



**Ontario
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Unit**

**Ontario SPOR SUPPORT Unit
Response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic**

February 2021

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on society is unprecedented in modern times and will likely pervade our lives for years to come. Never before has it been more essential to mobilize Canada's research excellence and innovation toward improving the efficiency of the health system and the health of Canadians. In response, OSSU's research centres have pivoted their focus to tackling critical issues and unmet needs regarding COVID-19 utilizing patient-oriented approaches to health and health services research. Their work will have impacts that span local, provincial and national borders.

The research centres listed below receiving funding from OSSU as well as from other funding agencies that contribute toward the collective impact of their work. OSSU's funding model allows centres to nimbly respond to time-sensitive critical issues facing the health care system. Below, you will find some of the critical work underway at OSSU research centres to combat the COVID-19 pandemic:

Applied Health Research Centre

The Applied Health Research Centre (AHRC) is an academic research organization at the Li Ka Shing Knowledge Institute of St. Michael's Hospital at Unity Health Toronto. The AHRC has expertise in clinical study design, pragmatic methodology, study operations and coordination, and biostatistics. The AHRC offers a comprehensive services package – a true one-stop-shop for patient-oriented clinical research.

Website: www.hubresearch.ca

AHRC is supporting 31 research projects ongoing or under development in critical questions regarding COVID-19 such as:

- the effectiveness of social distancing provisions and incentives;
- epidemiological studies of populations including children and families;
- mental health impacts of COVID on patients and hospital staff;
- therapeutics for the prophylaxis and management of COVID-19;
- a study evaluating the efficacy of oral lopinavir/ritonavir (LPV/r) as post-exposure prophylaxis against COVID-19, which has four (4) sites recruiting participants;
- a study to evaluate the efficacy of favipiravir chemoprophylaxis for control of outbreaks of COVID-19 in long-term care homes (LTCH), which has one (1) clinical site and three (3) LTCHs participating;
- a study to definitively determine if high dose heparin versus low dose heparin can improve outcomes in hospitalized COVID-19 patients with established abnormal blood clotting, which has 12 sites recruiting participants across seven (7) countries;



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- a study entitled “*Direct Income Support and Advice Negating Spread of Epidemic COVID-19: a randomized controlled trial*” - measuring the effects on COVID exposure and adherence to physical distancing guidance, which has completed enrollment and analysis; and
- a study to understand the effects of public health outbreak control policies and implementation on individuals and communities

Click [here](#) to learn more.

Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research

The Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research (CRaNHR) is an academic and applied health research centre at Laurentian University (Sudbury) with a mandate to conduct interdisciplinary research on rural health, with a growing focus on Indigenous and Francophone populations, particularly in rural and northern communities.

Website: www.cranhr.ca

CRaNHR’s work on the pandemic includes:

- providing data analysis and epidemiological support to the [Public Health Sudbury and Districts](#) on COVID-19 and related issues (renewed to April 2021);
- developing working models on health human capital planning for the [Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development](#). The Project is evolving to better incorporate community and patient perspectives, and is continuing to respond to challenges imposed by COVID-19 restrictions [Ontario Human Capital Research and Innovation Fund 2019-20];
- Reviewing programs to enhance emotional wellness for indigenous children in rural and remote communities as part of a CIHR COVID-19 Rapid Research Fund grant in mental health and substance abuse.
- Working with MLD Solutions Inc on understanding effective interactive digital content in support of mental health.
- Developing a collaborative, culturally-safe continuum of Indigenous mental health and addictions services during COVID-19 [CIHR- Operating Grant: COVID-19 Mental Health & Substance Use Service Needs and Delivery Opportunity]
- Development of communications plan to increase stakeholder engagement [to address health equity & outcomes initiatives for rural and northern populations]
- working with the Ontario Pharmacies Evidence Network (OPEN) to better understand vaccination capacity in Ontario;
- in collaboration with the Centre Francophone du Grand Toronto, CRaNHR will conduct a Francophone immigrant needs assessment in the Greater Toronto Area
- Rapid ad hoc health planning support for Ontario Health (north) and local Ontario Health Teams.
- CRaNHR researchers provide ad hoc research support and advice on studies in support of NOSM’s social accountability mandate—a mandate that explicitly recognizes the central role of community members.



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- supporting 14 research teams develop applications to CIHR and other funding organizations such as the Ministry of Health, [Physician Services Inc. \(PSI\) Foundation](#) and the [Northern Ontario Academic Medicine Association \(NOAMA\)](#)
- Funded projects:
 - Valuing Indigenous emotional wellness: Reviewing programs to enhance support for children in rural and remote communities [CIHR]
 - Understanding effective interactive digital content in support of mental health [MITACS]
 - Geospatial analysis of OLIS COVID-19 tests to determine temporal and demographic correlates at the neighbourhood level
 - Evaluating change in Seniors Housing needs using the Balance of Care Model for Ontario Health (North)
- Supporting the implementation of the InterRAI Pediatric measure in a northern Children's Treatment Centre

Click [here](#) to learn more.

Clinical Trials Ontario

Clinical Trials Ontario (CTO) is improving the clinical trials environment in Ontario by streamlining research ethics review and other processes to conduct trials, developing resources for investigators and sponsors with respect to patient engagement with trials, and engaging patients and the public in recognizing the health and economic benefits of clinical trials.

Website: <https://www.ctontario.ca>

During the pandemic, CTO has:

- processed more than 80 COVID-19 clinical trials with an average Research Ethics Boards (REBs) approval time of 15 days;
- provided enhanced training resources, on boarding and extended Helpdesk hours to support research teams, sponsors and REBs in submitting and reviewing urgent applications for COVID-19 research;
- disseminating pertinent information to the research community regarding REB requirements for COVID-19 submissions;
- launched a public [web portal](#) dedicated to COVID-19 resources and updates;
- begun planning for future updates to the system that will further enhance its tracking of research related to pandemics and other emergency situations

Click [here](#) to learn more.



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Health System Performance Network

The Health System Performance Network (HSPN) is a multi-university and multi-institutional network of Ontario researchers working closely with policy and provider decision makers, to find ways to improve management of the health system. The network includes investigators, trainees and project staff developing high quality evidence that is relevant to health system policy development and decision making for performance excellence.

Website: www.hspn.ca

During the pandemic, HSPN has been:

- Creating customized team-specific quantitative and qualitative reports on readiness to implement integrated care for Ontario Health Teams.
- Developing a provider experience survey for evaluating system-wide quadruple aim evaluations.
- Developing a series of guidance documents on implementing population health management.
- Developing indicators and a Learning Health System developmental evaluation plan for implementation in Ontario Health Teams in the Fall.
- Participated in a paper in BMJ on the equity of COVID and the pandemic response: <https://www.bmj.com/content/369/bmj.m2149>
- And co-facilitated in a webinar with the International Foundation for Integrated Care that was focused on the centrality of integrated care in response to COVID that included two patient panelists <https://vimeo.com/423320621>
- Received a new CIHR grant on evaluating implementation of a health information system using the learning health system model

Through its association with the Institute for Better Health, HSPN is also:

- conducting local forecasting/trending of pandemic infections, hospital capacity (e.g, ICUs, ventilators), and human resource capacity.
- worked on internal guidance documents for THP on a framework for opening to elective procedures as the pandemic continues (not as extensive as the Ontario Health report).
- Produced rapid cycle evidence reviews about rapid testing among health care workers, pandemic staffing models, and vaccine deployment models.
- undertaking analyses examining the outcomes of patients screened for COVID through in-person, virtual and drive through modalities (for individuals with both positive and negative test results).
- rapidly launching new clinical trials on investigational products to treat or prevent COVID-19 disease progression.
- launching many new research projects related to disease surveillance/epidemiology (e.g, in children), health service innovations (e.g, virtual care), patient/caregiver experience, AI/data modelling and others.
- Participating on the COVID-19 related provincial Science Advisory Table, Modelling Consensus Table, Evidence Synthesis Network, and Behavioral Science Working Group



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- Manuscript
http://scholar.google.ca/scholar_url?url=https%3A%2F%2Fjammi.utpjournals.press%2Fdoi%2Fabs%2F10.3138%2Fjammi-2020-0027&hl=en&sa=T&ct=res&cd=2&d=16357793698434290158&ei=zcYrYl-EDuaKywS55JSIBQ&scisig=AAGBfm33mhqeL0vxkzSrPMrM5DWI3XvdAw&nossl=1&ws=1287x568&at=Mass%20testing%20for%20asymptomatic%20COVID-19%20infection%20among%20health%20care%20workers%20at%20a%20large%20Canadian%20hospital

Click [here](#) to learn more.

ICES

ICES provides researchers, students and knowledge users with access to the largest and most comprehensive collection of health-related data in Ontario through ICES Data & Analytic Services (ICES DAS). ICES DAS offers several types of services to researchers who receive funding from the public sector including access to research-ready, linked health administrative data and analytic tools through a secure online desktop infrastructure.

