

# HEALTHY AGING ALBERTA

## REGIONAL GATHERINGS SUMMARY

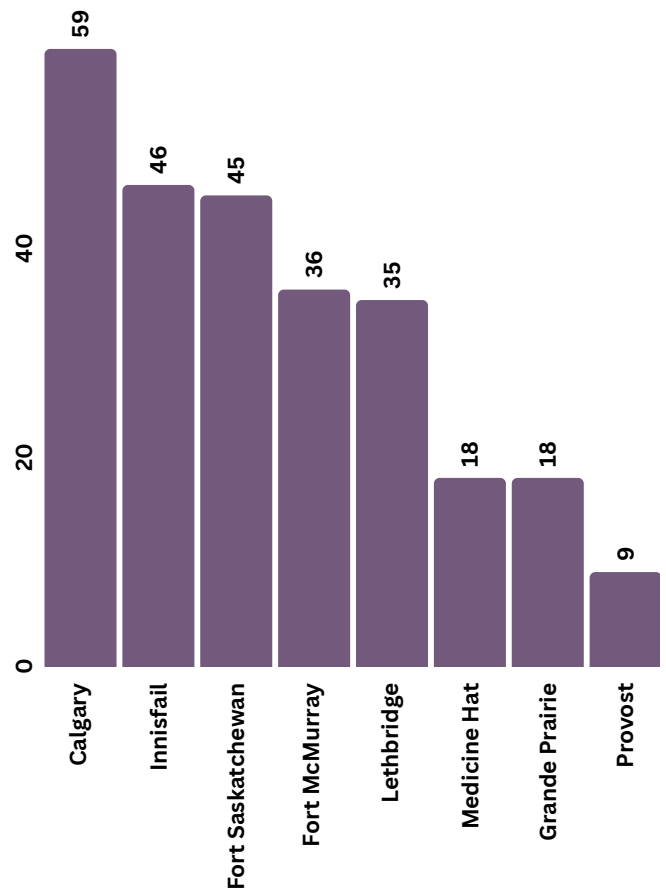
2023



A network of  
community allies  
for older adults.

# Introduction

In the Spring of 2023, Healthy Aging Alberta (HAA) hosted our second annual Regional Gatherings across the province. Eight in-person Regional Gatherings were held in Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Innisfail, Fort McMurray, Fort Saskatchewan, Calgary, Provost, and Grande Prairie. The purpose of the Gatherings was to learn from one another, strengthen regional networks, and support community-based senior serving organizations and allies from other systems, like housing and health. Each Gathering was tailored to fit regional trends and ongoing work unique to the area. We had a total of 269 participants attend the Gatherings, and travel subsidies were made available to offset any cost barriers for rural and remote attendees travelling significant distances.



Regional Community Developers started each gathering with an overview of HAA, investments facilitated by HAA including the Community & Home Supports Provincial Model, the Social Prescribing Provincial Model, and Provincial Assisted Transportation Project, as well as provincial and regional trends.

