

# CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

IN FRAILTY-INFORMED CARE™

Newsletter Issue #1 – June 2021



INAUGURAL  
EDITION  
June 2021

*Dr. Annie Robitaille (Right), The Commissionaires Ottawa Research Chair in Frailty-Informed Care & Danielle ("Danny") Sinden (Left), Director, Centre of Excellence and Research Operations (Pre-COVID Image)*

## In This Issue:

Letter from the Editor .....	p 1	Mentoring Excellence in Nursing Care .....	p 7
Researcher Profile .....	p 2	Presentations and Speaking Engagements .....	p 8
Funding News .....	p 2	Consultation on Research Priorities .....	p 9
Webinar Update .....	p 3	A Passion to Contribute .....	p10
Current Research Projects .....	p 4	In the News .....	p 11



**Perley Rideau**

The Perley and Rideau  
Veterans' Health Centre

1750 Russell Road, Ottawa ON K1G 5Z6



Research



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Care

# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



*Danielle Sinden  
Director, Centre  
of Excellence and  
Research Operations*

Welcome to this inaugural edition of our newsletter. With the Centre of Excellence in Frailty-Informed Care (CoE) fully operational, the newsletter enables us to list current and proposed research projects, present the latest developments, and introduce readers to people who conduct and participate in CoE projects. The newsletter will evolve over time based on the healthcare landscape, and the needs and expectations of our stakeholders: older adults, families, caregivers, researchers, healthcare professionals, donors to Perley Rideau Foundation, and anyone interested in improving the care of older adults living with frailty.

Along with listing current and proposed CoE research projects, this edition introduces you to Dr. Annie Robitaille, our Commissionaires Ottawa Research Chair in Frailty-Informed Care, along with other members of our community. The CoE has a full slate of current research projects and initiatives. These innovative

projects provide opportunities for Perley Rideau staff, residents, tenants, volunteers, friends and families, along with caregivers and the community at large, to engage in meaningful social and recreational activities such as learning new skills, sharing experiences and providing input on various topics. Results from these projects will contribute to the care, education and research conducted not only here at Perley Rideau, but also in other settings across Canada. During COVID-19, all CoE projects follow public health protocols and the policies set out by Perley Rideau.

I hope you enjoy our newsletter and I encourage you to share your comments — along with ideas for future editions — by contacting me directly.

**Danielle Sinden,**  
Director, Centre of Excellence and  
Research Operations  
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## WHO WE ARE

Established in 2019, The Perley Rideau Centre of Excellence in Frailty-Informed Care (CoE) aims to set a new benchmark in seniors' care, facilitating applied research that fuels innovation in education, best practices, and knowledge translation. Our goal is to ensure that frail seniors and Veterans receive the highest level of care both within our walls and beyond. The CoE is part of the Perley and Rideau Veteran's Health Centre, one of Ontario's largest and most innovative long-term care homes. Located on a 25-acre campus adjacent to The Ottawa Hospital, the Perley Rideau is home to approximately 450 residents (many of them Veterans who served overseas) in long-term care, along with approximately 200 seniors in 139 independent-living apartments (the Seniors' Village). Funded by donations to the Perley Rideau Foundation, the CoE supports the Perley Rideau's mission of excellence in the health, safety, and well-being of seniors and Veterans.

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*The exceptional care that residents receive at Perley Rideau is thanks in part to the generosity of our community.  
For more information or to make a donation please visit [www.PerleyRideauFoundation.ca](http://www.PerleyRideauFoundation.ca)*

# A PASSION FOR PRACTICAL RESEARCH



*Dr. Annie Robitaille,  
The Commissionaires  
Ottawa Research Chair  
in Frailty-Informed Care*

**\*Responsive Behaviours:**  
The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care defines responsive behaviours as “behaviours that often indicate: (a) An unmet need in a person, whether cognitive, physical, emotional, social, environmental or other, or (b) a response to circumstances within the social or physical environment that may be frustrating, frightening or confusing to a person” (Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, 2007, as cited in RNAO, 2012, p. 86)

Ever since I was a little girl, I’ve been interested in and inspired by older adults. I grew up in the same house that my father did, and for much of my childhood and teenage years, his parents lived in an apartment below us. At the time, it was wonderful; today, though, I wonder how they managed to put up with the dance parties I would sometimes host! Now that they’re both gone, I often think of the stories they told me. I’m still close to my mother’s mother, who’s 90 years old; we made quilts together, prior to the pandemic. During high school, I volunteered at a senior’s home. I liked spending time with the residents and learned to knit.