Website: www.ices.on.ca

During the pandemic, ICES has been supporting the COVID response via 4 key tracks of work:

- 1) Conducting Applied Health Research Questions (AHRQs) to directly provide health system stakeholders with rapid analytics and evidence and researcher-led projects. To date, ICES has provided access to data or initiated studies related to COVID-19 for 103 projects. Titles of these projects are listed in table 1.
 - a. ICES has been providing **bi-weekly** reports to the provincial emergency Command Table on testing in Long Term Care and Retirement Homes.
 - b. ICES has been providing **weekly** reports to the Ministry of Health (MOH) on testing by key demographics in the province.
 - c. ICES has provided the Indigenous leadership organizations, including the Chiefs of Ontario and the Métis Nation of Ontario, with weekly reports of cases and testing in First Nations and Métis people. In addition, ICES has been developing reports for individual Indigenous Communities and urban Indigenous health services organizations upon request.
- 2) Obtaining key additional data:
 - a. Daily eHO/OH feeds of COVID test data linkable to ICES data repository (currently being received, cleaned and linked on a daily basis). The algorithm to clean these data has been made publicly available and adopted by key health system stakeholders such as the Ministry of Health (MOH).



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- b. Negotiated receipt of key outcome data (weekly feeds of hospital discharge and emergency department visit records from the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI).
 - c. Weekly feeds of Electronic Canadian Triage and Acuity Scale (eCTAS) data, emergency department triage data, from Ontario Health-Cancer Care Ontario (OH-CCO) until the end of October 2020, with negotiations underway for a six-month extension.
 - d. Negotiating monthly feeds of Critical Care Information System (critical and intensive care unit data) expected to be received shortly.
 - e. Additional data from MOH, including information regarding residential addresses and long-term care and retirement homes, with the negotiation of the integrated Public Health Information System (iPHIS) dataset underway.
- 3) Use ICES's section 45 authority under PHIPA to enable an external researcher who is responding to a question from the command table/Public Health Ontario (PHO) /MOH or other COVID related knowledge user to undertake a rapid analysis at ICES. No REB approval is needed under section 45. For example, this could support modelling analyses of several groups currently supporting the command table – early results have been published from one McMaster-based team (Age-dependence of healthcare interventions for SARS-CoV-2 infection in Ontario, Canada - <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.09.01.20186395v1>).
- 4) For machine learning researchers, we have similarly used ICES's section 45 authority to enable machine learning (ML) researchers to access to COVID-related datasets in the high-performance computing platform (HAIDAP) that ICES has built in partnership with Vector and HPC4Health. This model would allow for rapid data access and would be more flexible (enabling access to code repositories external to ICES) to accommodate ML researcher needs.
- 5) Support for additional COVID-19 related initiatives
- a. ICES continues to support the MOH initiative Ontario Health Data Platform (OHDP) formerly known as PANTHR.
 - i. ICES is contributing through sitting on advisory boards and will be providing raw data and cleaned and curated data and documentation into the platform where authorized.
 - ii. ICES analytic environments DAS, HAIDAP, ICES sites – formally integrated as part of the OHDP (referred to as OHDP-I) and available to all approved OHDP projects.
 1. The OHDP formally launched on July 15, 2020 with the OHDP-I operational. The second high-performance platform at Queen's (OHDP-Q) is in development.



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- 2. Currently there are 37 Ministry-approved OHDP projects, 36 of which will use an ICES platform (OHDP-I).
- iii. ICES negotiated for funding to support OHDP-I operations and enhancements to support the provincial COVID-19 response.
- b. ICES is providing daily feeds of cleaned OLIS COVID-19 data to Ontario Health-Cancer Care Ontario (OH-CCO).

Table 1. List of studies/initiatives related to COVID-19 initiated at ICES since March 01, 2020

Applied Health Research Questions (Knowledge User Driven)	
1.	Access to testing and hospital outcome data for COVID modeling; supporting MoH Command Table I
2.	Command Table reports: COVID testing results by key demographics (daily reports for LTC, weekly reports provincially)*
3.	COVID risk factors and surge-capacity planning in northern communities
4.	COVID-19 impact on economic activity in health-care sector [†]
5.	COVID-19 impact on vulnerable populations (weekly reporting)
6.	COVID-19 Testing in Ontario retirement homes
7.	How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected access to health care for sexual assault and domestic violence survivors?
8.	Impact of COVID-19 on outcomes of patients with kidney disease
9.	Mechanical ventilation and ECMO in elective procedures
10.	Modelling ICU utilization and ventilator demand for COVID-19 in the second wave
11.	Network effects, PPE shortages, and other key factors in the spread of COVID-19 in Ontario healthcare workers
12.	Proportion of adults/children living in Thunder Bay with COVID-tests, cases, ER visits [†]
13.	Surge-capacity planning for [a specific GTA] hospital
14.	Surge-capacity planning for Ontario for Public Health Ontario (PHO)
15.	Hotspot identification and analysis of COVID-19 (COVID-19 Hotspots)
16.	Forecasting the progression of COVID-19
17.	Access to testing and hospital outcome data for COVID modeling; supporting MoH Command Table II
18.	7 AHRQs supporting Indigenous community requests
ICES Investigator-led initiatives**	



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25.	Association between ABO blood type and coronavirus illness or SARS: case-control study
26.	Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on drug utilization: Special attention on potential treatments, NSAIDs, ACEs and ARBs
27.	Trends in wait-times for aortic stenosis treatment in Ontario, Canada
28.	COVID-19 in Immigrants [†]
29.	Association of Cardiovascular Risk Factors and Angiotensin Inhibitor Drug Use with COVID-19 Infection and Subsequent Adverse Cardiovascular Events
30.	Changing patterns of opioid agonist therapy use and associated outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic in Ontario
31.	Leveraging population-based data to validate mathematical modelling of COVID-19 transmission and inform population-specific interventions
32.	Health impacts of COVID-19 on individuals at risk of homeless
33.	The impact of the 2019 coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak on physicians in Ontario
34.	Epidemiological features and clinical outcomes of children with confirmed severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 in Ontario, Canada
35.	Statin Use and the Risk of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Related Harms
36.	Predictors of severe outcomes associated with respiratory viruses (Sub-study of: Leveraging population-based data to validate mathematical modelling of COVID-19 transmission and inform population-specific interventions)
37.	Informing Ontario Cardiac Resource Needs and Wait-time Consequences during the COVID-19 Pandemic
38.	Validating diagnostic codes for acute respiratory illnesses
39.	Evaluating associations between drug exposure and coronavirus detection in suspected lung infection: a pharmacopeia-wide association study
40.	Prediction of Severe Outcomes Among Covid Patients: A Machine learning approach
41.	Impact of COVID-19 on the health care use, quality of care, and outcomes among long-term care residents with varying frailty levels
42.	Real-world cardiovascular safety of hydroxychloroquine for the treatment or prevention of COVID-19 infection
43.	Evaluation of admissions for stroke, myocardial infarction, and death as well as adherence to cardiovascular medications during COVID19
44.	Characterizing the burden of surgical care in CoVID-19 positive patients
45.	Health impacts of COVID-19 on snowbirds



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46.	Creation of a Learning Health System for Patients with Cardiovascular Diseases during the COVID-19
47.	Primary Care Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic in Ontario
48.	Cardiac surgery triaging tools to reduce mortality and unplanned harm during the COVID-19 crisis
49.	COVID-19 Cancer Surgery and Infection
50.	Cancer Surgery and COVID19: Infection Rate, Processes and Outcomes
51.	Duration of COVID 19 Viral Shedding
52.	ONDRI –Understanding the impact of COVID-19 in persons with neurodegenerative diseases
53.	Analytic approaches to understanding Covid-19 infections and outcomes in the population
54.	Cancer-related Health Care Utilization and Outcomes During the Current (COVID-19) and Prior Pandemics
55.	Prevalence, predictors and downstream outcomes of myocardial injury in patients with COVID-19 infection
56.	COVID-19 and diabetes: Clinical Outcomes and Navigated NEtwork Care Today - the CONNECT study
57.	Impact of COVID19 on surgery in Ontario
58.	Patterns of Mental Health Service Use and Outcomes for Postpartum Women in Ontario During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic
59.	Baseline Characteristics, Multimorbidity and Outcomes Among Patients with Laboratory-Confirmed COVID-19 in Ontario
60.	Family Physician Virtual Visits during COVID-19
61.	The risk of COVID-19 infection and its related outcomes in patients with immune-mediated inflammatory diseases (IMID) – A population-based study
62.	Outpatient Care for COVID-19
63.	A serial cross-sectional study of acute care transfer from long-term care: Evaluating the impact of COVID-19
64.	Comparing Risk Factors and Prediction for Acute Respiratory Infections and Covid-19
65.	Exploring excess deaths in older women and men during the COVID-19 pandemic: Making the most vulnerable visible
66.	Predicting survival of long-term care residents with COVID-19 infection
67.	COVID-19, Anti-Coagulation, and Adverse Outcomes (CACAO)
68.	COVID-19 in Patients with Solid Tumor and Hematologic Malignant Diseases in Ontario
69.	The Effects of the Health System Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic on Chronic Disease Management
70.	Estimating Excess deaths due to covid-19



