

# OVERVIEW OF HEALTHY AGING ALBERTA REGIONAL GATHERINGS

August 16, 2022



A network of  
community allies  
for older adults.

## A. INTRODUCTION

In May and June 2022, Healthy Aging Alberta (HAA) held six Regional Gatherings. An in-person Gathering, held in each of the five Alberta regions (North, Central, South, Edmonton, and Calgary), and one virtual Gathering, were held. This document provides an overview of these Gatherings and participants' input and identifies some next steps that build on learnings.

Alberta Region Gathering Location	Date	Number of Registrants
Edmonton Region: Spruce Grove	May 26, 2022	52
Central Region: Red Deer	May 31, 2022	30
Calgary Region: Calgary	June 2, 2022	63
Virtual Gathering	June 14, 2022	110
Northern Region: Athabasca	June 16, 2022	25
Southern Region: Bow Island	June 23, 2022	19
<i>Total Registration</i>		<i>299</i>

The purpose of the Gatherings was to support community-based senior serving professionals and their allied system partners, learn from one another, and strengthen regional and provincial healthy aging networks. Travel subsidies were made available to participants travelling significant distances.

Each Gathering was similarly formatted and a day in length. The day began with an overview and update on Healthy Aging Alberta. It followed with an orientation and workshop on the Healthy Aging Framework, a presentation and discussion on the Community-Based Seniors Serving (CBSS) Sector Systems Map, and a discussion on priorities for Healthy Aging Alberta over the next twelve to twenty-four months. These agenda items were standard content at each Gathering. In addition to these topics, Conversation Cafés enabled participants to connect and learn about regional issues and actions supporting older adults to age well in the community.

This overview provides summary information on the following:

- Conversation on the Healthy Aging Framework
- Conversation on the Community-Based Seniors Serving Sector Systems Map
- Conversation on priorities for Healthy Aging Alberta
- General comments and feedback on the Regional Gatherings

This document was prepared by Anne Smith, who delivered the presentation and workshop on the Healthy Aging Framework and attended all six Gatherings.



Calgary Region Gathering

Central Region- Red Deer Gathering

## B. CONVERSATION ON THE HEALTHY AGING FRAMEWORK

At each Gathering, a presentation on the Healthy Aging Framework was delivered, followed by a workshop using the Healthy Aging Framework Playing Cards. The particular purpose of this was to provide an orientation to the Framework and gather feedback on the framework and the Playing Cards. A key question asked of participants was: “Do you see the Framework as a useful tool that supports the work of your organization?” Overall, the response to the Framework was very positive. Participants indicated that they understood the Framework, saw value in it and could see using the Framework to support their work.

Comments about the Framework made by participants include:

- The Framework will help conceptualize the work of CBSS and to show to funders
- Building a shared language will support the seniors serving sector in communicating with others
- As a private consultant, I can see myself in this Framework
- The metrics (outcomes) within the Framework align with my service metrics
- Appreciate the Framework's flexibility, that it is not locked down in stone, and that you can enter into the Framework in different ways
- Development of the Framework seems collaborative
- See the connection between the Framework and Age Friendly
- Like that the Cards are colour coded
- Can see the interconnection of the Service Areas
- Like the chart that connects the planning process to the Healthy Aging Framework
- Like that the Framework is not prescriptive
- Great tool to highlight needs in the community
- The outcomes and impacts can lead to systemic advocacy for ethnocultural communities, Indigenous communities, and other communities
- Framework can support systems navigation. Suspect that rural areas need more navigation support than urban areas

Participants did have questions and suggestions for improvement to the Framework. The most substantive comments were made concerning equity, diversity, and inclusion from a content perspective. This feedback includes the following:

- Develop an overarching statement on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Suggest some questions/prompts related to equity, diversity, and inclusion to prompt those using the Healthy Aging Framework
- Think through how equity and inclusion are best addressed
- Consider the Health Impact Assessment – address health equity within the Framework
- Do we explicitly mention Indigenous/ethnocultural groups? Is it better to name them explicitly so they do not get missed?
- Suggest that equity, diversity, and inclusion not be separated (see impact and outcome cards) but be integrated into everything
- The Framework is good and useful, but it seems to need a few more layers of cards - ones for identity and ones for senior identified needs. What you have so far is a great tool for an organization to articulate what it does and what it is trying to do, but it doesn't systematically identify the gaps in programming that some seniors are experiencing, the barriers to participation and the ways we can articulate it, and then collectively work together to address

these issues. Perhaps we need to develop a programming checklist to help organizations see gaps. Off the top of my head, here are some categories that affect the equity of services. I'm sure there are more:

- Language skills
- Transportation
- Income level
- Understanding of the system
- Literacy
- Trauma
- Health
- Immigration status
- Mobility

Other suggestions for refinements of the Healthy Aging Framework and the Playing Cards<sup>1</sup> were made and are outlined below.

Refinements/questions related to the content of the *Healthy Aging Framework* are:

- How were the Six Determinants of Healthy Aging developed? Evidence-based? Why six Determinants and not four?
- What is the distinction between the impact of increased social connectedness and the impact of reduced social isolation?
- Suggest further grouping of content as they are too similar. Too many similar impacts.
- There is repetition across the Outcomes. Can this be addressed?
- Indicators are needed for the Outcomes.
- How will the issue of sustainability be addressed? Could the HAF include something about revenue generation?
- Need to develop a wheel or a pie model. Use this visual to show how a Determinant of Healthy Aging is connected to specific Impacts, Service Areas and Outcomes.
- Pilot test the HAF with an Age Friendly community.
- What is the connection between Healthy Aging Outcomes and FCSS outcomes?
- Is Healthy Aging Alberta connected to the Seniors Health Strategic Clinical Networks Primary Health Care Integrated Geriatric Services Initiative (PHC IGSI)?
- Can CORE Working Groups be connected to/organized related to the Healthy Aging Framework?
- Is the Healthy Aging Framework available for public use?
- Are there a preferred number of Service Areas and Outcomes for an organization?
- What government funding is available to support collaborative initiatives?

