



Roadmap and Strategic Plan for the Improvement of Seniors' Information Services and Resources

Report

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The Working Group included representatives from the following organizations:

Alberta Health (Ministry)

Alberta Health Services

Alberta Senior's Communities & Housing Association (ASCHA)

Alberta Seniors (Ministry)

ASSIST Community Services Centre

City of Edmonton

Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (ESCC)

Greater Edmonton Foundation for Seniors Housing

Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton (SAGE)

United Way of the Alberta Capital Region

Executive Summary

Overview

Age Friendly Edmonton (AFE) has identified access to information as a key component of an age-friendly city and has formed an Information and Communication Working Group to ensure seniors and those who support them have easy access to information. Zenev and Associates were contracted to develop a model and research-based recommendations for optimizing existing information and communication systems of organizations involved in providing services and information to seniors through collaborative and coordinated actions.

Throughout the Project, an engaged and participatory qualitative approach was utilized to reflect the complex field of information about seniors' programs and services and to involve Project Working Group members and other key stakeholders in some or all aspects of the research. Data was collected through research conversations, interviews and focus groups, an environmental scan and a literature review. Data was analyzed to yield a set of draft recommendations that were presented to the Working Group for feedback and subsequently revised to produce the final recommendations in this report.

Summary of Findings

Research data confirms that while information systems and excellent communications practices matter to and for the well-being of seniors, one method of communication cannot be expected to meet the complex information needs of all seniors. A variety of information and communication methods and technologies are required to meet the information needs of seniors and those who care for them.

Technology can pose a barrier for seniors trying to access information. While seniors are increasingly going online, some seniors do not turn to the Internet for information because of challenges such as the cost of technology, its design, and a lack of skills to navigate the Internet. To address these communications challenges, good design for print and digital communication is important, as is ensuring that information is disseminated through a variety of avenues to seniors themselves and to those who work with and care for seniors. A number of studies indicate that seniors actually prefer getting information from trusted sources such as caregivers, physicians and family members.

The information and communications field is complex. In the absence of cooperation and collaboration among communications and information professionals, this complexity can itself become a barrier to access. Some form of cooperation might address information providers' current challenges related to information gathering and verification, and inconsistencies in

terminology. Research on collaborative information sharing models surfaced two approaches: a centrally coordinated model and a non-centralized collaborative model, the latter appearing more appropriate given the current context in Edmonton. Research data reveals that organizations providing information to and for seniors have a strong interest in pursuing opportunities for collaboration to achieve efficiencies, produce better information, and enhance the professional profile of those involved in information provision for seniors.

Foremost among the ideas about how to collaborate was to develop/create a network of information and communications professionals working in the area of seniors services and programming. Such a network is viewed as being able to address some of the issues relating to overlap, duplication and inconsistency that were identified in the research and would be a vehicle for collaborative projects to improve information and communication practices.

In addition, a number of enablers that might make the work of collecting and disseminating information easier were identified. These enablers include: developing organizational priorities relating to communication, developing a common language among organizations, and developing extensive networks. As well, many participants articulated a desire to strengthen the professionalism and expertise within the field in order to ultimately better serve seniors.

Recommendations

The thirteen recommendations in this report are framed within a collaborative systems model, detailed later in the report, that emphasizes both collaboration and independence. Currently, each information source for seniors can be thought of as an individual system, guided by an organizational mandate and using a set of processes for collecting, updating and disseminating information. The conceptual model and the recommendations to support its development offer a process and framework for a collaborative system that connects the existing individual systems without consolidating them. The specific recommendations include actions that organizations can take on their own, as well as collaborative projects that one or more organizations can jointly undertake.

1. Interested agencies, organizations, and key stakeholders should form an Information and Communication Network (ICN) to identify processes for collaboration and projects that would benefit from working in concert.
2. Allocate resources for an ICN Coordinator to support the development and ongoing operation of the Network.
3. Document current information sources by creating and maintaining an inventory of all available sources.

4. Identify incorrect or inconsistent information and establish a mechanism to ensure the accuracy and reliability of information across sources, and to coordinate the verification of information.
5. Encourage and support organizations to provide information in alternative formats suitable for all seniors, including vulnerable and marginalized seniors.
6. Draw on past research (including Phase 1 and 2) that identifies the information needs of vulnerable and marginalized seniors, and use it to develop a plan to address needs and gaps.
7. Design and develop an online information hub that contains a set of links to existing, stable information sources for seniors that are maintained by individual organizations.
8. Wherever possible, modify current information sources to provide links to other relevant sources and organizations to facilitate connection within the system.
9. Wherever possible, create shared language and terminology related to programs and services for seniors, and include a glossary with the information source.
10. Support provision of education for information providers to enhance knowledge and skills related to communications with seniors in the information and communication field.
11. Develop standards and tools to collect data about users of information sources and evaluative data about user satisfaction.
12. Develop guidelines for communication strategies that are effective with seniors and ensure these guidelines are incorporated into information sources.
13. Create an online repository for sharing tools and promising practices for information providers, including those developed through the ICN's activities.

1. Project Background and Goals

Cities across the globe are taking action to enhance the health and participation of seniors as they age. Edmonton's commitment to the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and *The Vision for an Age-Friendly Edmonton Action Plan* (ESCC, 2011) provide important support and direction for projects and initiatives directed at improving the well-being of seniors.

Age Friendly Edmonton (AFE) has identified access to information as a key component of an age-friendly city. AFE has formed an Information and Communication Working Group to ensure seniors and those who support them have easy access to the information they need, when they require it. In 2013, the Information and Communication Working Group embarked on Phase 1 of a three-phase project to enhance information for seniors. The objective of Phase 1 was to explore how seniors access information, the resources they use and how they prefer to access information.