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71.	Impact of COVID-19 on frail population in Ontario: has the language an effect on the health outcomes?
72.	Outcomes of Non-COVID-19 Hospitalized Patients in Ontario During the First Six Month of the Pandemic
73.	Telemedicine use among rural residents across three countries
74.	Cancer Outcomes resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic resource reallocation in Ontario
75.	Impact of COVID-19 on Antibiotic Use and Resistance
76.	Incidence of COVID-19 among childhood cancer survivors in Ontario
77.	The response of provincial health systems to COVID-19: Service provision and costs across health sectors, First Nations, and other populations
78.	The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on virtual care use, total healthcare utilization and spending, and patient outcomes
79.	Examining the Effects of COVID-19 on Alternate Level of Care and Care Trajectories: A Time Series and Longitudinal Study
80.	Improving the care of older adults living with dementia across Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic
81.	The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the rates of preterm birth, stillbirth, and severe maternal morbidity in Ontario
82.	Risk of COVID-19 infection and complications with diabetes drugs
83.	Improving Canadian Outcomes Research On the Novel SARS-CoV-2 using Analytics: the CORONA Consortium - Project 1
84.	Improving Canadian Outcomes Research On the Novel SARS-CoV-2 using Analytics: the CORONA Consortium - Project 2
85.	Improving Canadian Outcomes Research On the Novel SARS-CoV-2 using Analytics: the CORONA Consortium - Project 3
86.	Deferred Care Outcomes in Canadian Children and Youth: Measuring and Mitigating Risk during COVID-19
87.	Pediatric Primary Care Access during the COVID-19 Pandemic
88.	Improving prescribing of medications at the end-of-life in long-term care facilities during and after the COVID-19 pandemic
89.	Ontario Real-Time COVID Data and Analytics Collaborative ("howmyflattening.ca")
DAS Requests**	
90.	Sex-specific profile of patients admitted to intensive care units with COVID-19: Primary prevention to reduce healthcare burden
91.	Impact of COVID-19 on Surgical Care in Ontario- Identification of Gaps in Essential Procedures and Strategies to Enhance Surgical
92.	The Ontario Health Study - Covid-19 Ancillary Study
93.	Canadian COVID-19 Emergency Department Registry (DASH 2020-008) †



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94.	Multimorbidity and Other Factors Associated with Susceptibility to and Outcomes of Covid-19: Focus on Long-Term Care Homes
95.	Risk factors for acquisition of or serious illness due to Covid-19 infection: an analysis within the Canadian Study of Diet, Lifestyle, and Health
96.	Vulnerable and Left Behind: Autism Community Experiences in Canada During COVID-19
97.	COVID-19 and cancer care disruptions: effects on healthcare utilization and health outcomes in Ontario
98.	COVID-19 in Rheumatoid Arthritis: A comparative cross-sectional study on risk and predictors of infection, admission and mortality and effect of immunomodulating treatments
99.	Interrupted Time Series Study of the effects of COVID 19 global pandemic on emergency room visits and mortality to non-COVID related illnesses
100.	Examining risk of infection in patients with psoriasis
101.	Association between SARS-CoV-2 infection and disease severity among men on androgen deprivation therapy for prostate cancer [†]
102.	Palliative care and health care utilization outcomes at the end of life for patients with cancer before and after the COVID-19
103.	COVID-19 Windsor/Essex County [†]

* Original request resulted in sub-studies

** Project documentation/request completed

[†] This project is in early stages (no Privacy Impact Assessment or Confirmation of Feasibility)

Click [here](#) to learn more.

INSPIRE – Primary Health Care OSSU

INSPIRE – Primary Health Care OSSU focuses on Primary Health Care (PHC) research, assisting Ontario researchers with primary health care-specific research consultation, knowledge translation and exchange (KTE), capacity building activities and patient engagement resources.

During the pandemic, INSPIRE-PHC OSSU:

- Has provided ongoing pandemic information and analysis support to health-system decision makers, providers and other stakeholders; Following studies all nearing completion working with Ontario primary care knowledge users
 - Rachele Ashcroft, KU:AFHTO: Kavita Mehta. Recommendations for Patient-Centered Telemedicine : Learning from patients’ experiences with synchronous virtual primary care encounters during the COVID-19 pandemic
 - Amanda Terry. KU:MOH-Digital Health: Kathryn May. Creating an Action Plan for the Use of Artificial Intelligence: COVID-19 Pandemic and Recovery in Primary Health Care in Ontario



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- Tara Kiran. KU: Ontario Health:-David Kaplan. Keeping Doors Open: Family Physicians and who continues in person visits during pandemic
- Catherine Donnelly. KU:AFHTO: Sandeep Gill. Understanding how primary care teams have responded to COVID-19 restrictions to support access for patients and communities
- INSPIRE-PHC Project Updates:
 - **Simone Dahrouge - RCT Patient navigation program:** Our study seeks to understand patients' expectations and experiences with telephone and video appointments during the pandemic. Findings from our study will generate recommendations to health-system decision makers, providers, and other stakeholders on how virtual care can be used to best support patients in Ontario. Currently, we have received 295 English survey respondents and 11 French survey respondents. In addition, we have conducted 39 English interviews and 3 French interviews, with the goal of completing 45 English interviews and 10 French interviews.
 - **Judith Brown - Engaging Family Physicians in OHTs:** This qualitative study using grounded theory is designed to explore the development and implementation of OHTs. With the arrival of COVID-19, we made a major shift in our focus, now examining the impact of the pandemic on the development and implementation of OHTs. Twenty interviews have been conducted with key informants, reflecting 5 regions of Ontario – N, S, E, W, and Central. These key informants have been primary care leads at OHTs, members of the COVID-19 Provincial Primary Care Advisory Table, and Ontario Health primary care representatives. The data analysis has been iterative and interpretive, and conducted by a team of 4 researchers at Western University. Key findings to date:
 1. The pandemic generally accelerated OHT development and was observed, for example, through the participation in securing PPE and staffing assessment centres. However, for some, Year 1 objectives shifted to pandemic priorities.
 2. In some OHTs, work on governance issues was deferred as they worked on specific tasks related to COVID-19.
 3. The pandemic further established and strengthened the development of primary care organizations/collaboratives, as well as their connections to the OHT. Many participants have suggested support for an umbrella primary care organization, similar to the OHA.
 4. Primary care leadership appears to be evolving from being champions who promote change to leaders who co-create change. This requires time and commitment. Consequently, the issue of remuneration has been expressed repeatedly as volunteerism is not sustainable.
 5. There appears to be a shift from describing the process as engaging primary care to investing in primary care, which is a two-way street and has more resonance with primary care providers.
 6. The pandemic has generated some remarkable innovations, e.g. family medicine setting up a respiratory assessment centre, which need to be sustained in the future.



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- **Michelle Greiver - POPULAR:** 6 practiced based EMR Networks affiliated with Dept of family medicine and the Alliance now part of INSPIRE PHC. Work in conjunction with AFHTO, CSPO and OCFP.
- **Clare Liddy – eCONSULT:** Survey of primary care and eConsult and wait times- psychiatry, mental health addictions, and frailty came up with major challenge points. Working in this space- numbers for cases of frail patients and practical examples coming out of this. Conducting a taxonomy of eConsult cases related to COVID; developing a survey of OHTs to support implementation of eConsult; drafting a protocol to survey long-term care homes in order to assess the level of Health Information Technology available in their facilities
- **Rick Glazier-COVID and primary care study- virtual and office care:**
 - 80 % drop in office visits
 - 46 fold increase in virtual care mapped by physician networks.
 - A lot of variation by networks across the province
 - CMAJ publication -Feb.8, 2021.
- **Mike Green-Attachment metrics for primary care:** Primary care report to be distributed to all OHTs. Key to planning and addressing primary care access in roll out of OHT during pandemic. Key outreach to multiple MOH branches and professional boards, associations.
- ARC program Patient Advisory Committee composed of individuals from across the province who have lived experience with the health care system. Members on the committee were carefully selected to ensure representation of Ontario’s diverse communities. We consult our Patient Advisory Committee on a regular basis (approximately once every two months) throughout the research process and have helped with developing our research tools, recruitment, and identifying key areas to address in our study. We will also be presenting our initial findings from our surveys and interviews for their feedback and guidance.
- Listing of COVID-related peer-reviewed publications
 - **Shifts in office and virtual primary care during the early COVID-19 pandemic in Ontario, Canada.** Richard H. Glazier, Michael E. Green, Fangyun C. Wu, Eliot Frymire, Alexander Kopp, Tara Kiran. CMAJ Feb 2021, 193 (6) E200-E210; DOI: 10.1503/cmaj.202303 <https://www.cmaj.ca/content/193/6/E200>
 - In press
 - **Development and validation of an algorithm using health administrative data to define patient attachment to primary care providers:** Journal of Health Organization and Management. 2021. Liisa Jaakkimainen, Imaan Bayoumi, Kamila Premji, Tara Kiran, : Shahriar Khan, Eliot Frymire, Michael E. Green,
 - Ashcroft, R., Donnelly, C., Gill, S., Dancey, M., Lam, S., Grill, A., & Mehta, K. **The rapid pivot of primary care during the COVID-19 pandemic: results from a provincial-wide survey.** Healthcare Policy.
- Presentations
 - 4 presentations at the North American Primary Care Research Group.

Click [here](#) to learn more.



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McMaster Health Forum

The McMaster Health Forum co-produces and supports the use of patient-oriented research about system issues; elicits patient values to inform system decisions; designs and evaluates approaches to combining evidence and values with other influences on the decision-making process; and, involves the full range of policy-makers and stakeholders in all aspects of its work and supports their use of what's learned through rigorous knowledge-translation approaches that are appropriate to the system level.