Refinements/questions related to the *Healthy Aging Framework Playing Cards* are:

- Colour code the Determinant of Healthy Aging Impact/Determinants of Healthy Aging Sheet so it is easy to use with the Cards

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<sup>1</sup> The Healthy Aging Framework Playing Cards are a tool that transpose the Framework components on to cards to support easy application and use. For the Virtual Gathering, a virtual version of the Healthy Aging Playing Cards was developed using Mural.

- Make the typing of the Service Areas on the Cards bigger
- Can you create a distinct set of Cards for the Service Areas? This will make this part of the process easier
- Put the Service Areas at the top of the Cards not the bottom
- Make the colour of the Cards more distinct – some colours are very similar, and this makes them hard to use
- Number the Card bags, so you know which is the first deck to use
- Would like to see something digital for the Playing Cards. Can you make a virtual platform for the Cards?

Of the twenty-one individuals who completed the follow-up Evaluation Survey, fourteen identified the Healthy Aging Framework as one of the most enthusiastic content areas. In addition, sixteen individuals identified they would be interested in further engagement with the Framework. In three of the six Gatherings (Edmonton, Central, and North), building a common language and refining the Healthy Aging Framework was explicitly identified in the priority discussion for Healthy Aging Alberta.

As a follow-up to each Gathering, the *Healthy Aging Framework Primer* and the PowerPoint presentation on the Framework were circulated to all registrants (See [HEALTHY AGING FRAMEWORK - CORE Alberta](#))

The next steps in developing and refining the Healthy Aging Framework are:

- Continue to pilot test the Framework over the Summer and Fall of 2022
- Finalize the detailed Healthy Aging Framework Handbook that is in the development stage
- Finalize the Healthy Aging Framework Playing Cards
- Develop a virtual tool based on the Healthy Aging Framework Playing Cards
- Continue to provide application support to organizations through their Regional Community Developer



Northern Region- Athabasca Gathering

## C. CONVERSATION ON THE COMMUNITY-BASED SENIORS SERVING SECTOR SYSTEMS MAP

Systems Mapping is a tool that creates a visual representation to help name and identify the different elements of a system by explicitly showing how elements interact. The CBSS Systems Map enables community-based senior serving organizations to form more intentional connections across the province and supports the development of a shared mental model both within and outside the sector. The Map can help an organization find areas where relationships can be created, work can be scaled, or gaps can be identified.

At each Gathering, Healthy Aging Alberta Regional Community Developers presented the CBSS Systems Map and how it can be used. Overall, the response to the Map was very positive. Some participants knew about the Map, but for others, this presentation was their first exposure to the Map. Participants were very positive about the real-time information provided by the Map and the potential to identify common ground, connections, service gaps, and to support systems navigation. Participants were informed during the discussion that the Regional Community Developers are available to support organizations adding information to and using the Map.

Comments made by participants concerning the Systems Map were:

- The Map will support the identification of whom to connect and partner with
- So many times, staff changes result in a loss of connection and the Map supports understanding and maintaining connections
- Great visual tool to convey connectedness and see other service organizations in your region
- Helps make connections to other beneficial information
- Value of the Systems Map is that it builds and makes connections around common issues
- The Map is a great resource tool. We get a lot of calls asking, "Where do we find resources?"
- Useful in helping make connections to clients to a range of services
- The Map is definitely helpful around case management and referral
- The more information we gather, the more robust the MAP will be
- Reaching out to others is working in the dementia care area
- Mapping work is helpful. One of the myths is that community development connections work is natural. This is a qualitative artifact that helps tell the story.
- This model of mapping is used to undertake community development asset mapping
- Partnerships can be developed across regions as well as in regions
- Often, we do not think about how the organizations we work with connect to others. Project partners often connect you to others with common interests.
- See the Systems Map as a launching pad for collaboration
- Systems Map could help us understand what is available outside of our service area

Refinements/questions related to the content of the Systems Map raised by participants were:

- How is the Map kept current?
- Is the Map geared to individuals or organizations?
- Does the Map offer program-specific information?
- Will the Map show geographic regions?
- Can the Hospital 2 Home (H2H) Framework be placed on the Systems Map?
- Are smaller communities using the Systems Map?

- Can the Map address age cohorts for the services provided given the broad age cohort of seniors?
- Can you click on a determinant for Healthy Aging colour code and see the organizations focused on the Determinant?
- Mapping sub-sectors within the sector will be useful. For example, organizations that address elder abuse.
- Several inter-agency groups exist in the north that make connections and coordinate activity. Also, many organizations are making connections to Councils. We should ensure this information is captured on the Map.
- Potential funding sources and home supports are future directions for the Mapping initiative.
- Social network analysis could be done on this tool.
- Appreciate the Map is developed for professionals, but families also need this information.

Of the twenty-one individuals who completed the follow-up Evaluation Survey, nine individuals identified the Systems Map as one of the most enthusiastic content areas. In addition, nine individuals identified they would be interested in further engagement on the Systems Map. In five of the six Gatherings (Edmonton, Calgary, North, South, and Virtual) the Systems Map was explicitly identified in the priority discussion for Healthy Aging Alberta.

The following steps in the development of the CBSS Sector Systems Map are:

- Add home supports and funding data to the Map
- Support organizations to provide and add to their organizational data
- Continue to promote and create awareness about the Systems Map



Calgary Region Gathering

## D. CONVERSATION ON HEALTHY AGING ALBERTA PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT 12 TO 24 MONTHS

At each Regional Gathering there was a discussion on priorities for Healthy Aging Alberta over the next twelve to twenty-four months. Gathering participants were asked three questions:

1. What are the priorities you hope Healthy Aging Alberta will focus on over the next twelve to twenty-four months?
2. Are there any opportunities or challenges in your region that you think Healthy Aging Alberta might be able to address or advance?
3. Any other feedback or thoughts?

