



THE ACTIVE LIVING COALITION FOR OLDER ADULTS

ALCOA Cancer Project: Results and Resources

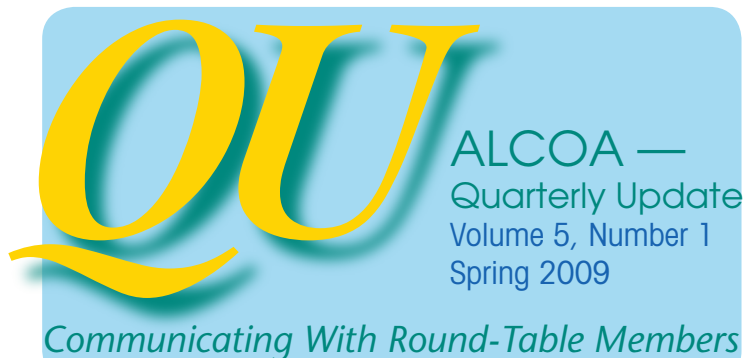
A holistic model to active living for older adults with cancer and cancer survivors

Funding through the Public Health Agency of Canada provided ALCOA with the financial support to work with the UW WELL-FIT program, at the University of Waterloo, in Ontario, to investigate issues surrounding older adult cancer patients and exercise. The project is now complete and ALCOA has obtained excellent results from the project and has developed some very useful resource material for your use as a health practitioner, and for cancer patients and cancer survivors.

Webinar

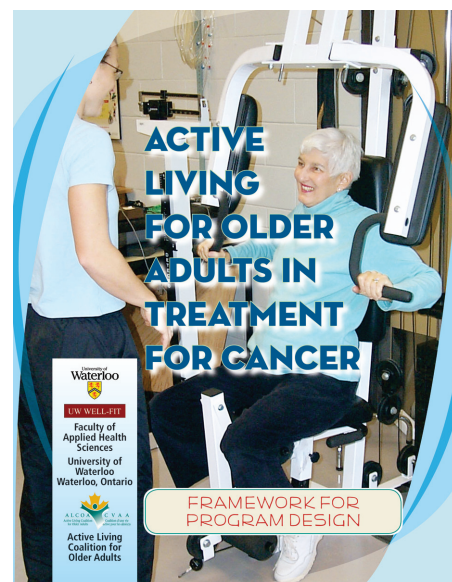
ALCOA hosted a complimentary webinar on March 27th. The presenter was Caryl Russell, Manager of the UW WELL-FIT Centre. Caryl provided a summary of the project results and highlighted the program offered at the UW WELL-FIT centre. There were over 50 participants on the call, from all provinces in Canada. The feed back was very positive:

- 💧 "...our team found it very interesting and informative. It defiantly got the wheels turning." Averill, MB
- 💧 "...wonderful program and information," Bev, SK
- 💧 "Very good conference," Gaétane, NB
- 💧 "Very interesting and I look forward to sharing this with colleagues here at CancerCare Manitoba." Annitta, MB
- 💧 "Lots of great info that was very clear and informative. Excellent!!!" Clara, ON
- 💧 "That is an exciting program and I am glad that I got to hear it," Bethe, AB
- 💧 "I am very interested in implementing a cancer program at the club." Tracy, ON



Active Living for Older Adults in Treatment for Cancer – Framework of Program Design

This 60-page 'how-to' manual was developed by Caryl Russell and her team at the UW WELL-FIT centre. It provides the reader with a step by step approach to develop an exercise program for cancer patients. The manual also includes sample forms and a short educational DVD that can be used for viewing by your clients. The manuals may be ordered (free of charge) from the office, or downloaded from the ALCOA web site.



As noted in the manual, "Negative side effects of cancer treatment may include: fatigue, muscle weakness, nausea, depression, lymphedema, decreased immune function, weight gain or loss, and decreased aerobic capacity. Appropriate, individualized exercise programs help reduce the severity of these symptoms and side effects leading to an improvement in the quality of life."



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Background Paper on Older Adult Cancer Survivors and Exercise – Following Treatment

This paper provides the scientific evidence to support two documents produced by ALCOA, for the use of health and fitness practitioners, and older adult cancer survivors. The author of the paper, Bill Hearst, reviewed over 200 abstracts, short listed 80 potentially relevant articles and selected 49 related articles for this paper.

The paper reviews cancer statistics, conditions affecting older adult cancer survivors, the role of exercise for cancer survivors, implications, contraindications, and precautions for exercising. A copy of the background paper will be mailed to ALCOA members, however you may also download the 20-page document from the web site.

Practitioner Handout

The intent of this document is to create an awareness with health and fitness practitioners of the need to encourage older adult cancer survivors to participate in physical activity programs. The document provides the relevant scientific information relating to physical activities, safety, benefits, prudent first steps, etc. The benefits of exercise for older adult cancer survivors are numerous, and the large number of older adult cancer survivors is always increasing!

The research conducted by ALCOA has uncovered that there are only a few exercise programs for cancer patients and/or survivors in Canada. This research summary will be available in the upcoming months.

This document is available in both French and English, and will be mailed to ALCOA members. It is also posted on the ALCOA web site.