During the pandemic, the **McMaster Health Forum** (www.mcmasterforum.org):

- jointly co-leads the secretariat, with its partner at the Ottawa Hospital Research Unit, for the global [COVID-19 Evidence Network to support Decision-making](#) (COVIDEND), which currently has 57 and counting of the world's leading evidence synthesis groups (major accomplishments to date listed below:
- in January 2021 we launched **COVID-END in Canada**, funded by the Government of Canada through a one-year \$1 mil. CIHR grant. It is co-led with the Ottawa Hospital Research Unit, [SPOR Evidence Alliance](#) and Cochrane Canada, includes with 40+ of Canada's leading evidence synthesis groups, and provides resources specific to Canadian decision-makers and researchers:
 - dedicated section on the COVID-END website (covid-end.org) including a '[Keep current](#)' section
 - innovative [new evidence synthesis products](#) (rapid evidence profiles in 4 hours to 3 days, and living evidence profiles that are updated regularly, such as those on vaccine roll-out and long-term care crisis-management and renewal
 - subscription available for:
 - [Canadian spotlights](#) published twice a month
 - [Global spotlights](#) published twice a month
 - [Horizon scans](#) published once a month
 - webinars available [here](#)
 - presentations available [here](#)
- Other major accomplishments
 - resources to support decision-makers:
 - 1) an [inventory of 'best evidence syntheses'](#) through which you can immediately find the best available (i.e., most up-to-date, highest quality, and transparently presented) evidence syntheses for each of: [public-health measures](#), [clinical management](#), [health-system arrangements](#), and [economic and social responses](#);
 - 2) [horizon scans for emerging issues](#) to proactively identify long-term, recurring and emergent issues that need to be prioritized in efforts to synthesize the best available research evidence to support decision-making about COVID-19;
 - 3) a [COVID-END Community](#) to facilitate large-scale collaboration and shared learning within the community of those supporting decision-making;



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- 4) a [living hub of COVID-19 knowledge hubs](#) to identify organizations that are supporting decision-making with a specific topic or sectoral focus, with a specific type of resource (e.g., recommendations, evidence syntheses or data), and/or with a specific geographic or linguistic scope; and
 - 5) additional supports: a [guide to COVID-19 evidences sources](#) (although we recommend starting with our inventory before searching other sources), [resources to help you package research evidence](#) for decision-makers, a description of a [model for responding to decision-makers' requests for research evidence](#) in very short turn-around times, and [tips and tools for responding to decision-makers' needs](#)
- resources to support researchers:
 - 6) [priorities for new syntheses and guidelines](#);
 - 7) [resources for those considering and conducting COVID-19 evidence syntheses](#);
 - and
 - 8) [resources for those considering and developing COVID-19 guidelines](#)
 - an engagement strategy to ensure that citizen perspectives are woven in COVID-END work (and now has citizen representation at the partner's table and as part of the horizon-scanning panel)
 - at the request of WHO, being part of the secretariat for the WHO Evidence Collaborative for COVID-19
 - we have a representative (John Lavis) on the Lancet COVID-19 Commission's Task force for Public Health Measures to Suppress the Pandemic
 - three published papers: in the [Cochrane Library Supplement](#), in [The Lancet](#), and in the [Science Magazine](#)
- has developed, in its role as co-lead of RISE, a rapid-response model to support Ontario policymakers and stakeholders with the best available evidence about COVID-19 in timelines as short as 3-4 hours and to date has produced 24 [rapid evidence profiles](#)

MIRA | Collaborative for Health & Aging

The MIRA | Collaborative for Health & Aging brings together world-class researchers from the McMaster Institute for Research on Aging (MIRA) and the McMaster School of Nursing's Aging, Community and Health Research Unit (ACHRU) with a mandate to support optimal aging in Ontario through capacity building and advance Ontario's health care system by using an integrated, coordinated, and people-centred approach. The collaborative seeks to address the unique needs of older adults and their caregivers through resources, consultation supports, data access, and technical services in patient-oriented research in aging. Website: <https://mira.mcmaster.ca/research/research-centres/mira-collaborative-for-health-aging>

During the pandemic, the MIRA | Collaborative on Health & Aging:



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- opened an additional offering of a free online course entitled “*Caregiving Essentials Course*” to support caregivers; providing content to the [McMaster Optimal Aging Portal](#) that helps older adults stay active and engaged while practicing physical distancing. The course also won a 2020 Program Award from the Canadian Association for University Continuing Education;
- published guidelines for providers caring for [COPD patients](#) in the Canadian Journal of Respiratory, Critical Care, and Sleep Medicine;
- published guidance for Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Speech-Language Pathologists and Assistants on [Rehabilitation for Patients with COVID-19](#) from the School of Rehabilitation Science, McMaster University;
- provided content for a publication entitled “[Being Prepared in the Time of COVID-19](#)” for The Conversation Starter (Institute for Healthcare Improvement);
- presented as part of 10 webinars for audiences including the McMaster Health Forum, Diabetes Action Canada, OSSU, and Pallium Canada on topics including the use of big data to understand the COVID-19 pandemic, long-term care in Ontario, hospital-to-home transitions, and engaging with patients and caregivers while social distancing measures and visiting restrictions are in place;
- partnered with the Hamilton Public Library to offer talks for community members on aging research, beginning with “[Navigating Life During Personal Disruption](#),” which will be offered both live and through the library’s YouTube channel;
- contributed to a [COVID-19 Rapid Evidence Profile #3](#) (27 April 2020) on asymptomatic screening to identify COVID-19 case and to prevent transmission;
- contributed to development of a toolkit, fact sheets and resources for identifying vulnerable home care patients – available from Big Data and Geriatric Models of Care: title: [DIVERT-CARE, Supporting Home Care Cardiorespiratory Patients during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#);
- Created the [COVID Caregiver Back-Up Plan](#) tool, to support primary caregivers to communicate important information about caring for their loved ones, especially in situations where their regular caregiving schedule has been interrupted or altered;
- participated in various [news articles](#) and media interviews for radio and television with local and national reach;
- launched CLSA-COVID Study: National Study Collecting Data on Aging Adults’ Experience during COVID-19 supported by the McMaster Institute for Research on Aging, McMaster University and Juravinski Research Institute
 - Video Link: <https://www.clsa-elcv.ca/coronavirus>
- Launched CLSA Seroprevalence Study, investigating age- and sex-specific prevalence of COVID-19 across Canada (by province) supported by the COVID Immunity Task Force. This study will collect samples from CLSA’s existing participant pool
 - Video Link: <https://www.clsa-elcv.ca/coronavirus>
- the CLSA research platform will be used to launch a CLSA COVID brain study, investigating the impact of COVID-19 on brain health. This study will draw from the pool of suspected or confirmed positive participants from the seroprevalence study and study the impacts of COVID-19 on older adults’ brains through MRI and cognitive testing;
- provided 3 research projects with catalyst funding through the Labarge Centre for Mobility in Aging COVID-19 Grant;



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- supported 8 research project applications to various funding agencies and organizations;
- developed the “MIRA Ideas Exchange”, a researcher discussion session that provides an opportunity for MIRA members to discuss and work through the challenges and opportunities created by conducting their research during COVID-19;
- developed Collaborative webinar series to highlight the research by Collaborative members at McMaster University that has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes research that has been developed to address the COVID-19 pandemic directly (e.g. treatment, prevention, screening for those who have or are at risk of contracting COVID-19; LTC; health care workers), or indirectly (e.g. displaced health care services, older adult priority populations, marginalized populations, pivots in current research programs in aging) and the patient engagement tools, strategies and approaches that are being used or adapted in the context of COVID-19.
- Webinar: Gannan R, Maybee A, Smith M. OSSU Patient Partners Webinar | Patient partnership and COVID-19 Research in Ontario. OSSU. July 9, 2020.
- Webinar: Ganann R, Beleno R. Engaging Patient and Public Research Partners in the Aging, Community & Health Research Unit (ACHRU) Community Partnership Program for Diabetes Self-Management for Older Adults – Canada. Diabetes Action Canada. July 8, 2020.
- Webinar: Whitmore C [Trainee]. 2020 CLSA Webinar Series: Engaging in Research on Aging: How trainees and researchers connect with the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging. CLSA. June 30, 2020.
- Invited Presentation: Markle-Reid M. Optimizing hospital to home transitions for older adults with stroke and multimorbidity: A pragmatic effectiveness-implementation trial of an integrated transitional care intervention. Hamilton/Burlington Stroke Community Re-Engagement Network. Saint Elizabeth Health Care, Hamilton, ON. June 12, 2020.
- Webinar: Gauvin FP, Markle-Reid M, McAiney C, Ganann R. Part 2 – Insights from the COVID-19 Response. McMaster Health Forum Top Ten Webinars. June 11, 2020.
- Webinar: Gauvin FP, Markle-Reid M, McAiney C, Ganann R. Part 1 - Older Adults with Complex Health and Social Needs. McMaster Health Forum Top Ten Webinars. June 9, 2020.
- in palliative care, the McMaster University School of Nursing project: *Strengthening a Palliative Approach in Long-Term Care* (SPA-LTC) (S Kaasalainen), includes the following:
 - Video: Strengthening a palliative approach in long-term care, known as SPA-LTC, is about making sure that people with life-limiting illnesses have more opportunities to experience a high quality of life from the moment they enter long-term care to the day of their death. Video Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PjqAXo_4mLw&t=7s
 - Video: The value of a Palliative Approach to Care video reflects on how the program SPA-LTC can help long-term care homes to implement a palliative approach to care. Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z0UmUdUe2G8>
 - Resource Library: Our national team of experts has developed a comprehensive collection of evidence-based resources for families, healthcare providers and those providing care to encourage a palliative approach in long-term care. Visit our website: www.spaltc.ca, where our virtual Resource Library is continuously updated: <https://spaltc.ca/resource-library/>