A facilitated discussion of these questions occurred at each Gathering, and participants were encouraged to complete the *Sector Check-In Questions Sheet* to provide their input. The results of these discussions/input are presented by region below. The results were developed by reviewing all input and clustering this input into common themes. Several common priorities emerged when the input from each region was consolidated into a provincial snapshot. The results of the discussion on priorities are an important source of input into Healthy Aging Alberta's planning processes.



Northern Region- Athabasca Gathering



## a. Northern Region

### *Priorities for Healthy Aging Alberta*

Twelve priorities for Healthy Aging Alberta were identified:

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: This priority is focused on ensuring equity of services for older adults in Northern Alberta. Regional disparities need to be addressed.

Funding: This priority includes improving funding collaboration and the alignment of funding. Concern was expressed with the downloading of government responsibilities onto communities.

Building and Enhancing the CBSS Systems Map: This priority includes continuing to develop the Systems Map. The Systems Map should be part of CORE Alberta.

Providing Ongoing Network and Connection Opportunities: This priority includes continuing to create opportunities for networking and connections across organizations. Healthy Aging Alberta should reach out to those not participating and build networks.

Building Common Language and Refining the Healthy Aging Framework: This priority includes continuing to refine the Healthy Aging Framework and developing consistency of language across the sector. Socializing the Framework's language and building the Framework into CORE were identified as part of this priority.

Addressing Service Gaps and Issues: This priority includes addressing the service gaps and issues faced by older adults. The following gaps and issues were identified by participants:

- Inequities in service access for older adults living in the north.
- Access to transportation in rural communities.
- Home care. It was noted that you could not age at home if no home supports are available.
- Provide services and supports related to elder abuse.
- Social Prescribing.

Cross-Sectoral Coordination and Action: This priority includes developing connections and collaborating with other sectors such as health and housing.

Advocacy: This priority includes advocating for a full range of accessible and affordable services for older adults. Elder abuse was raised as an important issue for advocacy. There is a need for the return of the Seniors Advocate.

Providing Supports for Aging in Place: This priority includes putting needed supports in place to enable older adults to age in place. Home care is a key issue related to this priority.

Public Awareness and Education on Aging: This priority includes creating public awareness and education on aging and addressing ageism.

Community Engagement: This priority includes listening to older adults and engaging all regions and communities. The voice of older Albertans must be heard.

Hire a Regional Community Developer: Addressing this priority will ensure a Regional Community Developer is in place to support the Northern Region. The challenge Healthy Aging Alberta is facing in recruiting for this position is a common one, and the result is that the interests of the north are not well represented.

### *Challenges and Opportunities*

Challenges identified by the participants are:

- Issues and solutions needed for older adults in rural communities
- The impact of limited access to health care for older adults in the north
- Funding
- Access to transportation
- Affordable and accessible housing
- Need to acknowledge that technological solutions are not accessible for all and/or do not work well for all older adults
- Voice and perspective of the north is heard, and concerns are acted upon
- Elder abuse

Opportunities identified by the participant are:

- Advocacy: giving the north a stronger voice
- Networking and collaboration activities
- Creating public awareness of elder abuse issues
- Using the CORE platform to address service gaps and issues

### *Other Feedback*

With respect to other input, participants expressed appreciation for the Gathering. Issues with respect to other thoughts and feedback were:

- Older adults in rural/remote communities often must leave the community they live in to have connections to appropriate housing as no staged housing is available



Northern Region- Athabasca Gathering



Edmonton Region Gathering

## b. Edmonton Region

### *Priorities for Healthy Aging Alberta*

Eight priorities for Healthy Aging Alberta were identified:

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: This priority has many components, including addressing rural inequities, responding to issues and service gaps for Indigenous and marginalized individuals, and demonstrating a commitment to the equity principle through action.

Funding: This priority includes improving funding collaboration, aligning funding, and developing a stronger understanding of the funding available to older adults and how it can be accessed.

Building and Enhancing the CBSS Systems Map: This priority includes continuing to develop the Systems Map and adding program and funding information to the Map.

Providing Ongoing Network and Connection Opportunities: This priority includes continuing to create opportunities for networking and connections across organizations.

Building Common Language and Refining the Healthy Aging Framework: This priority includes continuing to refine the Healthy Aging Framework and developing consistency of language across the sector. Participants are very interested in aligning the Healthy Aging Framework outcomes with the funding-based outcomes developed by FCSS and AHS.

Addressing Service Gaps and Issues: This priority includes addressing the service gaps and issues faced by older adults. The following gaps and issues were identified by participants:

- Rural service access
- Home care
- Addressing restrictive eligibility criteria

Cross-Sectoral Coordination and Action: This priority includes continuing to develop connections and take action with other sectors such as health and housing.

Develop Common Priorities for the Sector: This priority includes developing a common focus/shared outcomes for collective action within the sector.