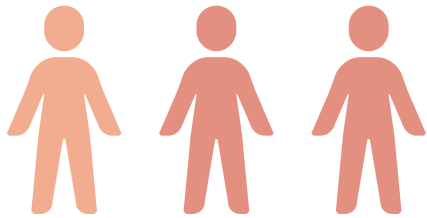
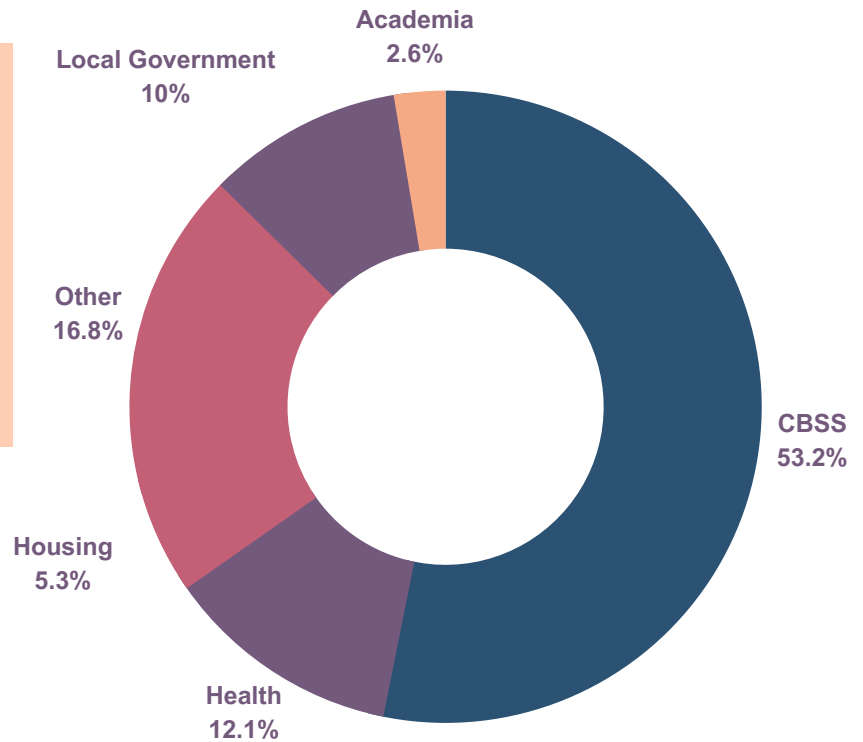
This document provides an overview of all eight Gatherings, including:

- Keynote Presentations
- Regional Priorities
- Key Learnings and Highlights

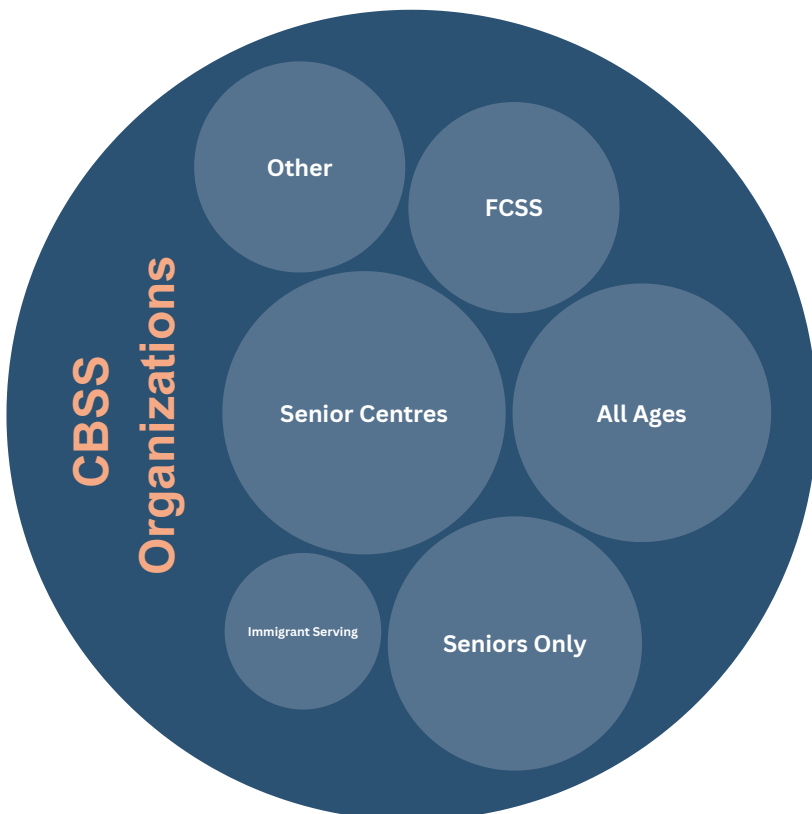


# Who Attended the Regional Gatherings?

More than half of those who attended a Regional Gathering work within a Community-Based Senior-Serving (CBSS) organization



29% of attendees are from rural or remote communities



## Breakdown of the 146 attendees from CBSS organizations:

- 36 from senior centres
- 30 from community-based organizations serving all ages
- 29 from community-based organizations only serving seniors
- 20 from FCSS
- 11 from immigrant serving organizations
- 20 from other CBSS organizations

