

Reducing Social Isolation of Seniors

With funding from the New Horizons for Seniors program through Employment and Social Development Canada, the Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit (SPHERU) at the University of Regina is collaborating with provincial agencies to evaluate the effectiveness of programs to reduce social isolation experienced by urban and rural seniors in central and southern Saskatchewan.

The agencies – the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism, the Alzheimer’s Society of Saskatchewan, and the Canadian Red Cross (Saskatchewan) – along with SPHERU and the Lifelong Learning Centre at the University of Regina have come together to form the *Reducing Isolation of Seniors Collective (RISC)*.

Each organization will conduct one or more projects that address social isolation of seniors. Guiding the work of the collective is the Saskatchewan Impact Plan, outlining the goals and outcomes for each organization’s RISC projects.

SPHERU’s role in the collective is to conduct an evaluation to assess the outcomes of the Saskatchewan Impact Plan. Evaluating the outcomes of the RISC projects will enable policy makers, communities and stakeholders to become more aware of the needs of older adults and find ways to strengthen both the view of seniors as valuable contributing members of society, and their connections with others.

The evaluation provides SPHERU with an opportunity to use innovative approaches that will contribute to the growing field of collective impact evaluation research. While the focus is on measuring collective outcomes, SPHERU will also assist the RISC partners at the project level by providing feedback on project processes and advising and supporting data collection.

Evaluation outputs will include an evaluation framework, logic model and a final report assessing the level of change achieved on each of the impact plan outcomes. SPHERU will present these findings and results of the evaluation at a one-day policy summit where policy and community representatives from Central and Southern Saskatchewan will be in attendance.

Leading the team of SPHERU researchers is Dr. Bonnie Jeffery (Social Work), along with Evaluation Oversight Committee members Dr. Tom McIntosh (Politics and International Studies), Dr. Nuelle Novik (Social Work) and Dr. Chad Nilson of Living Skies Centre for Social Inquiry.

Contact info: Sharianne Caffet, Project Coordinator at shari.caffet@uregina.ca