At university, I enrolled in a criminology program, but loved the psychology courses so much that I changed my focus. Once I got involved in research, I was hooked. At the time, the psychology of older adults was studied less. However, I was drawn to it and managed to find a PhD supervisor who specialized in the field. My passion for research has only

grown stronger over time. During the last decade, I’ve been involved in research initiatives that range from the study of long-term care to responsive behaviours\* and social isolation of older adults living with frailty.

As the Commissionaires Ottawa Research Chair at the Centre of Excellence in Frailty-Informed Care, I feel I’m exactly where I need to be right now. I love my job and can see that the research we do can really improve older adults’ quality of life, along with the quality of care they receive. With Canada’s population of older adults living with frailty expected to triple in the coming decades, the demand for practical solutions is only going to increase. It’s an exciting time to work in this field because we have many opportunities to apply our findings and make a real difference in people’s lives.

**Annie Robitaille, PhD,**  
The Commissionaires Ottawa Research  
Chair in Frailty-Informed Care

## Funding News

# THE COMMISSIONAIRES OTTAWA RESEARCH CHAIR IN FRAILTY-INFORMED CARE

The Centre of Excellence (CoE) is made possible by donations to the Perley Rideau Foundation. In June 2021, Commissionaires Ottawa announced an exceptionally generous donation of \$2 million to the Foundation. In honour of this donation, the CoE’s leading research position is known as The Commissionaires Ottawa Research Chair in Frailty-Informed Care.

The recent donation builds on a strong history of Commissionaires Ottawa philanthropy: in 2014, the organization donated \$1 million to support construction of the Seniors’ Village. The name of the apartment building attached to the Perley and Rideau Veterans’ Health Centre — Commissionaires Ottawa Place — commemorates this donation. We are grateful for the support provided by all donors.



**COMMISSIONAIRES**  
TRUSTED • EVERYDAY • EVERYWHERE

## WEBINAR SERIES

March 10, 2021 marked the debut of the Centre of Excellence's monthly webinar series. The webinars aim to inspire meaningful policy and program change by establishing a forum for news and discussions about frailty-related innovation and research, and by nurturing and engaging a broad network of older adults, LTC professionals, researchers and caregivers, along with members of the public.

The inaugural webinar, *The Future Is Now: Innovative Living Environments for Older Adults with Cognitive Impairments*, featured Philippe Voyer, professor with Laval University's Faculty of Nursing. Presented in partnership with the University of Ottawa's LIFE Research Institute, the webinar was moderated by Annie Robitaille, the Commissionaires Ottawa Research Chair in Frailty-Informed Care. The session focused on some of Canada's most innovative special-housing units, along with the principles and research data that support them. More than 120 people participated in the webinar and many shared positive comments, such as:

- "Excellent work by the team. Good subject matter to start the series of webinars."
- "Very happy that the Perley has moved into this new modality of communication."
- "Informative and refreshing presentation. It shows hope that we're moving slowing but surely away from traditional, depressing and boring models of care."

The second webinar, *Long-Term Care: Safety and Quality of Life during COVID-19*, occurred on April 27, 2021 and attracted 115 registrants. It featured three members of Perley Rideau staff: Dr. Benoît Robert, Chief Medical Officer; Tania Paolini, Manager, Infection Prevention and Control; and Jennifer Plant, Director of Clinical Practice, who served as moderator. The webinar also featured Kathryn May, Nurse Practitioner, The Ottawa Hospital Nurse-Led Outreach Program.

Participants had the following comments about this webinar

- "The presentation really was uplifting and gave us all a sense that our residents are so well looked after at the Perley...thank you!"
- "Always been impressed by the professionalism, care, services and communication offered by the PVRCH staff and employees. Your vision of becoming a leader in elderly and frailty care industry is happening...Keep up the amazing job you are doing!"