# Southwest Region: Lethbridge Gathering

Lethbridge Senior Citizens Organization (LSCO)  
April 25, 2023

## Keynote Presentation

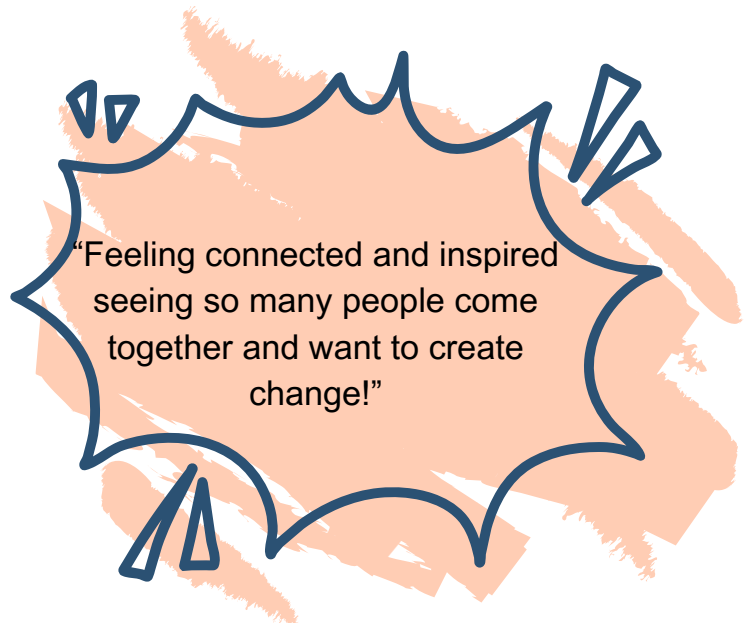
The Role of PCN Clinics in Supporting our Senior Population was presented by Kira Scott, Program Coordinator and Clinical Facilitator at the Campbell Clinic in Lethbridge. Kira spoke on the social prescribing work undertaken by the Campbell Clinic in collaboration with Lethbridge Senior Citizens Organization (LSCO). This collaborative effort focuses on a holistic care model, integrating non-medical supports like social programs, housekeeping, transportation, and service navigation into care plans for seniors. Through a formal referral pathway from healthcare professionals at the Campbell Clinic to the Senior System Navigator team at LSCO, Link Workers tailor care plans for older adults to fit their needs. Kira was then able to share three anonymous cases that involved older adults who benefited from the social prescribing work of the Campbell Clinic and LSCO's collaborative work.

Four conversation cafes were held in the afternoon and participants were able to attend three of the four. The conversation cafes were as follows:

- Benefits and Challenges of Engaging Older Adults in Health and Recreation Programming hosted by Be Fit for Life
- Reducing the Impacts of Financial Strain hosted by Chinook Primary Care Network
- Single Session Counselling Model hosted by Lethbridge Family Services
- Introduction to Volunteer Income Tax Program hosted by Barons Eureka Warner FCSS

## Regional Priorities

- Connection
- Funding
- Resources
- Transportation
- Isolation



## Key Learnings and Highlights

- This was the first Regional Gathering held in Southwest Alberta, and 35 people from the region attended the event. Eleven of the 35 attendees came from rural areas surrounding Lethbridge.
- Attendees were most excited about the collaboration, networking, funding, transportation, and social prescribing.
- Many of the gathering participants commented on how beneficial they found the afternoon conversation cafes. The cafes gave folks an opportunity to learn about local programs and services while also networking with representatives from various community organizations.



## Southeast Region: Medicine Hat Gathering

Unison at Veiner Centre  
May 3, 2023

### Keynote Presentation

Healthy Aging Alberta's Social Prescribing Project Manager, Beth Mansell, gave an overview of social prescribing, the model that's recently been developed for Alberta, and the impacts of implementing social prescribing in our communities. Beth's presentation concluded with a facilitated discussion, including questions like:

- What do you think of the model being developed?
- What do you think your role in this work is?
- How does this work benefit the 'client'?