### *Challenges and Opportunities*

Challenges identified by the participants are:

- Issues and solutions needed for older adults in rural communities
- The impact of limited access to health care for older adults in the north
- The varied definitions used to define older adults and the breadth of the senior's population
- Funding
- The role of for-profit organizations in the sector
- Equity and inclusion
- Access to transportation
- Affordable and accessible housing
- Changing the perceptions of aging in our communities
- Consistency throughout government and non-government organizations
- Need to acknowledge that technological solutions are not accessible for all and/or do not work well for all older adults

Opportunities identified by the participants are:

- Developing connections for technological applications with the private sector
- Increasing awareness/education of resources for organizations and older adults to support aging in place
- Making connections to existing organizations/activities. For example, the [Edmonton Seniors Alliance](#)

### *Other Feedback*

With respect to other input, participants expressed appreciation for the Gathering. They made some process suggestions for future Gatherings, such as more and shorter breaks and increased opportunities for networking. Issues raised with respect to other thoughts and feedback are:

- Suggest you do not use the terms sector when developing the Framework and evaluation. Explore language already being used by funding sources, AHA, AHS, FCSS - easy-to-adopt language that is well established.
- Considering thoughtful shared programming to support equitable service.
- Use Twitter and LinkedIn.

## c. Central Region

### *Priorities for Healthy Aging Alberta*

Eleven priorities for Healthy Aging Alberta were identified:

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: This priority includes ensuring all action is assessed using the Health Equity Lens, addressing rural inequities, and responding to issues and service gaps for Indigenous and marginalized individuals.

Providing Ongoing Network and Connection Opportunities: This priority includes continuing to create opportunities for networking and connections across organizations.

Building Common Language and Refining the Healthy Aging Framework: This priority includes continuing to refine the Healthy Aging Framework and developing consistency of language across the sector. It was suggested the Healthy Aging Framework Playing Cards be printed so that they can be purchased.

Addressing Service Gaps and Issues: This priority includes addressing the service gaps and issues faced by older adults. The following gaps and issues were identified by participants:

- Transportation
- Food safety/security
- Support for life transitions. Transitions to retirement and transition from larger to smaller communities were specifically identified by participants.
- Addressing social isolation
- Affordable and accessible housing. It was noted that access to assisted living in one's home community is needed.
- Meeting the needs of older adults living in poverty
- Providing systems navigation support

Cross-Sectoral Coordination and Action: This priority includes continuing to develop connections and take action with other sectors such as health and housing.

Caregiver Support: This priority includes acknowledging and providing support to both formal and informal caregivers.

Access to Medical Services and Supports: This priority includes issues related to accessing a family doctor, accessing mental health services, and accessing dementia care. It was noted that accessing a family doctor is particularly difficult in rural and remote communities.

Advocacy: This priority includes advocating for a full range of accessible and affordable services for older adults.

Intergenerational Connections: This priority includes developing intergenerational connections for older adults.

Providing Supports for Aging in Place: This priority includes putting needed supports into place to enable older adults to age in place.

Hire a Regional Community Developer: Addressing this priority will ensure a Regional Community Developer is in place to support the Central Region.

### *Challenges and Opportunities*

Challenges identified by participants are:

- Funding
- Transportation: cost, consistency, and accessibility. Medically assisted transportation was identified as a key challenge
- Affordable and accessible housing
- Need to acknowledge that technological solutions are not accessible for all and/or do not work well for all older adults
- Access to health care (includes access to family doctors and mental health supports)
- Systems navigation
- The continuous engagement of seniors
- Addressing complex needs

Opportunities identified by participant are:

- Social Prescribing
- Using the Healthy Aging Framework

### *Other Feedback*

With respect to other input, participants expressed appreciation for the Gathering. Issues raised with respect to other thoughts and feedback are:

- Need more rural communities. This is where there are the largest gaps in the system.
- I would like to know if anything will actually be done and how it will be done.



Central Region- Red Deer Gathering



Calgary Region Gathering

#### d. Calgary Region

##### *Priorities for Healthy Aging Alberta*

Seven priorities for Healthy Aging Alberta were identified:

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: This priority includes responding to issues and service gaps for Indigenous and marginalized individuals and demonstrating equity principles through action.

Funding: This priority includes improving funding collaboration and the alignment of funding. The Funders Table should be made a priority. Sharing of financial resources and the development of a sustainability plan are other issues that need to be addressed.

Building and Enhancing the CBSS Systems Map: This priority includes continuing to develop the Systems Map. It was suggested that the Map could be used to identify transportation needs and issues.

Providing Ongoing Network and Connection Opportunities: This priority includes continuing to create opportunities for networking and connections across organizations. It was noted that connecting to other initiatives such as Age-Friendly and H2H2H (Home to Hospital to Home) is very important.

Addressing Service Gaps and Issues: This priority includes addressing the service gaps and issues faced by older adults. The following gaps and issues were identified by participants:

- Strengthening the capacity of local organizations
- Increasing accessibility to programs and services
- Transportation
- Addressing social isolation
- Housing. This priority includes providing affordable housing for older adults. Access to assisted living in one's home community is needed.

Cross-Sectoral Coordination and Action: This priority includes continuing to develop connections and action with other sectors such as health and housing.

Providing Supports for Aging in Place: This priority includes putting needed supports in place to enable older adults to age in place.

### *Challenge and Opportunities*

Challenges identified by participants are:

- Issues and solutions are needed for older adults in rural communities
- Funding
- Access to transportation
- Affordable and accessible housing
- Changing the perceptions of aging in our communities
- Need to acknowledge that technological solutions are not accessible for all and/or do not work well for all older adults

Opportunities identified by participants are:

- Develop an effective phone system for seniors
- Develop more public and private partnerships
- Develop stronger connections with Age Friendly initiatives

### *Other Feedback*

With respect to other input, participants expressed appreciation for the Gathering and made some process suggestions for the future. It was suggested that the Healthy Aging Framework Playing Cards be presented as part of a binder that provides information on how to use the Cards. Issues raised related to other thoughts and feedback section are:

- Public/private sector partnerships
- Pilot the Healthy Aging Framework with Age-Friendly initiatives
- Create easy-to-use provincial transportation systems that will support transportation in rural communities



Calgary Region Gathering





Southern Region- Bow Island Gathering

## e. Southern Region

### *Priorities for Healthy Aging Alberta*

Eight priorities for Healthy Aging Alberta were identified

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: This priority is focused on ensuring equitable seniors' services. Inequities in service access in rural and remote communities need to be addressed.