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- Policy: During the pandemic, the SPA-LTC team has led a position statement for the Alzheimer Society of Canada about End-of-Life Care in Dementia during COVID and written opinion pieces to engage the public. Available from: <https://www.thespec.com/opinion/contributors/2020/05/14/moral-distress-lets-take-this-time-to-help-the-helpers-during-nurses-week.html>
- 2020-2021 Kaasalainen, S. (PI), McCloskey, R., Wickson-Griffiths, A., Neil-Sztramko, S., Baxter, S. (PIs); Dobbins, M., Boamah, S., Durepos, P., Hunter, PV., Markle-Reid, M., McCleary, L., Sussman, T., Siu, H., Arya, A., Holroyd-Leduc, J., Thompson, G., Venturato, L. Implementing and Scaling Up the Palliative Care Toolkit in Long-Term Care During COVID. Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Implementation Science Teams: Teams Strengthening Pandemic Preparedness in Long-Term Care Funding Opportunity, \$149,998.
- Gauvin, F.P., Waddell, K., Ganann, R., Heald-Taylor, G., Markle-Reid, M., McAiney, C., Lavis, J. Evidence brief: *Improving hospital-to-home transitions for older adults with complex health and social needs in Ontario*. Hamilton, Canada: McMaster Health Forum, December 9, 2020.
- presentations at the MIRA and Labarge Research Showcase, Dec 7th, 2020:
 - Pivoting During a Global Pandemic | Andrew Costa
 - Leveraging MIRA Funding | Marla Beauchamp
 - InHamilton study: An intergenerational longitudinal cohort findings from the COVID-19 study | Divya Joshi, Meghan Kenny, Andrea Gonzalez, Parminder Raina on behalf of the InHamilton Team
 - #Caremongering: A community-led social movement to address health and social needs during COVID-19 | Hsien Seow, Kayla McMillan, Margaret Civak, Daryl Bainbridge, Alison van der Wal, Christa Haanstra, Jodeme Goldhar, Samantha Winemaker
 - The IMPACT of COVID-19 and social distancing on mobility and participation in community-dwelling older adults living in Hamilton, Ontario: A longitudinal telesurvey | Marla Beauchamp, Brenda Vrkljan, Heather Keller, Luciana Macedo, Elisabeth Vesnaver, Janie Wilson, Nazmul Sohel, Renata Kirkwood, Paula Gardner, Bruce Newbold, Darren Scott
 - The McMaster – Monitoring My Mobility – MacM3 project: Pivoting in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic | Marla Beauchamp, Brenda Vrkljan, Qiyin Fang, Paul McNicholas, Bruce Newbold, Paula Gardner, Ayse Kuspinar, Julie Richardson, Manaf Zargoush, Darren Scott, and Parminder Raina
 - The EMBOLDEN study: COVID-19 impacts and responses | Rebecca Ganann, Sarah Neil-Sztramko, Stuart Phillips, Bruce Newbold, Elizabeth Alvarez, Courtney Kennedy, Ayse Kuspinar, Caroline Moore
 - Empowering older adults with real-time cybercrime alert system during COVID-19 | Xuecong Lu, Milena Head, Brenda Vrkljan, Ridha Khedri
 - INITIAL Test for fall risk Assessment in The Elderly and priority Extensions to examine virtual assessment in the context of COVID-19 (INITIATE-EX) | Julie Reid, Stephanie Saunders, Ava Mehdipour-Ataei, Ayse Kuspinar, Marla Beauchamp
- the CLSA website and the CLSA COVID-19 Dashboard. Available from: <https://dashboard.clsa-elcv.ca/baseline/clsa-dashboard-en/>



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- Publications
 - For-profit long-term care homes and the risk of COVID-19 outbreaks and resident deaths. Nathan M. Stall, Aaron Jones, Kevin A. Brown, Paula A. Rochon and Andrew P. Costa. CMAJ August 17, 2020 192 (33) E946-E955; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.201197>.
 - Kevin A. Brown, Aaron Jones, Nick Daneman, Adrienne K. Chan, Kevin L. Schwartz, Gary E. Garber, Andrew P. Costa, Nathan M. Stall. Association Between Nursing Home Crowding and COVID-19 Infection and Mortality in Ontario, Canada. JAMA Intern Med. 2021;181(2):229-236. DOI: <https://doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2020.6466>.
- Media News
 - Hamilton Spectator. A Costa. What experts say needs to change in long-term care in COVID-19. Feb 3, 2021. Click [here](#) to access story.
 - The Toronto Star. A Costa. The problem with profits: As Ontario's long-term-care homes stagger under a COVID death toll of more than 3,000, some say it's time to shut down for-profit homes for good. Jan 26, 2021. Click [here](#) to access story.
 - CBC News. A Costa. Out of date design of long-term care homes left residents more vulnerable to COVID-19: study. July 23, 2020. Click [here](#) to access story.
 - Global News. A Costa. More staff, better layouts: how to make long-term care homes 'good living'. May 31, 2020. Click [here](#) to access story.
- Policy Briefs
 - Nathan M. Stall, Kevin A. Brown, Aaron Jones, Andrew P. Costa, Vanessa Allen, Adalsteinn D. Brown, Gerald A. Evans, David N. Fisman, Jennie Johnstone, Peter Jüni, Kamil Malikov, Antonina Maltsev, Allison McGeer, Paula A. Rochon, Beate Sander, Brian Schwartz, Samir K. Sinha, Kevin Smith, Ashleigh R. Tuite, Michael P. Hillmer on behalf of the Ontario COVID-19 Science Advisory Table. COVID-19 and Ontario's long-term care homes. Science Briefs of the Ontario COVID-19 Science Advisory Table. December 15, 2020. 2020;1(5). <https://doi.org/10.47326/ocsat.2020.01.05.1.0>.
- Markle-Reid M, Raina P, Abelson J, Ganann G, Costa A, Griffith L, Vrkljan B, Wilson M. Patient Engagement in Hamilton Ontario Health Team including COVID-19 Priorities. MIRA | Collaborative [virtual meeting]. Feb 25th, 2021.
- Course on COVID-19 Infection Prevention from McMaster Continuing Education: has developed a new, short free online course on *Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) for Caregivers and Families* supported by The Ontario Caregiver Organization and the Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement (Available: <https://mcmastercce.ca/infection-prevention-and-control>), an additional offering from the series on "*Caregiving Essentials Course*" (Available: <https://www.mcmastercce.ca/caregiving-essentials>). Further detail is found [here](#) in the press release.
- Webinar: Vrkljan B, Beauchamp M. Pivoting a large-scale aging research initiative due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Feb 26th, 12 – 1 pm. MIRA | Collaborative Webinar Series. Click [here](#) for more details.

Click [here](#) to learn more



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Ontario Brain Institute

The Ontario Brain Institute (OBI) is pioneering an open-source, “team science” approach to brain health. OBI integrates the will, knowledge and resources that creates new connections across research, commercialization and care.

Website: www.braininstitute.ca

During the pandemic, OBI has:

- hosted an online conversation with CAMH experts about coping with the stress of the COVID-19 pandemic and tap into the power of being present.
- participated in a TVO.org interview with Yona Lunsky, director of the Azrieli Adult Neurodevelopmental Centre at CAMH, about how mindfulness can help those with autism — and the ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic may be affecting the mental health of people with autism and their families.
- hosted a webinar entitled “Taking Care of Body, Mind & Soul in the COVID-19 Pandemic” for people living with or caring for those with cognitive or motor problems from Alzheimer’s disease, MCI, Parkinson’s disease, ALS, Frontotemporal dementia, Stroke or Aging.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

Ontario Child Health SUPPORT Unit

The Ontario Child Health SUPPORT Unit (OCHSU) – led by The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) and the Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) –provides patient-oriented clinical research and data management support to researchers to enhance capacity in child health clinical research in Ontario.

Website: www.ochsu.ca

During the pandemic, OCHSU:

- through its CHEORI Patient Engagement in Research team, supported Family Leaders to complete 28 project reviews on proposed CHEO COVID-19 research projects that were submitted for internal funding;
- Research Patient and Family Advisory Committee completed a consultation for the project- Implementing a support intervention for parents during the COVID-19 mental health crisis. This project team is also working with OCHSU on methodology and recruitment.
- through its CHEORI Patient Engagement in Research team, provided letters of support and facilitated access to the PFAC (Research Patient and Family Research Family Advisory Council) to facilitate a consultation service for the project “Natural Evolution of Serum Antibodies in Children and Adults with SARS-CoV-2 and Household Contacts.” which was then awarded close to one million dollars in funding <https://www.cheoresearch.ca/about-us/media/news/research-team-receives-almost-1-million-for-covid-19-study/>.