The May 26, 2021 webinar, entitled *Navigating the Journey of Caring for a Loved One with Dementia*, featured Claire Webster, Founder and Ambassador of the Dementia Education Program, McGill University, and Founder and Ambassador, Dementia Education Program, McGill University and Founder and President of Caregiver Crosswalk Inc. Here are a few comments from the 95 registrants:

- "I am grateful to have learned so much in so little time. This presentation was effective, informative and interesting. Thanks for the personal aspect of sharing one's own experience to educate those of us listening with rapt attention."
- "This helped me understand what I was going through with my husband's dementia. It still is not clear at times. It also reinforced that I need to take care of myself"

The fourth webinar, scheduled for June 24, 2021, focuses on Elder Abuse; June is Elder Abuse Awareness Month. The speakers are John E. Johnson, Vice-Chair of Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario and Sabby Duthie, co-authors of *Elder Abuse: You Have a Role to Play*.

You can watch archived recordings of each webinar by visiting this page on the CoE website.

<https://www.PerleyRideau.ca/free-webinar-series>

The poster for the webinar series is titled "It's Time to Talk About Elder Abuse". It features the Centre of Excellence logo and the text "FREE WEBINAR ALL ARE WELCOME". Below the title, there are two small photos of the speakers, John E. Johnson and Sabby Duthie. The text "Presented by: John E. Johnson and Sabby Duthie, Co-authors of Elder Abuse: You Have a Role to Play." is displayed. A red banner at the bottom of the poster says "Join Us... June 24, 2021 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. ET". The Perley Rideau logo is also visible at the bottom.

*Fourth webinar in our series with authors of Elder Abuse: You Have a Role to Play*

<http://bit.ly/CoEJune24>

# CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE – JUNE 2021

## CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECTS

N.B. For a more current list of projects, please consult the CoE website.

<https://www.perleyrideau.ca/ongoing-research-projects>

### Psychosocial Impacts of Reducing Non-Essential Visitors in Long-Term Care in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic (Modified Version)

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Annie Robitaille, Interdisciplinary School of Health Sciences, University of Ottawa

This study will improve understanding of the emotional well-being (e.g. psychological distress, loneliness) of family/friend caregivers, volunteers and older adults in LTC. During an interview of 45–60 minutes conducted online or by telephone, participants are asked about how measures related to COVID-19 — such as reductions in staffing and volunteers — has impacted LTC. Participants will also be asked to share success stories, along with solutions for dealing with future pandemics and outbreaks.

### Social Inclusion of People Living with Dementia and Their Caregivers Using an Intergenerational Program

**Co-Principal Investigators:** Dr. Annie Robitaille, Interdisciplinary School of Health Sciences, University of Ottawa; Dr. Linda Garcia, Faculty of Health Sciences, LIFE Research Institute, University of Ottawa

Older adults (long-term care residents and tenants) living with dementia can receive friendly one-on-one virtual visits from university student volunteers, providing them with an opportunity to engage in social and recreational activities, and meaningful conversations. The caregiver of the person living with dementia will be asked to complete a 20-minute questionnaire on 4 occasions.

### Health Information Technology and Senior Care: Seniors and Nurses' Perspective of Technology Adoption

**Principal Investigator:** Hamidreza Kavandi; **Supervisor:** Dr. Mirou Jaana, Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa

Health-information technology (HIT) presents opportunities for healthcare providers to better meet seniors' healthcare needs. This study will investigate the perspective of nurses in relation to the key factors that affect nurses' adoption of HIT in LTC. Nurses will be asked to answer three online questions (each question will take 10-15 minutes). Participants will benefit from the study by voicing their opinions and thoughts on this important topic and contributing to the development of an authoritative list of factors that influence nurses' adoption of HIT in the context of senior care.

### Evaluating Long-Term Care Resident Quality of Life and Wellbeing Pre and During the COVID-19 Pandemic

**Principal Investigator:** Danielle Cruise; **Supervisor:** Dr. Mirou Jaana, Telfer School of Management; University of Ottawa

While research on the quality of life (QoL) of older adults prior to the COVID-19 pandemic is relatively abundant, little research has focused on the QoL of residents in long-term care (LTC) during the pandemic.

To evaluate the impacts of the pandemic on resident QoL and wellbeing, this study will compare data from the ActivityPro tracker and the QoL surveys collected during 2019 and 2020. The data will be analyzed at the aggregate level and the results used to improve the care and services provided to seniors.