Building and Enhancing the CBSS Systems Map: This priority includes continuing to develop the Systems Map. This will support the identification of service gaps and policy issues.

Providing Ongoing Network and Connection Opportunities: This priority includes continuing to create opportunities for networking and connections across organizations.

Addressing Service Gaps and Issues: This priority includes addressing the service gaps and issues faced by older adults. The following gaps and issues were identified by participants:

- Addressing social isolation
- Elder abuse
- Home care
- Systems navigation
- Implementing Social Prescribing

Advocacy: This priority includes advocating for a full range of accessible and affordable services for all older adults. Advocacy related to the issue of elder abuse was raised as an important issue for advocacy. There is a need for the return of the Seniors Advocate.

Community Engagement: This priority includes listening to older adults and engagement of all regions and communities. It is critical that the voice of older adults be heard and amplified.

Community Building: This priority includes developing a sense of belonging and community within seniors-serving organizations and facilities.

Healthy Aging Alberta Resource Development and Awareness: This priority includes the dissemination of Health Aging Alberta resources and creating awareness of these resources. Continuing to build tools and needed infrastructure to create a “good stage” for organizations/the sector to perform.

### *Challenges and Opportunities*

Challenges identified by participants are:

- Issues and solutions are needed for older adults in rural communities
- Definition of the term “seniors” and the breadth of this population
- Funding
- Equity and inclusion
- Changing the perceptions of aging in our communities
- Lack of interest in community connection and loyalty

Opportunities identified by participants are:

- Advocacy- Using the Systems Map to identify gaps/focal points for advocacy
- Plugging into and connecting with existing networks for support

### *Other Feedback*

With respect to other input, participants expressed appreciation for the Gathering. Issues raised related to other thoughts and feedback section are:

- Social Prescribing- A question was asked about whether a virtual platform would be put into place to enable Social Prescribing. It was suggested a virtual platform will be needed for Social Prescribing.



Southern Region- Bow Island Gathering



## f. Virtual Gathering

### *Priorities for Healthy Aging Alberta*

Thirteen priorities for Healthy Aging Alberta were identified

Equity Diversity and Inclusion: This priority has many components, including addressing rural inequities and responding to issues and service gaps for Indigenous and marginalized individuals. It is essential to connect with unserved and underserved populations and older adults falling through the cracks.

Funding: This priority includes improving funding collaboration, the alignment of funding, and advocating for funding to support needed programs and services.

Building and Enhancing the CBSS Systems Map: This priority includes continuing to develop the Systems Map and adding both program and funding information to the Map. It was also suggested that settlement services, Indigenous health organizations, and provincial Healthy Aging Councils could be added to the Map.

Providing Ongoing Network and Connection Opportunities: This priority includes continuing to create opportunities for networking and connections across organizations.

Addressing Service Gaps and Issues: This priority includes addressing the service gaps and issues faced by older adults. Participants identified the following gaps and issues:

- Providing services closer to home
- Transportation
- Systems navigation
- Food safety/security
- Affordable housing
- Addressing the needs of rural clients
- Home care supports
- Advance care planning
- Access to mental health services
- Emergency disaster planning for seniors
- Providing a one-stop shop for programs and service access
- Supporting seniors to use technology
- Needs assessment

Cross-Sectoral Coordination and Action: This priority includes continuing to develop connections and take action with other sectors such as health, housing, immigration and settlement services.

Develop Common Priorities for the Sector: This priority includes developing a common focus/shared outcomes for collective action within the sector. Examples of areas of common focus are elder abuse, fall prevention, and dementia.

Caregiver Support: This priority includes acknowledging and providing support to both formal and informal caregivers.

Advocacy: This priority includes advocating for a full range of accessible and affordable services for older adults. Advocacy is needed for funding from the government. There is a need for change with respect to individual services for older adults and to systems.

Community Engagement: This priority involves listening to older adults and engagement of all regions and communities. It is critical that the voice of older adults be heard and amplified. It is important to empower older adults.

Community Building: This priority includes developing a sense of belonging and community within senior-serving organizations and facilities and with older adults accessing services.

Healthy Aging Alberta Resource Development and Awareness: This priority includes the dissemination of Health Aging Alberta resources and creating awareness of these resources.

Value Front-Line Delivery Staff: This priority includes providing equitable and adequate pay and job security to staff who are providing direct services to seniors. Training and education are also essential.

## *Challenges and Opportunities*

Challenges identified by participants are:

- Funding
- Equity and inclusion
- Access to transportation
- Affordable and accessible housing
- Need to acknowledge that technological solutions are not accessible for all and/or do not work well for older adults
- Providing more resources for the 55+ age cohort
- Federal/provincial/territorial policy groups need to understand how and why immigrant seniors become targets for abuse/exploitation – the reason is immigration/sponsorship conditions
- Competition across organizations- There is a need for more integration across organizations

Opportunities identified by participants are:

- Access to AHS Health Promotions Facilitators
- Advocacy
- Collaboration across various organizations
- Keep building the Systems Map
- Undertake mailout advertisements
- Increase coordination between the healthcare system and community-based organizations (For example: making connections with primary care navigators)
- Put local advocates in place to support older adults
- Provide more fall prevention classes – virtual and in-person
- Build connections to rural municipal governments
- Leverage the free delivery of Mental Health First Aid

## *Other Feedback*

With respect to other input, participants expressed appreciation for the Gathering and did make some process suggestions for future gatherings. Participants identified that it is very important to identify who is not at the table and then involve them in the conversation. Issues raised with respect to other thoughts and feedback are:

- Understandable language – do not use the term equity-seeking older adults
- As currently structured, RFPs are counterproductive to social change efforts
- Agree a summit is worthwhile
- Need at the federal and provincial level to provide adequate funding to enable older adults housing to accommodate aging in place
- Need resources
- Can we have a general referral source for older adults?
- Encouraging seniors to participate and to get out – how to encourage boomers to engage in seniors' activities?