Consumer Handout

The intent of this flyer is to create awareness with older adult cancer survivors about the benefits of physical activity post treatment, and

also to encourage older adults to take small steps towards making a behavioural change towards becoming physical activity. It is a short and easy-to-read pamphlet, in which we want older adults to understand that it is safe, easy, fun, enjoyable, and very beneficial to be an active cancer survivor.

A copy of the flyer will be mailed to ALCOA members. If you would like to receive several copies of this pamphlet please contact the ALCOA office. This document is available in both French and English.

Best Wishes to Jennifer Dechaine

Jennifer Dechaine has been on maternity leave for the past year, from her position as the Older Adult Coordinator at the Alberta Centre for Active Living. Now after much thought, she has decided not to return to work, but instead continue on at home with her family responsibilities.



Jennifer has made a significant contribution to the work of the Centre for many years. She was involved with Ever Active Adults, Active Independence, and the Rural Route to Active Aging. She is well known in the physical activity field and in the many Alberta communities she visited in her role with the Centre.

Nationally, Jennifer contributed to many initiatives through the Active Living Coalition for Older Adults as a Guardian, CAAWS, and the Canadian Centre for Active Aging.

Jennifer will be missed, but we wish her much happiness and success with her new family.



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Roundtable Member Spot Light

National Indian & Inuit Community Health Representatives Organization

The National Indian & Inuit Community Health Representatives Organization (NIICHRO) incorporated in 1992, works on behalf of Community Health Representatives (CHR). The CHR is a front-line paraprofessional health care provider serving in First Nation and Inuit communities since the early 1960s. Most of the CHRs are First Nation or Inuit and work in communities that are remote or isolated. As an organization, we provide an annual National Training Session promoting wholistic health and to build capacity on various issues ranging from abuse prevention, tobacco abuse/misuse, injury prevention and diabetes... to developing resources on HIV/AIDS to keeping older Aboriginal elders active.

One of the many strengths of CHRs is that they work with all age groups from young woman and couples in a pre-conception stage, to keeping older adults active, to providing assistance and comfort to the frail and elderly. The CHR's approach is to look at health from a wellness model using health promotion, health education and disease prevention initiatives. The CHRs play a vital role as key individuals in community health, who know and monitor the pulse of their community's well being. As front-line health care providers, they are the first line of defense in identifying a problem and to facilitate interventions in collaboration with other members of their health team.

When working to keep older adults

socially, physically, mentally and spiritually active, CHRs utilize the strengths of the elders. The elders are the holders of knowledge and are often asked to participate in activities that involve youth so as to build a bridge between these two age groups. One means is by storytelling. Facilitating such activities enables the elder to pass on their traditional knowledge while the youth gain a better understanding of their cultural background.

CHR's also help their community elders by offering them information on improving or maintaining a healthy lifestyle. They emphasize the importance of keeping strong relationships with family and friends, raise awareness about having a clean, smoke-free environment and promote eating of a balanced diet for overall well-being.

For close to 50 years, CHRs have served Aboriginal communities and as a result, are considered experts in the area of their communities' health. NIICHRO and many others organizations and government departments often requests their input when Aboriginal strategies are being developed. NIICHRO proudly promotes the work of its membership – the CHRs, as they humbly take any and all measures in serving to improve the health of their community.





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ALCOA Member Spotlight

Debbie Dedam-Montour

Debbie Dedam-Montour, a Mi'kmaq from the Listuguj First Nation in Quebec, Canada has been involved with capacity building of Aboriginal people since 1989. Her first position was that of an Employment Recruitment Officer for the Quebec Native Women's Association where she developed an Aboriginal Human Resources Directory; then with the Aboriginal employment and training strategy Pathways to Success, at which time she was Executive Director of the Aboriginal Workforce Association of Montreal until 1998.

For Aboriginal health workers, building their capacity began through her work at the National Indian & Inuit Community Health Representatives Organization (NIICHO). She joined NIICHO in 2000 when she began as Trust Administration Officer for the wage parity compensation awarded to Community Health Representatives (CHR Settlement Trust). For the 2002 National Training Session, she was selected as one of NIICHO's Trainer for Spirit in Motion. This training resource promotes active living among the aging population and was delivered to the CHRs and other Aboriginal health workers. Being a trainer increased her knowledge and allowed her to experience the level of understanding and commitment that CHRs provide in their daily work.

In February 2004, she became the Executive Director of NIICHO, where she works at developing resources for Community Health Representatives (CHRs) and brings forward their interests, issues and propositions to address concerns at

various levels. She also believes it's very important that when opportunities arise, to facilitate CHR attendance at events, so that they can bring their own voice to regional, national and international forums. Another means used to develop skills at the community level is by being a member of a national team of the 5-year research project titled 'Changing the "culture of smoking": Community-based Participatory Research (CBPR) to empower Inuvialuit communities', which is hosted by NIICHO.

Working on behalf of CHRs has provided Debbie with many learning opportunities; developing competencies for Aboriginal paraprofessional health workers for NIICHO's Road to Competency initiative; an annual visit to a community as a member of the First Nations, Inuit & Métis Health Committee of the Canadian Paediatrics Society; as a planning committee member for various conferences.

Working on behalf of the CHRs is very important to Debbie. She considers it truly an honour and a privilege to represent the interests of CHRs, Aboriginal front-line paraprofessional health workers who have contributed to community development for almost 50 years.



*Debbie Dedam-Montour
Executive Director, NIICHO*