### Regional Priorities

- Non-medical home supports
- Mental health
- Advocacy
- Collaboration
- Transportation



## Key Learnings and Highlights

- This was the second Regional Gathering held in Southeast Alberta. The number of Southeast Alberta attendees increased from eight last year to 18 this year.
- Rural attendance from Southeast Alberta increased from one attendee last year to three this year.
- While there were multiple priorities and topics that folks were excited about, social prescribing and collaboration were the most notable.



## Central West Region: Innisfail Gathering

Library Learning Centre Innisfail  
May 5, 2023

### Keynote Presentation

The keynote speakers for the morning session were Helen Lightfoot and Sharon Hamlin from Connecting People and Community for Living Well (CPCLW). They were joined by Ellen Helgason, AHS Recreation Therapist and Wendy Evans, WCPCN Geriatric Assessment Nurse from the Innisfail Community Partners in Action (CPIA). They discussed what healthy aging means as well as what is going on nationally and globally to support it. The group also dove into wellbeing and how a community response can create change. The keynote speakers encouraged attendees to consider age-related stigma, increasing awareness, and the need for intentional, long-term partnerships between health and social sectors.

Three conversation cafes were held in the afternoon, which gave everyone an opportunity to attend each café. They were as follows:

- Community Collaboration hosted by CPIA and CPCLW
- Grandparents Raising Grandchildren hosted by McMan Youth, Family, and Community Services
- Nav-CARE hosted by Olds Hospice Society

## Regional Priorities

- Transportation
- Social Prescribing
- Funding
- Advocacy
- Collaboration
- Home Supports



## Key Learnings and Highlights

- A total of 53 people attended the event which means attendance more than doubled from 2022 and 85% of attendees were from rural areas. There was representation from CBSS organizations, health, and housing sectors.
- Attendees loved having the opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations during the cafés and many exchanged contact information to discuss programs and ideas.
- People were excited about the work of HAA and the event furthered their ability to see themselves as part of it.



## Northeast Region: Fort McMurray Gathering

**Golden Years Society**  
**May 9, 2023**

### Keynote Presentation

Healthy Aging Alberta's Healthy Aging Framework (HAF) was presented by our Consultant, Anne Smith. Anne gave an overview of the HAF, presented an example of how the HAF could be used when addressing the issue of social isolation and loneliness, and facilitated an interactive session for small groups, using activities identified by participants. By working through the HAF using programs and services familiar to each group, participants could envision themselves using the framework to support their work and see the value of the HAF.



## Regional Priorities

- Transportation
- Funding
- Housing
- Age-Friendly
- Mental health



## Key Learnings and Highlights

- This was the first-ever Regional Gathering in Northeast Alberta. Three of the 36 attendees were from outside the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.
- Participants were heavily involved in the afternoon conversations and presentations. About one-quarter of the attendees presented their organization's work.
- Attendees were most enthusiastic about future collaboration, coordination, health aging, and aging in place.



## Calgary & Area Gathering

### Parkdale Nifty Fifties May 16, 2023

#### Keynote Presentation

Dr. Rose Joudi, Aging and Ethnic Diversity Consultant and Certified Professional Consultant on Aging (CPCA) spoke to attendees about the topic of ageism and links to elder abuse. The audience was challenged to think about their own ideas of age and the impact that ageism plays in much of our daily lives, leading people to think of older adults as vulnerable, less capable, and ultimately at a greater risk of suffering from serious issues, including elder abuse. Dr. Joudi led an engaging conversation and furthered learning for the attendees on ways to think about and combat ageism.

Later, a panel of four working in their respective communities presented on their journeys in promoting and building Age-Friendly strategies. Together, they brought forward discussion on how working towards implementing age-friendly strategies highlights the issue of ageism, and the particular successes and barriers that have come out of this important work.