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- The TARGet Kids! COVID-19 Study of Children and Families now has 959 subjects enrolled from 739 families. This project continues to enroll participants and has just received funding for serology testing which is now being added to their protocol and consent form. They are also working on a school questionnaire which will provide information on how COVID is affecting school-aged participants.
- has, through the SickKids Patient Engagement in Research Team, facilitated either access to the RFAC (Research Family Advisory Council) or provided a patient advisor to research teams. In total 6 projects have reached out for formal input from family advisors.
- completed three systematic reviews on N95 mask decontamination using UV, heat and chemical disinfectants. The reports were delivered to the Office of the Chief Science Advisor of Canada, by request.
- Evaluation of N95 mask fit performance, post sterilization with UV and the Clean Flow Mini devices. Manuscript in development.
- Developed a reusable surgical mask for healthcare professionals with an industry partner. Prototype masks have undergone fit and practical penetration testing, as well as focus group testing with healthcare professional. Pilot study at hospital and wider community is in development.
- OCHSU has provided support to 12 grant applications to CIHR and other funding agencies. Eight of the submitted grants were funded - \$1,166,497.
- Worked with The Ottawa Hospital and CHEO researchers to estimate sample size requirements for comparing diagnostic accuracy of nasal and saliva COVID tests.
- OCHSU is working with the Pediatric Emergency Research Canada (PERC) Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) collaboration to create a surveillance system of Canadian Children with COVID-19
- Created a nationwide surveillance reporting system of pediatric COVID-19 testing in emergency departments with OCHSU, Pediatric Emergency Research Canada (PERC) and Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). To date there is no evidence that the COVID-19 positivity rate has changed in Canadian children.
- Obtained an OntarioTogether, PSI and CHAMO grants to study COVID spread within families and of antibody development within households.
- Grant to study COVID cellular (T-cell) immunity (co-PIs: Bhatt and Zemek).
- Successful through the National Medical Laboratory to examine the sensitivity and specificity of saliva testing for COVID in children.
- Three new COVID-19 rapid grants to study concussion as in-person visits are limited.
- Three papers published with three accompanying registered OSF protocol:
 - O'Hearn, K. et al. (2020) Efficacy and safety of disinfectants for Decontamination of N95 and SN95 Filtering Facepiece Respirators: A Systematic Review. (2020) J. Hosp. Infect 106, 504-521.
 - O'Hearn, K. et al. (2020) Decontaminating N95 masks with Ultraviolet Germicidal Irradiation (UVGI) does not impair mask efficacy and safety: A Systematic Review. J. Hosp. Infect. 106, 163-175



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- Gertsman, S. et al. (2020) Microwave-and Heat-Based Decontamination of N95 Filtering Facepiece Respirators (FFR): A Systematic Review. *J. Hosp. Infect.* 106, 536-553.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

Ontario Drug Policy Research Network

The Ontario Drug Policy Research Network (ODPRN) is a collaboration between researchers and drug policy-makers across Ontario that aims to respond rapidly to the need for high-quality, timely, relevant and scientifically rigorous research to support drug policy decisions. The network's core mandates are to: generate scientifically sound evidence related to real-world drug utilization, safety, effectiveness, and costs of drugs in Ontario; and, develop partnerships for cross-provincial comparisons of drug safety and utilization. The ODPRN also aims to focus its research agenda on priority areas identified by patients and the general public through meaningful engagement, consultation, collaboration, and integration of patients and citizens throughout its entire research process.

Website: www.odprn.ca

During the pandemic, ODPRN has:

1. Expanded Patient and Citizen Engagement

- Engaged with members of the ODPRN Citizens' Panel and Lived Experience Advisory Group to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on Ontarians, particularly among those with substance use disorders, and identify potential research questions. Members have also been involved in several COVID-19 projects as research team members.

2. Launched research to explore the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on at-risk populations

- Led a report in collaboration with Public Health Ontario (PHO), the Office of the Chief Coroner/Ontario Forensic Pathology Service (OCC/OFPS), and the Centre on Drug Policy Evaluation, describing the [Preliminary Circumstance Surrounding Opioid-Related Deaths in Ontario during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#).
 - This report was featured in various media outlets such as [CBC News](#), the [Globe and Mail](#), [CTV News](#), among others.
 - ODPRN Principal Investigator, Dr. Tara Gomes, discussed findings from this report in a CTV W5 segment on "*Canada's Epidemic within a Pandemic*".
- A manuscript, *Measuring the Burden of Opioid-Related Mortality during the COVID-19 Pandemic*, was developed and is currently under review for publication consideration.
- Updated the ODPRN's [Ontario Prescription Opioid Tool](#) to explore changing patterns on opioid prescribing indicators and the distribution of naloxone during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Nearing completion on a project on the Changing Patterns of Opioid Agonist Therapy Use and Associated Outcomes during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Ontario, which has integrated perspectives of people with lived experience from the Lived Experience Advisory Group.



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- In response to a request from Ontario Health, initiated a project on the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Medication Use and Healthcare Services among Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in Ontario.

3. Monitored Ontario's drug utilization and professional pharmacy services during the pandemic

- Released the [COVID-19 Ontario Prescription Drug Utilization](#) Tool, which provides public access to data on drug utilization in Ontario during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - This data can be used to determine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on potential drug shortages among patients, healthcare professionals, and the healthcare system, as well as uptake of flu shots and pharmacy-based COVID-19 tests.
 - This tool was featured in various media outlets such as [CBC News](#), and the [Globe and Mail](#), among others and will be regularly updated with new data as it becomes available.
 - Members of the ODPRN Citizens' Panel have contributed to this work as project team members.
 - Building on shifting drug utilization trends observed in this tool, the ODPRN published a [manuscript](#) that describes methodological considerations for drug-related research during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In response to a request from the Ontario College of Physicians (OCP), completed a project on the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Prevalence of Pharmacist-Prescribed Opioids in Ontario.
- Participated in a CBC News article entitled "[Coronavirus a 'wake-up call' for Canada's prescription drug supply](#)" discussing how Canadian pharmacies are limiting how much medication can be dispensed to try to prevent shortages.

4. Evaluating drugs related to the treatment or risk of COVID-19 infections

- Launched several collaborations and accessed additional funding to support research into drug effectiveness and safety related to COVID-19. This includes projects studying:
 - The real-world cardiovascular safety of hydroxychloroquine for the treatment and prevention of COVID-19 Infection.
 - Statins and alpha-1 receptor blocker use and the risk of COVID-19 related harms.
 - The risk of COVID-19 infection among individuals prescribed angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitors (ACEIs) and angiotensin-receptor blockers (ARBs) (ICES-led collaboration).

Click [here](#) to learn more.

Ottawa Methods Centre

The Ottawa Methods Centre (OMC), a sub-unit of the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute, provides expert methods consultation to provincial researchers and/or decision makers planning or currently involved in POR-related projects. OMC's robust infrastructure of services includes a specific focus on patient engagement wherein we offer training, mentorship, and conduct specialized methods research. We offer a range of other services including research design and methodology support, data



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management and big data analytics, statistical consultation and health economics, and knowledge syntheses, knowledge translation, and evidence implementation support

Website: <http://ohri.ca/ottawamethodscentre/>

The Ottawa methods Centre provided support for several COVID-19 projects thanks to \$1.2 million in funding from The Ottawa Hospital Academic Medical Organization (TOHAMO). This year, TOHAMO launched a separate Innovation Fund Competition on COVID-19 and partnered with The Ottawa Hospital's COVID-19 Research and Innovation team to align the central intake of ideas through the [COVID-19 Ideas Hub](#). In total, more than 160 ideas have now been submitted to the COVID-19 Ideas Hub.

The Ottawa methods Centre continues to provide support for several COVID-19 projects thanks to funding from The Ottawa Hospital Academic Medical Organization (TOHAMO). In 2020 TOHAMO launched a separate Innovation Fund Competition on COVID-19 and partnered with The Ottawa Hospital's COVID-19 Research and Innovation team to align the central intake of ideas through the [COVID-19 Ideas Hub](#). In addition, the Ottawa Hospital Foundation created a [COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund](#) through which to fund additional projects.

Recently funded work supported by OMC includes

- Research to understand the impact of COVID-19 on women's health and healthcare (Principal Investigator: Dr Innie Chen). This project, which has engaged patients as partners in the design of the research, will involve a systematic search of the literature and assemble a multidisciplinary panel of community patient partners and healthcare workers to identify the key issues in women's health during the pandemic. This information will lead to evidence-based strategies to mitigate gender-based impacts and help improve the lives of women during the pandemic.: <http://www.ohri.ca/newsroom/story/view/1306?!=en>
- Research to evaluate the efficacy (mechanical ventilator-free days) of using umbilical cord derived- mesenchymal stromal cells to treat patients with laboratory-confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection and who require mechanical ventilation (Principal Investigator: Duncan Stewart).

In addition, we continue to grow the COVID-19 patient partner review panel who are available to provide feedback to investigators developing new COVID-19 research proposals.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

Public and Patient Engagement Collaborative

Established in 2011, the Public and Patient Engagement (PPE) Collaborative conducts research and service activities focus on the role of patients and publics in health system policy making and health research, with a specific focus on the evaluation of these efforts.