### COVID-19 Immunity Study

**Co-Principal Investigators:** Dr. Amy Hsu, Bruyère Research Institute and Dr. Marc-Andrè Langlois, University of Ottawa

This study involves residents, staff and volunteers in long-term care homes across Ontario, Québec and British Columbia. The aim of this project is to gain a better understanding of COVID-19 prevalence in LTC homes across Canada and to examine the level and duration of protection COVID-19 vaccines. Participants will be asked to complete an online baseline survey (15 minutes) and provide blood spot samples collected at several time points over the next 12 months. Participants can access their antibody results through a secure web-based portal. Also, participating LTC homes will be given the aggregate data, enabling them to better understand overall levels of immunity and risk.

### Program to Accelerate Technologies of Home (PATH)

**Co-Principal Investigators, Ottawa site:** Dr. Jeffrey Jutai, Interdisciplinary School of Health Sciences, University of Ottawa; Dr. Jason Millar, School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, University of Ottawa

[PATH](#) is a large multi-partner initiative to increase understanding of the potential role that home-based technologies can play in the care and wellbeing of older adults. Groups of older adults will be provided various devices and technologies (e.g. blood-pressure monitors, pressure-sensitive mats that track sleep patterns, wearable devices that can detect falls, etc.) and their experiences monitored. Researchers will share the data with industry to test, validate and potentially commercialize products. The CoE will soon recruit LTC residents and Seniors' Village tenants to participate.

### Linking Lives Through Care

**Principal Investigator:** Christine Novy; **Supervisor:** Dr. Roanne Thomas, School of Rehabilitation Science, University of Ottawa

Family/friend caregivers currently caring for a loved one living with dementia are invited to participate in a study about relationships and care. The study involves two 60 minute on-line interviews and one follow-up interview (15-30 min) on-site at the Perley. In the first interview you will be asked about the history of your caring relationship. In the second, you will be asked to share 3 sentimental objects associated with your experiences. During the third interview the person you are caring for will be invited to reflect with you on the sentimental objects. You will receive a video recording of this meeting as a memento.

### Health Surveillance of Community-Dwelling, Person-with-Dementia and Caregiver Dyads

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Annie Robitaille, Interdisciplinary School of Health Sciences, University of Ottawa

The project aims to increase understanding of the trajectories of individuals living with dementia and their caregivers (dyads) from diagnosis to move into LTC. Information will be collected from dyads over extended periods of time and the results used to inform policies, programs and areas of future research in Canada.

### Comparaison des performances au Montréal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA) en anglais et en français chez les personnes bilingues ayant le français comme langue maternelle

(\*Please note this project is available only to French-speaking individuals)

**Co-chercheurs principaux:** Dominique Yelle, Amira Meyers, Zachary Carrière et Emily Pidgeon; **Superviseur:** Dr. Jacinthe Savard, École des sciences de la réadaptation, Université d'Ottawa

Nous recherchons des volontaires de 40 ans et plus, ayant le français comme langue maternelle et une connaissance de l'anglais allant de minimale à très bonne, pour participer à une étude comparant les performances à un test cognitif en anglais et en français chez les personnes bilingues. En tant que participant à cette étude, il vous serait demandé de : Répondre à un questionnaire en ligne, puis de passer un test de bilinguisme et un test cognitif en français et en anglais par vidéoconférence. Votre participation est entièrement volontaire et prendrait environ 50 minutes de votre temps. En participant à cette étude, vous nous aiderez à aider les personnes bilingues à mieux saisir dans quelles langues elles doivent demander des services. Afin de vous remercier pour votre contribution à ce projet de recherche, vous pourrez entrer votre nom dans un tirage pour gagner une carte-cadeau d'une valeur de 50\$.

### COVID-19, Precarity and the Counternarratives of PSWs: Photovoice and Change

**Principal Investigator:** Veen Wong, Public Health Sciences, University of Waterloo; **Supervisor:** Dr. Patricia Van Katwyk, School of Social Work, Renison University College, University of Waterloo

The project will shed light on the work perspectives of Personal Support Workers (PSWs) during the pandemic. During group and individual virtual interviews, PSWs will be encouraged to describe their experiences, particularly whether they consider their work as essential, precarious and/or unseen, and how various policies and systems shape their work experiences. Each participant will then be encouraged to create images based on these discussions—a technique known as photovoice. The identity of the image-takers images will remain anonymous and the images will be analyzed and shared. Each participant will receive \$50.00 honorarium of \$50.