The day continued with conversation cafes on a diverse range of organizations and topics, including:

- CIWA's Programs for Immigrant Seniors: Successes and Challenges from Calgary Immigrant Women's Association
- Exploring New Horizons: Virtual Recreation from the Brenda Strafford Foundation
- Unison Elder Abuse and Community Outreach from Unison at Kerby Centre
- Helping Indigenous Elder and Senior Community Members from Circle of Wisdom Elders and Seniors Centre

## Regional Priorities

- Collaboration
- Social Isolation
- Transportation
- Funding

## Key Learnings and Highlights

- Participants found the presentation on ageism was informative and useful and combined with the panel presentation on work happening in communities that are, or are trying to become Age-Friendly alerted everyone to the work that remains to be done around full inclusion of older adults in communities.
- Participants were very engaged and networked throughout the day, it would be helpful to provide time in the agenda for a large group discussion and feedback on current topics of interest.
- Providing a small gift and allocating time in the agenda to encourage people to fill out the post-event survey prior to the end of the event was a great success, as 43 of 65 participants (66%) provided responses.
- 21% of registrants were from surrounding communities outside of the city of Calgary up from 14% in 2022.

# Edmonton Region: Fort Saskatchewan Gathering

Dow Centennial Centre  
May 16, 2023

## Keynote Presentation

Diane Stonehocker and Cathy Aust from Age Friendly Cold Lake gave a presentation titled, Supporting Seniors in their Homes: Nav-CARE Creates Connections. Their presentation included an overview of the Nav-CARE program and focused on their success implementing and utilizing it in support older adults in their community of Cold Lake. They also spoke to the role of volunteers in this programming and how they are supported to be successful in their role as navigators for older adults.

## Regional Priorities

- Funding
- Government Funding
- Transportation
- Subsidization
- Mental Health Supports



## Key Learnings and Highlights

- Over one-third of participants were from rural communities surrounding Edmonton which is a great improvement in representation from surrounding areas.
- Participants were very engaged in the conversation cafes and enjoyed the diversity of the presentations. Social prescribing was overwhelmingly a topic that people were enthusiastic about and wanted to learn more.
- Conversation from participants was lively during the Nav-CARE presentation, but at times became unfocused. For future gatherings, we will try to keep participants focused on the learning and collaborative intentions of sharing our work.



# Central East Region: Provost Gathering

Provost Recreation & Culture Centre  
June 7, 2023

## Keynote Presentation

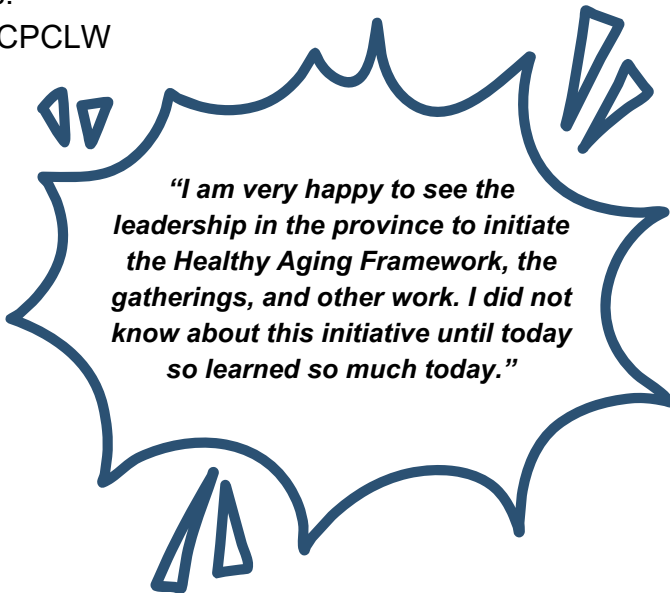
The keynote speakers for the morning session were Helen Lightfoot and Sharon Hamlin from Connecting People and Community for Living Well (CPCLW). They discussed what healthy aging means as well as national and global current events to support it. The group also dove into wellbeing and how a community response can create change. They encouraged the group to consider some of the stigma around aging, increased awareness, and appreciation for the need for intentional, long-term partnerships between health and social sectors.

