On September 20 and 21, 2018, the Canadian Frailty Network (CFN) held their 5th Annual Conference – *Improving Frailty Care Benefits Everyone*. This conference provides attendees with the opportunity to learn, network, brainstorm new ideas, and address key questions related to frailty.

This year CFN created the FRAILTY MATTERS *Innovation Showcase* to put the spotlight on Canada’s best innovations to improve care for Canadians living with frailty.

The showcase drew 80 submissions from every region of the country. The top 30 submissions exhibited storyboards at the conference, gaining national exposure. Of these 30 submissions, 2 were from New Brunswick.

The first storyboard from New Brunswick was entitled “Rehabilitation and Reablement Services for Seniors: An Integrated, Home-Based Approach to Promote Independence” by Project Lead David Arbeau, Director, Extra-Mural Program, Wester Operations, Medavie Health Services. The details on the CFN website read:

“Rehabilitation and Reablement is a patient centered, integrated service delivered in the senior’s home or assisted living facility. It is an enhanced, rapidly accessible service that provides intensive rehabilitation and reablement to promote independence so that seniors can remain in their homes longer. It is delivered in collaboration by the Extra-Mural Program (EMP) team and the Department of Social Development.

In the proof of concept, patients were screened by an Extra Mural clinician either in the hospital or community. In order to be eligible, patients needed to demonstrate the potential for improvement within 9 weeks using evidence-based assessments. Once deemed appropriate, patients were discharged from hospital within 24-48 hours with the necessary supports in place at no cost to the patient or family. Targeted diagnoses such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, congestive heart failure, diabetes, mild/moderate stroke/transient ischemic attack, falls, musculoskeletal injuries, fractures and dementia (mild to moderate) were areas of focus.

The home health care services included a team of nurses (RN and LPN), physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech and language pathologists, rehabilitation assistants, respiratory therapists, dietitians and social workers. Care was tailored to the specific needs of the patient using a tool called ‘My Health Plan’. My Health Plan uses a patient centered interdisciplinary approach in the development of the focus of care and is kept with the patient. Results were very encouraging with over 80% of seniors meeting identified goals and completing care successfully at home. Hospitalizations and ED visits were decreased, as well as overall mortality.”

The second storyboard from New Brunswick was entitled “*Nursing Homes Without Walls*” by Project Lead Suzanne Dupuis-Blanchard, Professor and Research Chair in Population Aging CFNS-Université de Moncton, Université de Moncton. The details on the CFN website read:

“Most seniors want to age at home. While the topic of ‘aging in place’ has been widely discussed in the last few years, many provinces do not have a well-organized system to provide services, especially in rural communities, that is cost-effective and meets vulnerable seniors’ needs for aging at home.”
The idea of nursing homes providing services to vulnerable seniors’ living at home is being proposed to: 1) offer services in the community by trained personnel who work at the local nursing home while also providing full-time employment to casual employees; 2) allow vulnerable seniors to age at home longer, delaying their admission to hospital and long-term care facilities; 3) provide support to caregivers as well as respite care; 4) address loneliness in seniors by providing friendly visits and calls; 5) keep older adults living with frailty healthy by providing, for example, balanced meals, exercise programs, outings, help with medication, health promotion and prevention programs.

Nursing Homes Without Walls is in its early stages and expansion is ongoing with local nursing homes in New Brunswick. Two pilot projects have been successfully conducted so far with results showing great interest and openness in the possibilities of nursing home staff providing services to vulnerable seniors in the community. Nursing Homes Without Walls has the potential to change aging at home.

Given that population aging will have an effect for the next 30 years, the proposed model is an innovative service delivery model that could continually improve the lives of vulnerable seniors.”

Congratulations to David and Suzanne.

At the conference, CFN also runs their Highly Qualified Professional (HQP)/student/trainee program. As part of this program, some HQPs are required to submit abstracts and present posters. This year there were 57 trainee posters, and many spirited discussions with conference attendees were held. Of these 57 posters, 5 were from New Brunswick:

- “Sedentary Behaviour in Long-Term Care Facilities”, Amanda Lee, University of New Brunswick
- “Falls on Geriatric Hospital Units: What Patient Characteristics are the Culprits?”, Shyane McKay, University of New Brunswick
- “Physician Perspectives of Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD): A Scoping Review”, Caitlin Robertson, University of New Brunswick
- “Utilizing a Frailty Index to Determine Pharmacological Efficacy in the Spontaneously Hypertensive Aged Rat (SHAR) Model”, Michael Connolly, Dalhousie University
- “Various patterns of physical activity are associated with greater physical function in older adults: a cross-sectional study”, Andrea Mayo, Dalhousie University.

Congratulations to Amanda, Shyane, Caitlin, Michael and Andrea.