## Contact Information

If you are interested in participating or would like to learn more about a particular project, please contact:

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# MENTORING EXCELLENCE IN NURSING CARE

As a Registered Nurse (RN) at Perley Rideau, Babylyn Alcantara appreciates the importance of leadership skills and continuous education.

“In a long-term care home, residents, families and other staff typically see nurses as leaders,” she says. “They expect us to know about everything from nursing care to the schedule of daily activities to the latest on COVID-19. Developing leadership skills helps to meet these expectations.”

A lifelong learner, Babylyn acquired and continues to improve her leadership skills through mentorships with more experienced nurses. Her commitment to professional development inspired the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario (RNAO) to grant her an Advanced Clinical Practice Fellowship in partnership with Perley Rideau. RNAO Fellowships enable select RNs to increase their skills and knowledge through focused learning and formal mentorships. To qualify, a Fellow must select a project that meets a need within their organization and aims to improve resident outcomes.

Babylyn’s project established a formal mentorship program for both RNs and Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs) at Perley Rideau. In consultation with her own mentors, Babylyn developed a six-week model, recruited four mentor-mentee pairs, and monitored and analyzed the results. In April 2021, Babylyn presented her findings to the Canadian Gerontological Nursing Association’s annual conference. Her presentation, *Harnessing the Power of Nursing Mentorship*, includes lessons learned and suggestions for organizations seeking to improve the leadership skills of their nurses.

“Babylyn’s project fosters a culture of nursing leadership,” says Jen Plant, Perley Rideau’s Director of

Clinical Practice. “And sharing the findings supports knowledge translation across the sector, a key long-term goal.”

For Babylyn Alcantara, the Fellowship is only the latest step in an amazing journey. Born in a rural region of the Philippines, she was the first in her family to attend university.

“My parents always encouraged me to further my education,” she says, “they told me: ‘knowledge is something that can’t be taken from you.’”

After earning a Bachelor’s degree in Chemistry, Babylyn’s quest for knowledge led her abroad, first to Hong Kong and then to Canada. While working as a nanny to fund her studies, she earned a diploma and certification as an RPN, then a Bachelor’s degree and RN certification.

“Throughout my career, I’ve been inspired by many accomplished professionals dedicated to improving quality of care,” she says. “I know that building my skills and knowledge will enable me to contribute more, as well.”

Babylyn’s quest will continue this fall, when she begins the University of Ottawa’s Master of Science Nursing program.



*Babylyn Alcantara,  
Registered Nurse (RN)  
at Perley Rideau*

*“My parents always encouraged me to further my education... they told me: ‘knowledge is something that can’t be taken from you.’”*

*– Babylyn Alcantara*



# PRESENTATIONS AND SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

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## AdvantAge Ontario:

January 21, 2021

Chief Operating Officer Mary Boutette, described the strategy Perley Rideau has used to record sector-leading rates of staff vaccination against seasonal flu (and COVID-19) in a webinar that attracted more than 200 participants.

## IPAC Canada Education Webinar:

January 22, 2021

Tania Paolini, Manager of Infection Prevention and Control, described the measures Perley Rideau has implemented during the pandemic.

## Champlain Centre for Healthcare Ethics Annual Symposium:

April 15, 2021

Dr. Benoît Robert, Chief Medical Officer; Jennifer Plant, Director of Clinical Practice; and Tania Paolini, Manager, Infection Prevention and Control, delivered a presentation entitled: Masking the Problem of COVID-19 in LTC.

## Canadian Association of Spiritual Care National Conference:

April 21, 2021

Jessie Stephenson, Spiritual Health Practitioner, delivered a webinar about trauma-related suffering at end-of-life to approximately 50 participants.

## Registered Nurses Association of Ontario (RNAO):

April 21, 2021

As part of RNAO's orientation to incoming members of its Best Practices Spotlight Organization (BPSO), Registered Nurse Daniela Acosta presented strategies and lessons learned during Perley Rideau's BPSO journey. The webinar attracted approximately 60 participants.