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During the pandemic, the **PPE Collaborative** (<https://healthsci.mcmaster.ca/ppe>)

- Supported research teams (pre-award and post-award) investigating aspects of COVID/pandemic:
 - New research grants awarded through internal McMaster and Labarge COVID-19 research competitions:
 - The impact of priority setting on pandemic preparedness and response: A Global comparative analysis of the role of priority setting and equity during the COVID-19 pandemic (PIs: Kafiriri L, Essu B; Co-applicants: Abelson J, Biemba G, Danis M, Gibson J, Goold S, Nouvet E, Sundman L, Williams I).
 - The #Caremongering social media campaign: Understanding its impact and adaptability to combat social isolation among older adults affected by COVID-19 (PI: Seow H; Co-applicants: Abelson J, Chan T, Gardner P, Moll S, Urowitz S, Williams A)
 - Studied aspects of patient engagement related to COVID/pandemic activities.
 - Interviews with patient partners and patient engagement leads working with the newly-formed Ontario Health Teams to discuss, amongst other things, the challenges associated with their engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic (Ontario-specific). A report on these findings will be shared with the Ministry of Health, OHTs and with a community of practice for patient engagement in OHTs.
 - this is work that falls under responsibilities with the OHT Program of Central Supports
 - Surveyed over 500 patient partners across the country through a CIHR-funded Canadian Patient Partner Study (CPPS) to better understand the Canadian patient partner community, activities, roles and experiences. The survey included questions on whether and how COVID influenced respondents' patient engagement experiences and work. The team is currently analyzing these data and preparing a publication on the impact of COVID on Canadian patient partners and their activities.
- Publications:
 - Williams I, Essue B, Nouvet E, Sandman L, Razavi D, Noorudlhuda M, Goold S, Danis M, Biemba G, Abelson J, and Kafiriri L. Priority setting during the COVID-19 pandemic: going beyond vaccines. *BMJ Global Health*, 2021; 6:e004686. doi:10.1136/bmjgh-2020-004686.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

The Knowledge Translation Program

The Knowledge Translation Program (KTP) works with researchers to develop a strategy to put knowledge into practice at both the clinical and policy level. By focusing on the processes through which



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knowledge is effectively translated into changed decision making, KTP plays a critical role in enabling the creation and delivery of outcome-based learning experiences, and ultimately improved health outcomes

Website: knowledgetranslation.net

During the pandemic, the KT Program:

- Has assembled a transdisciplinary team of >30 individuals and organizations to collaborate on supporting long-term care homes (LTCH) and retirement homes (RH) with infection prevention and control (IPAC) and other needs through these challenging times. To date, the team has addressed the need for practical resources to support the implementation of IPAC+ recommendations in LTC through:
 - (1) the co-creation of a publicly available infection prevention and control tool repository (<https://www.rgptoronto.ca/resources/ipac+/>);
 - (2) the development of an interactive tool for LTC self-assessment of IPAC preparedness (<https://ipac.knowledgetranslation.ca/>);
 - (3) infographics addressing common myths/questions related to COVID-19 vaccines created and publicly disseminated. [Link to infographic](#); and,
 - (4) the hiring of a facilitator to support the implementation of IPAC resources in LTCHs.Partners include the Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement, Public Health Ontario, and the Regional Geriatric Program amongst many others. Moving forward, the KTP will build on this initiative to ensure the program is supporting LTCHs and RHs address long-standing gaps in processes and care highlighted as a result of this COVID-19 pandemic. This may include the implementation of theory- and trauma- informed educational, procedural and wellness resources to optimize LTC resident care while ensuring LTC staff physical, emotional, and mental wellness and safety.
- Additionally, the multidisciplinary team has received funding to pilot the implementation facilitator model with 5 LTCHs and conducting a process and outcome evaluation of the LTC/RH support program which will allow ongoing improvements and tailoring of supports to best meet needs.
- With additional funding from the COVID-19 Immunity Task Force, the team will estimate the change in prevalence and correlates of prior SARS-CoV-2 infection and factors associated with infection in a diverse population of LTCH residents, their essential family visitors/caregivers, and LTCH staff and their household members. This project has more than 40 partners, including caregivers of LTCH residents, Family Councils Ontario, Ontario PSW Association, Ontario Long-term Care Association, PHAC, Public Health Ontario, and the National Microbiology Lab, amongst others.
- co-create tailored messaging with LTCH staff to reduce COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) vaccine hesitancy and to determine the impact of such tools, coupled with tailored facilitation, on rates of LTCH staff vaccinations.
- With funding from the Ontario Ministry of Labour, the KT program initiated a project to address concerns raised by LTC partners regarding the impact of IPAC implementation, such as occupational health and safety (OHS) issues, wellness, and mental health challenges. To date,



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there is no comprehensive repository that provides plain-language, accessible tools to support LTC homes to address such OHS challenges during COVID-19. We will create a repository titled **CARE+** to compile and create OHS, wellness and mental health resources to support LTC staff (specifically personal support workers (PSWs)) during COVID-19. CARE+ will build on our IPAC+ repository. This work will support tailored implementation efforts at LTCs in Ontario to implement CARE+ and IPAC+ resource recommendations. This work will be completed in partnership with the Ontario PSW Association.

- Has initiated a project with donor funding to compare the accuracy of virtual and in-person comprehensive geriatric assessments and to determine barriers and facilitators to the conduct of virtual assessments. This project will advance our knowledge of how best to meet the needs of older adults requiring ambulatory care.
- Has partnered with the Chinese Canadian National Council for Social Justice (CCNC-SJ) and the Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter (CCNCTO) to develop strategies and tools to combat misinformation as it relates to stigma and fear during an outbreak. In addition, the KT program has engaged the Yee Hong Center for Geriatric Care to ensure the perspectives of healthcare providers caring for primarily Chinese-Canadian populations are considered.
- Is working on a rapid scoping review on effective models of provider care in long-term care facilities. This builds on the [Restoring Trust](#) document, which was published by the Royal Society of Canada. [Link to final report.](#)
- Conducting active surveillance for safety and effectiveness of Health products for COVID-19 (Q20-23) for the CIHR DSEN Targeted Research fund.

- Dr. Straus became a member of the Data and Health Working Group for the Royal Society for the G7/ S7, which is focused on pandemic recovery.
- Dr. Straus was named a member of the Chief Scientist's Expert Advisory Group on Implementation strategies during COVID.
- Dr. Straus became a member of the Royal Society of Canada Task Force on COVID-19.
- Dr. Straus consulted on these COVID-19 projects:
 - (1) Socio-Cultural Implications of COVID-19: Educating, Engaging & Empowering the Public (Principal Investigators: Jeanna Parsons Leigh, Kirsten Fiest)
 - (2) Social frailty interventions that can best support vulnerable older adults during the COVID-19 pandemic: A rapid review (Principal Investigators: Monika Kastner, Jayna Holroyd-Leduc)

- Publications:

Arevalo-Rodriguez I, Tricco AC, Nussbaumer-Streit B, Steingart KR, Kaunelis D, Alonso-Coello P, Bossuyt PM, Javier Z. **Developing rapid reviews of diagnostic tests in the time of COVID-19: current knowledge and future steps.** In: Collaborating in Response to COVID-19: Editorials and methods initiatives across Cochrane. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, (12 Suppl 1):[32-36]. 2020 Dec 10.
<https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD202002/full>



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Rios P, Radhakrishnan A, Williams C, Ramkissoon N, Cormack GV, Grossman MR, Muller MP, Straus SE, Tricco AC. **Preventing the transmission of COVID-19 and other coronaviruses in older adults aged 60 years and above living in long-term care: a rapid review.** Systematic reviews. 2020 Dec;9(1):1-8.

https://sporevidencealliance.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/COVID-19-in-LTC_Research-Brief-for-CFN_v1.pdf

<https://systematicreviewsjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13643-020-01486-4>

Wang L, Ma H, Yiu KC, Calzavara A, Landsman D, Luong L, Chan AK, Kustra R, Kwong JC, Boily MC, Hwang S. **Heterogeneity in testing, diagnosis and outcome in SARS-CoV-2 infection across outbreak settings in the Greater Toronto Area, Canada: an observational study.** CMAJ open. 2020 Oct;8(4):E627.

<http://cmajopen.ca/content/8/4/E627.full>

Tricco AC, Garritty CM, Boulos L, Lockwood C, Wilson M, McGowan J, McCaul M, Hutton B, Clement F, Mittmann N, Devane D. **Rapid review methods more challenging during COVID-19: commentary with a focus on 8 knowledge synthesis steps.** Journal of clinical epidemiology. 2020 Oct 1;126:177-83.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32615209/>

Holmes B, Straus SE. **Resilient Research.** The Globe and Mail. 2020 August 6.

<https://rsc-src.ca/en/voices/resilient-research>

Mishra S, Wang L, Ma H, Yiu KC, Paterson JM, Kim E, Schull MJ, Pequegnat V, Lee A, Ishiguro L, Coomes E. **Estimated surge in hospital and intensive care admission because of the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic in the Greater Toronto Area, Canada: a mathematical modelling study.** CMAJ open. 2020 Jul;8(3):E593.

<http://cmajopen.ca/content/8/3/E593.full>

Estabrooks C, Flood C, Straus S. **We must act now to prevent a second wave of long-term care deaths.** The Globe and Mail. 2020 June 10.

<https://rsc-src.ca/en/voices/we-must-act-now-to-prevent-second-wave-long-term-care-deaths>

Estabrooks CA, Straus S, Flood CM, Keefe J, Armstrong P, Donner G, Boscart V, Ducharme F, Silvius J, Wolfson M. **Restoring trust: COVID-19 and the future of long-term care. A Policy Briefing by the Working Group on long-Term Care.** Royal Society of Canada. 2020 June.

https://rsc-src.ca/sites/default/files/LTC%20PB%20%2B%20ES_EN.pdf

Straus SE, Watt J. **Unintended consequences.** RSC COVID-19 Series, Publication #11. 2020 May 22.



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<https://rsc-src.ca/en/voices/unintended-consequences>

Armstrong P, Straus SE. **What's missing from discussions on nursing homes**. RSC COVID-19 Series, Publication #10. 2020 May 21.