- United Way Calgary and Area's role as the backbone to Healthy Aging Alberta is so important. This type of collaborative work does not happen without a backbone organization to pull it all together. Great work UWCA and HAA leadership.

## Provincial Summary

When looking at the input on priorities as a whole, Gathering participants identified both common priorities and distinct regional priorities. Overall, nineteen priorities were identified by participants. See *Appendix 1: Priorities, Challenges, and Opportunities* for a chart that shows a comparison of priorities raised by Gathering.

Priorities identified in three or more Gatherings are:

- Equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Funding
- Building and enhancing the CBSS Systems Map
- Providing ongoing network and connections opportunities
- Building common language and refining the Healthy Aging Framework
- Addressing service gaps and issues
- Cross-sectoral coordination and action
- Advocacy
- Providing supports for Aging in Place
- Community engagement

Priorities identified in less than three Gatherings are:

- Develop common priorities for the sector
- Hire a Regional Community Developer
- Public awareness and education on aging
- Caregiver support
- Access to medical services and supports
- Intergenerational connections
- Community building
- Healthy Aging Alberta resource development and awareness
- Value front-line delivery staff

In the discussion of challenges, participants again identified common challenges and challenges that were unique to their region. See *Appendix 1: Priorities, Challenges, and Opportunities* for a chart that shows a comparison of the challenges raised by Gathering.

Challenges identified in three or more Gatherings are:

- Issues and solutions for older adults in rural communities.
- Funding
- Access to transportation
- Affordable and accessible housing
- Need to acknowledge technological solutions do not work for all older adults
- Equity and inclusion

Challenges identified by less than three regions are:

- Impact of limited access to health care in the north
- Voice and perspective of the north is heard
- Access to health care
- Elder abuse
- Varied definitions of older adult and the breadth of the senior's population
- Role of the for-profit organizations within the sector
- Consistent through government and non-government organizations
- Systems navigation
- Changing perception about aging in our communities
- Continuous engagement of older adults
- Lack of interest in community connection and loyalty
- Providing more resources to 55+
- Competition across agencies
- Federal/provincial/territorial policy groups need to understand why immigrant seniors become targets for abuse and exploitation

In the discussion of opportunities, participants identified common opportunities and opportunities that were unique to their region. See *Appendix 1: Priorities, Challenges, and Opportunities* for a chart that shows a comparison of the opportunities raised by Gathering.

Opportunities identified in three or more Gatherings are:

- Advocacy
- Networking and collaboration

Opportunities identified by less than three regions are:

- Creating public awareness of elder abuse issues
- Using CORE to address service gaps and issues
- Developing technology applications with the private sector
- Increasing awareness/education of resources for organizations and older adults to support aging in place
- Social Prescribing
- Using the Healthy Aging Framework.
- Develop an effective phone system for seniors
- Develop more public and private partnerships
- Develop stronger connections with Age Friendly initiatives
- Access AHS Health Promotion Facilitators
- Keep building the Systems Map
- Leverage the free delivery of Mental Health First Aid
- Provide more fall prevention classes
- Build connections with rural municipal governments
- Put local advocates for older adults in place
- Collaboration between healthcare and community-based seniors serving organizations.
- Undertake mailout advertisements

## E. GENERAL COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK ON THE REGIONAL GATHERINGS

A post Gathering Evaluation Survey was sent out to all participants after each Gathering. A total of twenty-one individuals responded to the Survey. See *Appendix 2: Overview of Gathering Evaluation* for the detailed results of this Evaluation. Overall, the Survey results indicate respondents saw value in the content presented, were interested in learning more, and made connections with others.

The majority of respondents identified the Gatherings as very useful. All participants agreed that they have:

- Gained new knowledge or connections that will support their work;
- Feel empowered to participate in collaborative work to create systems-level change;
- Feel like they belong to the CBSS sector network; and
- Would invite colleagues to similar events.

In addition, fifteen respondents strongly agreed with the statement, *“I feel I could reach out and form relationships with professionals who attended today’s events.”* Five respondents agreed with the statement and one individual was neutral.

All twenty-one respondents answered yes to the question, *“After attending the Regional Gathering, do you have a better understanding of the work of the Healthy Aging Alberta initiative?”*

When asked about what they were most enthusiastic about given the Gathering content:

- Fourteen respondents identified the overall Healthy Aging Alberta initiative;
- Twelve identified the Healthy Aging Framework;
- Nine identified the CBSS Systems Map; and
- Five identified the work occurring in my region that was shared during the Conversation Café (Note: some respondents identified more than one content area).

Most respondents indicated they would be interested in joining future engagement about the Healthy Aging Framework and/or the Systems Map. Eleven respondents indicated they would like to discuss other skills and resources that they or their organization could contribute.

Regarding the Gathering structure and process, nine respondents indicated they selected a Gathering session based on alignment with geographic location, and twelve indicated they selected the date and time that worked best for them. Fourteen respondents found the format very effective, and seven respondents found the format somewhat effective.

Respondents were asked to identify priorities, challenges, and opportunities for Healthy Aging Alberta. The priorities identified are captured in the analysis of the discussion on Healthy Aging Alberta priorities that occurred at each Gathering. The challenges and opportunities also echo the discussion at the Gatherings.

Overall, the Evaluation Survey results indicate that respondents found a high level of value in the Gatherings.



## F. CONCLUSION

The purpose of the six Healthy Aging Alberta Gatherings held in May and June of 2022 was to support community-based older adults serving professionals and their allied systems partners to learn from one another and to strengthen regional and provincial healthy aging networks. This purpose was realized.