## Canadian Gerontological Nursing Association:

April 23, 2021

As part of her RNAO Fellowship, Registered Nurse Babylyn Alcantara designed and led the implementation of a mentorship program for Registered Nurses and Registered Practical Nurses at Perley Rideau. She presented her findings in a poster and webinar entitled: Harnessing the Power of Nursing Mentorship.



*Dr. Annie Robitaille is speaking with volunteer Frances Boon. (Pre-COVID Image)*

## CONSULTATION ON RESEARCH PRIORITIES

In May 2021, the Centre of Excellence completed a consultation project that will inform priority areas for CoE research, as well as build and engage a network of stakeholders. The project consisted of an online survey followed by a series of focus groups. We invited a broad group of people to complete the survey: members of Perley Rideau staff and Boards of Directors (Health Centre and Foundation); residents, tenants, caregivers and their families; volunteers; and researchers. We received a total of 123 completed surveys. The survey included an invitation to participate in follow-up discussions, which elicited a strong response. We then held four separate focus groups: Perley staff, Board members, caregivers and volunteers. We continue to analyze the results, and will post an update on the CoE website and in the next newsletter.

# A PASSION TO CONTRIBUTE

Sue Davies has always had a passion for improving the well-being of others. During a stellar 42-year career as a nurse and educator, she provided compassionate care and taught countless others to do the same. These days, she's found a new way to pursue her passion: by participating in research projects led by the Centre of Excellence in Frailty-Informed Care.

"I think the Centre of Excellence does important work and I'm glad to do anything I can to help," says Sue.

Born in England, where she trained as a nurse and launched her career, Sue moved to Montréal in the 1960s and worked at the Royal Victoria Hospital. She soon became aware of a challenge that continues to this day: how to care for elderly patients who no longer require hospital care yet are not yet well enough to live independently.

"In 1970s Montréal, it could take years before a bed would become available in an assisted-living home," Sue recalls. "So they remained in hospital, which wasn't designed or equipped to care for them properly. Many patients deteriorated, became depressed and gave up hope. It was heartbreaking to witness."

Sue played a central role in establishing a 40-bed restorative-care unit — among the first in a Québec acute-care hospital. While serving as Head Nurse of the unit, she continued her studies, earning Bachelor's and Master's degrees, along with a string of scholarships and service awards. She later worked at McGill University as a lecturer in Adult Education to undergraduate and postgraduate nursing students, and as Director of Douglas Residence.

The final phase of Sue's full-time career began when the Order of Nurses of Québec issued a damning review of the nursing department at two long-term care hospitals recently amalgamated under one administration. The hospital's CEO recruited Sue as Head of Nursing; four years later, the department —



*Sue Davies, Seniors Village Tenant*

and the hospital — earned exemplary standing from Accreditation Canada. After retiring from full-time work, Sue worked as a nursing consultant for several long-term care homes and continued to keep up with developments in gerontology and geriatrics.

"My brother was in long-term care at Perley Rideau and I visited him regularly for about 10 years," says Sue. "I was impressed by the quality of care he received and could tell it was ahead of its time. When the Seniors' Village was under construction, I put my name on a wait list for an apartment. When my name came up about three years ago, I moved in."

Keen to see the Centre of Excellence succeed, Sue participated in both the research-priorities survey and the technology study.

"We're fortunate to have access to someone with Sue's professional expertise and knowledge," says Danielle Sinden, Director, Centre of Excellence and Research Operations.

*"I feel like I'm in the right place at the right time," says Sue Davies. "And I look forward to doing whatever I can for the Centre of Excellence."*

*– Sue Davies*

# IN THE NEWS

**June 15, 2021**

[Perley Rideau Centre of Excellence in Frailty-Informed Care receives historic \\$2M gift from Commissionaires Ottawa](#)

**May 18, 2021**

[Mansbridge named honorary chair of Perley Rideau fundraising drive](#)

**Apr 21, 2021**

[Perley Rideau research program looks to advance elder care with intergenerational visits](#)

**March 10, 2021**

[Perley and Rideau showcasing frailty research, innovation through webinar series](#)

**February 18, 2021**

[From Expert Tips to Free Online Exercise Videos, Here's How to Stay Fit During Lockdown](#)

**February 18, 2021**

[Winter & Frailty: The Deadly Link](#)

# CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN FRAILTY-INFORMED CARE™

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