



## NEWS RELEASE

### **AGE-WELL: New National Hub for Research and Innovation to Help Seniors Live Independently and Safely at Home**

*Canada's first research network in technology and aging; researchers hit the ground running with focus on improving lives of an aging population*

**Toronto – January 19 2015** – The Honourable Alice Wong, Minister of State (Seniors) has announced that AGE-WELL NCE Inc. (Aging Gracefully across Environments using Technology to Support Wellness, Engagement and Long Life), one of Canada's newest research networks, will receive \$36.6 million over five years as part of the federal government's Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE) program. The minister made the announcement while visiting the network's research leaders in Toronto today.

"Our government is committed to investing in world-class research networks, including AGE-WELL, which will develop new technologies to help seniors live independently and safely at home. These investments will improve the quality of life of Canadians and contribute to the creation of a stronger, more innovative economy and a more prosperous Canada," Alice Wong, Minister of State (Seniors).

AGE-WELL will leverage the world-class expertise and facilities at universities across the country and a strong research and industry partnership network to establish Canada as a leader in the design and implementation of technology that improves the well-being of older people.

"We are excited about today's funding announcement and thank the government for making AGE-WELL part of the NCE program," said Mike Harcourt, Chair of the AGE-WELL Board.

This first-time network in technology and aging, AGE-WELL, brings together 26 universities and more than 70 industry and not-for-profit organizations to establish a hub of research and innovation in technology and aging.

"AGE-WELL aims to help older Canadians maintain their independence, health and quality of life through practical and affordable technologies that increase their safety and security, support their independent living, and enhance their social participation," said Dr. Alex Mihailidis, Joint Scientific Director of AGE-WELL and the Barbara G. Stymiest Chair in Rehabilitation Technology at the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute – University Health Network and the University of Toronto.

"We are harnessing advanced Information and communication technologies, sensor networks and robotics to create innovative and sustainable products and services for older people and their caregivers," says Dr. Andrew Sixsmith, Joint Scientific Director of AGE-WELL and professor and director of the Gerontology Research Centre at SFU. "We'll also be working on overcoming the ethical, social and cultural barriers to realizing the full benefits of this technology."

The AGE-WELL research plan includes an integrated set of eight themes organized by three overarching questions:

- 1) What are the needs of older adults and caregivers and how can technology be used to meet those needs?
- 2) What technology-based systems and services should be used to enhance the health and well-being of older adults and support independent living?
- 3) How can innovation be fostered in the short-and long-term to benefit older adults, health care providers and Canadian industry?

In addition to studying the ethical, policy and regulatory issues associated with new technologies, AGE-WELL will also tackle early stage funding, entrepreneurship training and other commercialization challenges.

On December 18, 2014, The Honourable Ed Holder, Minister of State (Science and Technology) named AGE-WELL as one of five research networks to receive funding. Today's announcement confirmed the government's funding amount.

#### **About AGE-WELL**

AGE-WELL NCE Inc. (<http://www.agewell-nce.ca/>, [@AGEWELL\\_NCE](#)) is a pan-Canadian network of industry, non-profit organizations, government, care providers, caregivers, end-users, and academic partners working together using high-quality research to drive innovation and create technologies and services that benefit older adults. Our vision is to harness and build upon the potential of emerging and advanced technologies in areas such as artificial intelligence (AI), e-health, information communication technologies (ICTs), and mobile technologies to stimulate technological, social, and policy innovation. Toronto Rehab, University Health Network is the AGE-WELL host institution. AGE-WELL has two core facilities: Toronto Rehab's iDAPT Centre for Rehabilitation Research and Simon Fraser University's IRMACS Centre.

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Associated Links:

[www.seniors.gc.ca](http://www.seniors.gc.ca)

<http://www.sfu.ca/grc/> <http://www.irmacs.sfu.ca>

AGE-WELL partners: <http://www.agewell-nce.ca/partners>

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