As a result of the Gatherings participants:

- Are better informed about Healthy Aging Alberta, the Healthy Aging Framework and the Community-Based Seniors Service Sector Systems Map;
- Provided input into the further development of both the Healthy Aging Framework and the Community-Based Seniors Service Sector Systems Map;
- Identified priorities for Healthy Aging Alberta over the next twelve to twenty-four months, and the challenges and opportunities where Healthy Aging Alberta could play a role;
- Had opportunities to network and hear about action with their own region; and
- Provided feedback on improving the effectiveness of future Gatherings.

The overall feedback on the Gatherings and their value/benefit to participants is very positive.

## G. APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Priorities, Challenges, and Opportunities

#### *Priorities by Gathering*

Priority	North	Edmonton	Central	Calgary	South	Virtual
1. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion	x	x	x	x	x	x
2. Funding	x	x		x	x	x
3. Building and Enhancing the Systems Map	x	x		x	x	x
4. Providing Ongoing Network and Connections Opportunities	x	x	x	x	x	x
5. Building Common Language and Refining the Healthy Aging Framework	x	x	x			
6. Addressing Service Gaps and Issues	x	x	x	x	x	x
7. Cross-Sectoral Coordination and Action	x	x	x	x		x
8. Develop Common Priorities for the Sector		x				x
9. Hire a Regional Community Developer	x		x			

<b>Priority</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>Edmonton</b>	<b>Central</b>	<b>Calgary</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>Virtual</b>
10. Advocacy	x		x		x	x
11. Proving Supports for Aging in Place	x		x	x		
12. Public Awareness and Education on Aging	x					
13. Community Engagement	x				x	x
14. Caregiver Support			x			x
15. Access to Medical services and supports			x			
16. Intergenerational Connections			x			
17. Community Building					x	x
18. Healthy Aging Alberta Resource Development and Awareness						x
19. Value Front-line Delivery staff					x	x

### *Challenges by Gathering*

<b>Challenges</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>Edmonton</b>	<b>Central</b>	<b>Calgary</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>Virtual</b>
Issues and solutions for older adults in rural communities	x	x		x	x	
Impact of limited access to healthcare in the north	x	x				
Funding	x	x	x	x	x	x
Access to transportation	x	x	x	x		x
Affordable and accessible housing	x	x	x	x		x
Need to acknowledge technological solutions do not work for all older adults	x	x	x	x		x
Voice and perspective of the north is heard	x					
Access to health care	x		x			
Elder abuse	x					
Varied definitions of older adult and the breadth of the senior's population		x			x	
Role of the for-profit organization within the sector		x				
Equity and inclusion		x			x	x
Changing perception about aging in our communities		x		x	x	

<b>Challenges</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>Edmonton</b>	<b>Central</b>	<b>Calgary</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>Virtual</b>
Consistent through government and non-government organizations		X				
Systems navigation			X			
Continuous engagement of seniors			X			
Lack of interest in community connection and loyalty			X			X
Providing more resources to 55+						X
Competition across agencies						X
Federal/provincial/territorial policy groups need to understand why immigrant seniors become targets for abuse and exploitation						X

### *Opportunities by Gathering*

<b>Opportunity</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>Edmonton</b>	<b>Central</b>	<b>Calgary</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>Virtual</b>
Advocacy	X				X	X
Networking and collaboration	X	X			X	X
Creating public awareness of elder abuse issues	X					
Using CORE to address service gaps and issues	X					
Developing technology applications with the private sector		X				
Increasing awareness /education of resources for organizations and seniors to support aging in place		X				
Social Prescribing			X			
Using the Healthy Aging Framework			X			
Develop an effective phone system for older adults				X		
Develop more public and private partnerships				X		
Develop stronger connections with Age Friendly initiatives				X		
Access AHS Health Promotion Facilitators						X
Keep building the Systems Map						X

Leverage the free delivery of Mental Health First Aid						X
Provide more fall prevention classes						X
Build connections to rural municipal governments						X
Put local advocate for older adults in place						X
Collaboration between healthcare and community-based seniors serving organizations						X
Undertake mailout advertisements						X

## Appendix 2: Overview of Gathering Evaluation

### Respondents by Region

Region	# of Responses
North	2
Edmonton	3
Central	2
Calgary	3
South	3
Virtual	8

### Respondents by Role

Role	# of Responses
Organizational Leadership	11
Organizational Staff	4
Volunteer	2
AHS Employee	2
Government of Alberta Employee	2

Overall, the Evaluation indicates that respondents saw value in the Gatherings, wanted to learn more about Gathering content, and did have opportunities for networking.

### Gathering Impact

Questions:	# Respondents		
	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not Useful
Was the Gathering useful?	17	4	0

## Respondent Satisfaction

Questions:	# Respondents				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<i>I have gained new knowledge or connections that will support my work to enhance the lives of older adults in Alberta</i>	13	7	0	0	0
<i>I feel empowered to participate in collaborative work to create systems-level change</i>	14	7	0	0	0
<i>I feel like I belong to the CBSS sector network in Alberta</i>	15	5	0	0	0
<i>I feel could reach out and form relationships with professionals who attended today's events</i>	15	5	1	0	0
<i>I would invite colleagues to similar events</i>	16	5	0	0	0

## Healthy Aging Alberta Awareness

Questions:	# Respondents	
	Yes	No
<i>After attending the Regional Gathering do you have a better understanding of the work of the Healthy Aging Alberta initiative?</i>	21	0

The following comments were made by respondents to add further insight into their answer to this last question:

- What an amazing and worthwhile event. The content was relevant and inspiring, and the connections made are vital.
- Great day. So good to meet in person to connect, learn, and share. Appreciate the opportunity to learn about new tools, try them out and provide input. Thank you.
- Excellent presentations, wonderful speakers. Well done CORE.
- Exceptionally well-done session! Fantastic.
- I believe the growth and continued operation of the CORE network is vital to addressing the needs of our population in Alberta.
- The framework and tools will be extremely helpful when looking to acquire funding or partnering with others in the community. The mapping will also help to understand where the gaps may be and where we can do a better job of collaborating to support seniors in our region.
- Love that there is a common framework with common language that unites the seniors service sector. I would love to learn more.

