, and the importance of addressing these issues to **improve overall well-being and longevity in older populations**

6. <https://shorturl.at/kJMP3>

Thank-you for listening!



To learn more or to sign up,
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