Two conversation cafes were held in the afternoon, followed by a Healthy Aging Framework (HAF) session. The conversation cafes were as follows:

- A Deeper Look at the Well Being Guide hosted by CPCLW
- Nutrition and Aging Initiatives hosted by AHS Health Promotion

## Regional Priorities

- Transportation
- Advocacy for senior's voices
- Increased Programming/Education
- Collaboration



*"I am very happy to see the leadership in the province to initiate the Healthy Aging Framework, the gatherings, and other work. I did not know about this initiative until today so learned so much today."*

## Key Learnings and Highlights

- This was the first gathering in east-central Alberta and organizations were excited that HAA came to their area. While there were only 12 people registered, they were an engaged and passionate group consisting of health, housing, and CBSS organizations, all of which were rural.
- The theme of the day was the importance of collaboration as it was listed as the major take away by all the participants who responded to our survey.
- The Healthy Aging Framework was well received, and participants were excited to be offered a deck of HAF cards to use in their communities.



# Northwest Region: Grande Prairie Gathering

Golden Age Centre  
June 22, 2023

## Keynote Presentation

Healthy Aging Alberta's Healthy Aging Framework (HAF) was presented by Edmonton-North Regional Community Developer, Jasmine Elniski. Jasmine gave an overview of the HAF, presented an example of how the HAF could be used for a snow and mow program, and facilitated an interactive session for small groups, using activities identified by participants. By working through the HAF using programs and services familiar to each group, participants could envision themselves using the framework to support their work and see the value of the HAF.

Charlene Sitar, the Regional Elder Abuse Coordinator with Hinton FCSS gave a presentation on Elder Abuse and Northern Communities. She shared statistics on elder abuse as it related to northern Alberta communities and gender related homicide. Charlene spoke about prevention best practices and way that CBSS organizations can walk alongside older adults experiencing abuse.

## Regional Priorities

- Connections
- Collaboration

## Key Learnings and Highlights

- This was the first-ever gathering held in northwestern Alberta and was a great success with participants from municipalities, healthcare, and senior serving organizations in attendance.
- Participants were highly engaged in the framework session and could see how it could be beneficial to their work and could be used to help articulate impact. This was the first time that the framework had been presented in Northwest AB.
- Participants enjoyed learning about how to support increased awareness of Elder Abuse in their communities and support individuals who may be experiencing elder abuse.



# Survey Results for all Regional Gatherings

At each of the Regional Gatherings, the interactive tool, Mentimeter was used to ask attendees questions on how they feel about Healthy Aging Alberta.

## When you think of Healthy Aging Alberta, you think of...

Building a strong community-based senior serving sector that functions in a coordinated and collaborative way



Improving sector capacity and infrastructure



Improving advocacy and collective action to address priority issues affecting older adults