Evaluation respondents saw value in the content presented at the Gatherings, have further questions about this content, and would like to continue to be engaged in the work of Healthy Aging Alberta. The Gatherings sparked an interest in the work of Healthy Aging Alberta and the desire for further conversation and involvement in this work.

When asked about what they were most enthusiastic about given the Gathering content:

- Fourteen respondents identified the overall Healthy Aging Alberta initiative;
  - Twelve identified the Healthy Aging Framework;
  - Nine identified the Systems Map; and
  - Five identified the work occurring in my region that was shared during the Conversation Café.
- 
- In terms of further questions about Gathering content:
  - Seven respondents identified they had further questions about Systems Mapping;
  - Six respondents identified they had further questions about the work occurring in their region;
  - Two respondents identified they had further questions related to the overall Healthy Aging Alberta initiative;
  - Three respondents identified they had further questions about the Healthy Aging Framework; and
  - One respondent identified they had a question about government support for Healthy Aging Alberta.

In terms of future engagement:

- Sixteen respondents indicated they would be interested in joining future engagement about the Healthy Aging Framework;
- Nine respondents would be interested in future engagement related to the Systems Map; and
- Eleven respondents indicate they would like to discuss other skills and resources that they or their organization could contribute.

In terms of Gathering structure and process, nine respondents indicated they selected a Gathering session based on alignment with geographic location, and twelve respondents indicated they selected the date and time that worked best for them.

Overall respondents did find the Gathering format effective. Fourteen respondents found the format very effective, and seven respondents found the format somewhat effective.

Respondents indicated that the following was effective about the format:

- Everything ran on time, there was sufficient breaks, the content was interesting, and the venue was lovely
- Growth opportunity, informal, participatory, time to make connections
- Easy to see presentations and worktables were useful
- Very well organized and delivered
- Ability to interact with individuals and groups from all over Alberta without having to travel
- Effective use of online technology for collaboration (e.g., Menti.com)
- In-person, small size, and ability to connect and share with others
- The time and place

Respondents indicated that the following was ineffective about the format:

- Would have preferred more interaction or movement around to different tables during the event to promote more networking
- The Conversation Cafés were a long-time frame at the end of the day
- It was difficult to see the screen from where I was sitting
- I had trouble with joining in on this virtual meeting which meant that I was over 30 minutes late and did not hear the introduction
- The Conversation Cafés were not delivered in the conversation style, they were more like presentations - still very informative and useful, but not conversations

When asked if they would join CORE, nineteen respondents indicated they were a member of CORE and two individuals indicated that they would join CORE. The identified reasons for joining CORE are that CORE aligns with their work responsibilities and is an incredible resource.

Respondents were asked to identify priorities for the Healthy Aging Framework. The following priorities were identified:

- Transportation
- Reducing isolation
- Creating new programs for seniors to attend
- Love the Systems Mapping and Framework. Keep doing what you are doing.
- Caregiver support
- Affordable housing
- Community engagement and mobilization to increase awareness, knowledge and collaboration on healthy aging best practices, tools, resources, etc.
- Home supports
- Becoming a stronger advocate for systems change
- Access and isolation
- Emergency preparedness
- Developing the Systems Map. Educating groups/individuals on its use
- Dementia care and Compassionate Communities
- Launching at least two new older adult programs based on the needs in the community and reaching out to ensure that our organization is mapped properly
- Advocating for legislation to address elder abuse
- Ongoing development of the Social Prescribing model we are currently implementing
- Training board members and other stakeholders to encourage the use of the Framework

It should be noted that these priorities are captured in the analysis of the discussion on Healthy Aging Alberta priorities that occurred at each Gathering.

Respondents were asked to identify opportunities and challenges for Healthy Aging Alberta. The following were identified:

- Support expanding housing and service options for aging Albertans
- Continue forging ahead in connecting, educating, and resourcing practitioners serving older adults
- Develop partnerships to create local communities of practice to guide and advance this work.
- Lack of resources

- The need for coordination and advocacy
- Access to information and technology for lower-income older adults
- Emergency preparedness
- I think that there is a need to address the adaptation of homes to deal with our aging population in terms of advice and funding sources
- Support expanding housing and service options for aging Albertans
- Lack of volunteers participating in elder care
- Funding
- Creating more public awareness about elder abuse

This input provides further insight into the challenges and opportunities discussed during the Gatherings.

At the end of the Survey, respondents were asked if they had any other feedback. The following responses were provided:

- The development of this approach has been a long time coming and I think the province will benefit substantially by the work it can and will undertake on behalf of seniors.
- I was expecting that there would be more volunteers present at this event. The audience seemed to be mainly agency staff members.
- Dietary restrictions - if there is lunch being provided, it would be beneficial to either ask if anyone has dietary restrictions or post what will be served to people so they know to bring something if they cannot eat what is provided. (I have Celiac disease and cannot eat gluten - the only food I could eat were carrots and snap peas.) I don't always expect to be accommodated and have brought some of my own food. However, to know what will be served can help for those who are travelling to bring additional items to eat.
- It was a great day, thank you so much.
- Thank you for such a great event!
- Excellent work! Thank you.

Nine respondents said they would like Healthy Aging Alberta to follow up with them directly.



Central Region- Red Deer Gathering





A network of  
community allies  
for older adults.