<https://rsc-src.ca/en/voices/what%E2%80%99s-missing-from-discussions-nursing-homes>

Rios P, Radhakrishnan A, Antony J, Thomas SM, Muller M, Straus SE, Tricco AC. **Effectiveness and safety of antiviral or antibody treatments for coronavirus**. medRxiv. 2020 Jan 1. (pre-print)

<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.03.19.20039008v2>

Rios P, Radhakrishnan A, Thomas SM, Darvesh N, Straus SE, Tricco AC. **Guidelines for preventing respiratory illness in older adults aged 60 years and above living in long-term care: A rapid review of clinical practice guidelines**. medRxiv. 2020 Jan 1. (pre-print)

<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.03.19.20039180v3>

Dugas M, Carnovale V, Poirier AA, Mailot B, Skidmore B, Faust L, Costello C, Thomson D, Majnemer A, Goldowitz D, Miller S. **COVID-19 in Children with Brain-Based Developmental Disabilities: A Rapid Review**. medRxiv. 2020 Jan 1. (pre-print)

<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.05.01.20088021v1>

Antony J, Rios P, Williams C, Ramkissoon N, Straus SE, Tricco AC. **Safety and effectiveness of dose-sparing strategies for seasonal influenza vaccine: a rapid scoping review of fractional dosing of the intramuscular influenza vaccine**. medRxiv. 2020 Jan 1. (pre-print)

<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.07.31.20163717v1>

- Publications [in progress]:

Conducted a rapid review: [Testing for Asymptomatic COVID-19: A rapid systematic review and jurisdictional/ healthcare organizational scan](#)

Intradermal versus Intramuscular Administration of Influenza Vaccination

Rapid scoping review of fractional dosing of the intramuscular influenza vaccine

Preventing the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) in older adults aged 60 years and above living in long-term care: a rapid review. *Manuscript submitted: currently under revisions with the Systematic Review Journal*. Authors : Patricia Rios, Amruta Radhakrishnan, Chantal Williams, Naveeta Ramkissoon, Ba' Pham, Gordon V. Cormack, Maura R. Grossman



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Updated a review entitled "[Transmission of Acute Respiratory Infections During Aerosol Generating Medical Procedures: Update of 2011 CADTH Systematic Review](#)". The report provides an overview of the 2011 CADTH report and presents a synthesis of updated findings.

Conducted a rapid scoping review: [Rapid scoping review of the effectiveness and safety of treatments for COVID-19 and other coronaviruses that cause serious respiratory tract infections](#)

Conducted a review: [Efficacy and safety of treatments \(antivirals and antibodies\) for coronavirus \(CoV\)](#)

Conducted a review: [Digital Health Interventions for the Prevention, Detection and Management of Mental Health Problems in People with Chronic Diseases](#)

Conducted a review: [Rapid and Point-of-Care Diagnostic Test for SARS-COV-2 \(COVID-19\): A Rapid Summary](#)

☑ Conducted a review: [Risk of Acquiring COVID-19 Associated with Singing in a Choir: A Quick Response Report](#)

- KT Program Scientist Dr. Andrea Tricco is the Nominated Principal Applicant for The Drug Safety and Effectiveness Network (DSEN) Methods and Applications Group for Indirect Comparisons (MAGIC). DSEN-MAGIC is a pan-Canadian team of investigators with world-renowned expertise in knowledge synthesis, biostatistics; knowledge translation; clinical epidemiology; sex and gender analysis; and health economics. [This page](#) showcases COVID-19 work being conducted by MAGIC in response to decision-maker needs.
- Dr. Tricco is also the Nominated Principal Applicant for the SPOR Evidence Alliance. The SPOR Evidence Alliance is a Canada-wide alliance of researchers, research trainees, patients, healthcare providers, policy makers and organizations who use research to inform decisions. The alliance was established to provide national-level support in knowledge synthesis, clinical practice guidelines development, knowledge translation, and patient-oriented research. It provides evidence-based answers to clinicians, patients, and policy makers to make sure high-quality information is available to inform decisions. [This page](#) showcases knowledge synthesis work being conducted by the Alliance researchers in response to decision-maker needs and COVID-19.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

Population Health Research Institute



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The Population Health Research Institute (PHRI) is an internationally-recognized global health research institute of McMaster University and Hamilton Health Sciences specializing in large clinical trials and population studies. Originally formed with a focus on cardiovascular disease and diabetes, PHRI's research areas have broadened to include population genomics, perioperative medicine, stroke, thrombosis, cardiac surgery, renal disease, obesity, and other areas. PHRI has developed expertise in epidemiology, population health, clinical trial methodology, and patient and citizen engagement in research, as well as in the examination of biological, social, and environmental determinants of health.

Website: <http://www.phri.ca/>

During the pandemic, PHRI has launched and received funding for several COVID-19 projects, including these initiatives (please see website for details):

- Post Discharge After Surgery Virtual Care with Remote Automated Monitoring Technology (PVC-RAM) Trial (now completed enrollment and follow-up)
- Anti-Coronavirus Therapy (ACT) to prevent COVID-19 disease progression: a clinical trial platform to rapidly evaluate whether several commonly available interventions can be repurposed for treating COVID-19 (recruiting internationally)
- Assessing Coagulation Biomarkers to Accelerate the Discovery of Effective Therapies for COVID-19 (ACT-COAG)
- PURE SARS-CoV-2, examining factors that affect the risk of infection and long-term health effects of getting infected by COVID-19

Click [here](#) to learn more.

Women's College Hospital: Women's Xchange

Women's Xchange (WX) is a research knowledge translation and exchange centre within Women's College Hospital that aims to support women's health research in academic and community settings and helps to disseminate those findings across the province of Ontario. The team offers support to researchers to enhance the integration of sex and gender in their research by reviewing proposals during the pre-funding and post-funding phases and providing feedback or recommendations on every element of the proposed study or project.

Website: <http://womensxchange.womensresearch.ca/>

During the pandemic, WX:

- developed an infographic with Ontario Network of Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Treatment Centres (SADVTCs), highlighting the other global pandemics and rates of violence against women with additional information on how to access their services during this time
- published an article entitled "Modified Routine Cardiac Imaging Surveillance of Adult Cancer Patients and Survivors During the COVID-19 Pandemic" found in the *JACC CardioOncology*;



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- published a paper entitled “The Missing Pieces of the COVID-19 Puzzle” found in *JAGS*, looking at the intersection of sex and age and its importance in informing our understanding of COVID-19 through exploring publicly available international data;
- published a paper entitled “Increasing the Visibility of Older Women in Clinical Research” currently in press in *The Lancet*, illustrating that there is a gap in the consideration of the unique health needs of older women in clinical research;
- published an Op-Ed in the Toronto Star entitled “To help combat COVID-19, we need better data to benefit all” (<https://www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/2020/04/15/to-help-combat-covid-19-we-need-better-data-to-benefit-all.html>);
- developed two new modules to add to The Health Researcher's Toolkit;
- developed a list of suggestions and resources on Social Connectedness Suggestions – the document was distributed to over 100,000 members of the Retired Teachers of Ontario (RTOERO);
- distributed an REB approved survey of >5,000 members of the RTOERO identifying how and to what extent the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted older adults, particularly in terms of social isolation and loneliness;
- examined Ontario-wide COVID-19 data on vulnerable residents in LTC homes to identify strategies to improve outcomes going forward;
- launched a study using provincial COVID-19 databases to examine excess COVID deaths (related to measures such as physical distancing, or due to lack of access to usual healthcare) among different groups of vulnerable older adults, in order to target resources to where they are most urgently needed to prevent future deaths;
- Participating in the launch of a study on the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations led by Dr. Bayoumi at St. Mike's
- Participating on a study to adapt digital safety planning tools for women in abusive relationships led by Dr. O'Campo at St. Mike's
- published an Op-Ed in the Toronto Star entitled “Family caregivers will be key during the COVID-19 pandemic” on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on family caregivers (<https://www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/2020/03/31/family-caregivers-will-be-key-during-the-covid-19-pandemic.html>);
- Invited member on the Long-Term Care Staffing Study Advisory Group (Ontario Ministry of Health) to provide strategic advice on staffing in the long-term care sector across the province of Ontario;
- invited member of an expert panel for a federal Task Group on COVID-19 in long-term care homes; this group has been convened to provide practical advice to the Government of Canada on the topic of long-term care homes;
- published a blog post on the Canadian Family Physician entitled “Uptake of virtual primary care visits during COVID-19”;
- supported 15 grant applications;
- developed EDI content for the NFRF Transformation proposal submitted by Dr. Lewis



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- established the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion across Women’s Working Group (EDIWWG) to establish harmonized and consistent approaches to considerations of equity, diversity and inclusion across the organization during the current COVID-19 pandemic and beyond;
- participated in all OSSU meetings and related activities.
- Dr. Paula Rochon is on the Ontario COVID-19 Science Advisory Table
- Dr. Nathan Stall is a member of the secretariate and Assistant Scientific Director of the Ontario COVID-19 Science Advisory Table
- Dr. Paula Rochon and Dr. Nathan Stall are members of the COVID-19 Modelling Consensus Table
- Dr Rochon is chair of the newly established Congregate Care Setting Working Group where Dr. Rachel Savage and Dr. Nathan Stall are members
- Dr. Rochon is a co-author in a science brief “COVID-19 and Long-Term Care Homes” (<https://doi.org/10.47326/ocsat.2020.01.05.1.0>) led by Dr. Stall, examining the disproportionate impact that the pandemic has had on Ontario long-term care home residents and proposing measures for prevention of infection.
- Dr. Rachel Savage led a paper entitled: “Loneliness among older adults in the community during COVID-19”, currently under review for publication (Preprint: <https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.11.23.20237289>)
- Dr. Mason co-authored a paper entitled: “Doing Better: Eleven Strategies to Integrate a Sex and Gender Plus Lens in Health Research” (doi.org/10.1186/s41073-020-00102-2)
- Dr. Mason published an editorial entitled: “Addressing a global pandemic within a global pandemic”. (<https://sciencepolicy.ca/news/addressing-global-pandemic-within-global-pandemic>)

Click [here](#) to learn more.