Amplifying the impact, reach, and scale of research and resources



Improving service delivery and system integration

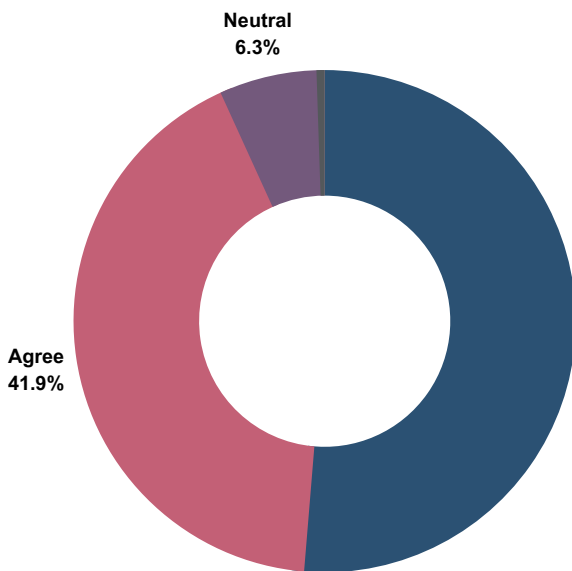
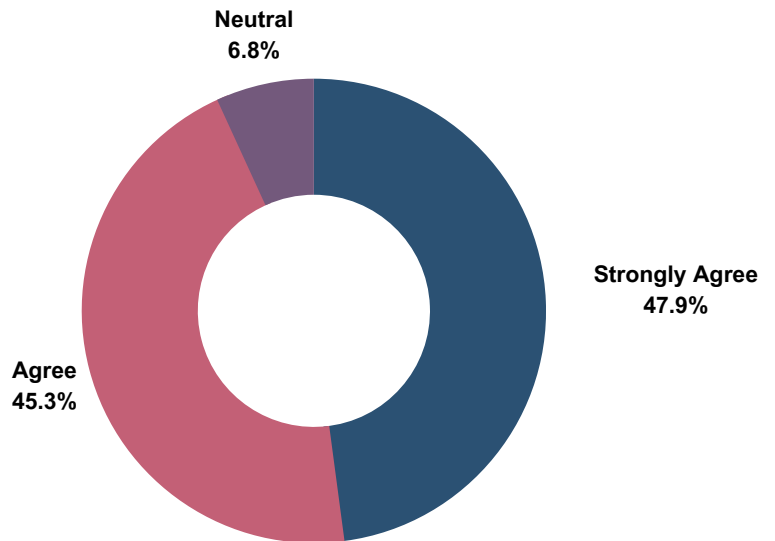


Strengthening funding coordination across the sector



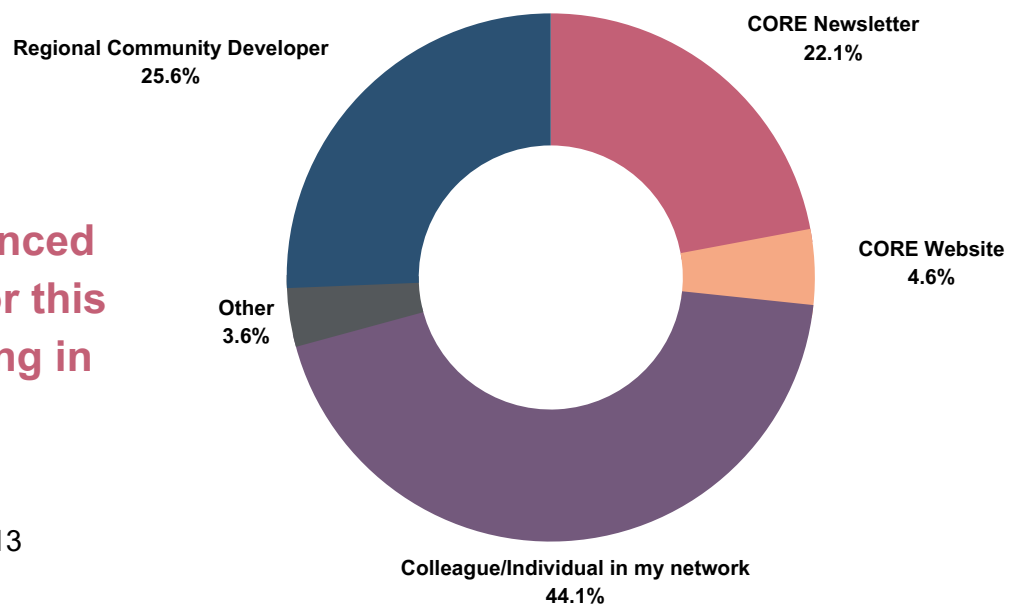
Of the 269 individuals who attended the Regional Gatherings, 193 participated in the post-event survey. Results from three multiple choice questions are below.

**Thinking about key issues in the sector, do you feel progress has been made as HAA and the network grows?**



**How do you feel about the following statement?  
You see clear and accessible opportunities to be involved with HAA.**

**What/who influenced you to sign-up for this regional gathering in particular?**





**For more information on Healthy Aging  
Alberta, Regional Gatherings, or to reach  
a Regional Community Developer in your  
area, contact  
[info@healthyagingalberta.ca](mailto:info@healthyagingalberta.ca)**



**A network of  
community allies  
for older adults.**