In February 2015, Zenev and Associates was contracted to undertake Phase 2 of the project, initially aimed at creating a comprehensive, cohesive information services system for print and digital materials for older adults in Edmonton.

All phases of the Project were guided by a Project Coordinator who is a member of AFE's Information and Communication Working Group, and the Project Working Group recruited specifically for Phase 2.

1.1. Project Goals

The goals in Phase 2 have been dynamic, shifting in response to learning throughout the Project. As is the case in any good engagement process, the voices and perspectives of those involved in the Project influenced the process as it emerged and shaped the Project goals in significant ways.

Project goals were originally oriented towards a singular comprehensive model for communications and included:

- Establish a Project Working Group to guide the Project at each stage and foster learning and communication amongst Working Group

Information and Communications System

For the purposes of this Project, an information and communications system consists of the processes required to collect and update information for a specific information source, and the mechanisms to distribute the information source.

An example of an information and communication system is the set of processes required to collect and update information for SAGE's Directory of Seniors Services (the information source) and the mechanisms used to distribute the directory.

members.

- Develop recommendations for enhancing the delivery of information that is needed by and relevant to seniors.
- Develop a plan for a sustainable, comprehensive, coordinated communication model.

Early in the Project, research findings from the literature, along with Working Group and stakeholder consultations, revealed the incredible complexity of the communication and information systems that touch in some way on information for seniors in Edmonton. This learning led to a shift in the Project goals. While the overall aim of improving communication and information systems in order to better serve seniors did not change, the goal of developing a sustainable, comprehensive, coordinated communication model shifted to the following:

Project Goal:

Develop a model and research-based recommendations for optimizing existing information and communication systems of organizations involved in providing services and information to seniors, through collaborative and coordinated actions.

1.2. Project Overview

The Project was designed to enable responsive shifts as research results unfolded. The initial findings of the Project led to revised goals, which were carried into the first round of data collection. These goals were developed more concretely through the analysis of data from the first round, and brought forward in the second round of data collection. The data from the second round was analyzed and shared with the Working Group for verification and contextualization. The findings from the two rounds of data collection were used to develop a set of draft recommendations, which were presented to the Working Group. Feedback from the Working Group was incorporated into the final recommendations included in this report.

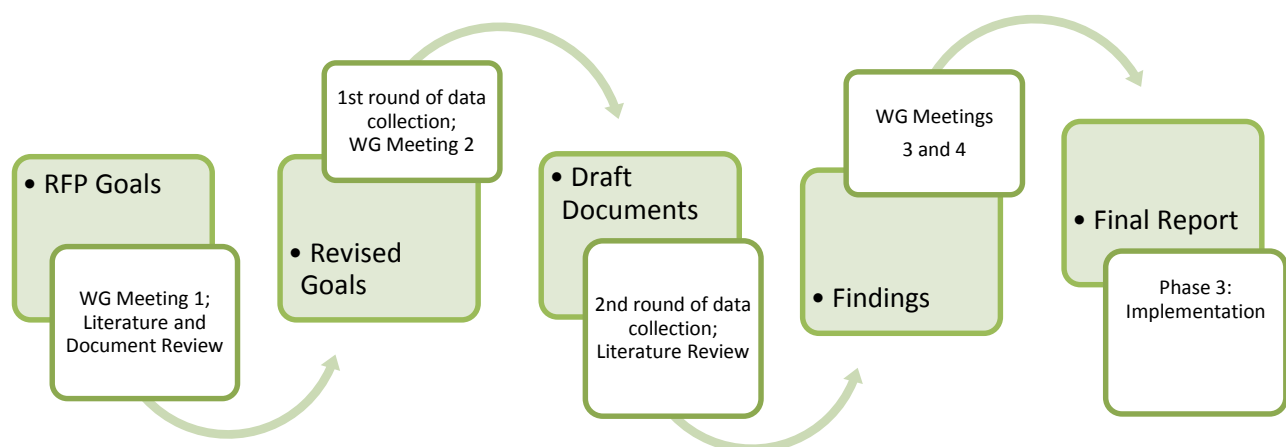


Figure 1: Project Overview

Figure 1 depicts the recursive nature of the research design, the process of data collection and Working Group involvement, most of which took place through Working Group meetings.

1.3. Project Working Group

As the diagram above demonstrates, the Working Group has been an important touch point throughout the research process, and study participants have been engaged in multiple discussions, each building on one another. This process provided opportunities to shape and reshape ideas for optimizing systems and to build excitement and support for the implementation phase.

Working Group members were recruited by the Project Coordinator, with an eye to including professionals involved in information and/or communications activities at/with organizations that provide information or services to seniors. Recruitment continued throughout the Project as new organizations and information providers were discovered.

The role of the Working Group was to guide Phase 2 of the Project, participate in the research aspect of the Project, and share information and resources that might contribute to the Project goals. To guide the Working Group participation in this Project, a Working Group Charter (see Appendix A) was shared at the first Working Group meeting and revisited when the Project goals shifted.

Working Group members included representatives from the following organizations:

- Alberta Health (Ministry)
- Alberta Health Services
- Alberta Senior's Communities & Housing Association (ASCHA)
- Alberta Seniors (Ministry)
- ASSIST Community Services Centre
- City of Edmonton
- Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (ESCC)
- Greater Edmonton Foundation for Seniors Housing
- Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton (SAGE)
- United Way of the Alberta Capital Region

2. Data Collection

This section outlines the methodology and methods used for data collection.

2.1. Methodology

Given the interest in both process and concrete outcomes expressed in the Project RFP, this research was designed as an engaged and participatory qualitative study. Qualitative research aims to understand phenomena, often with an eye to context and complexity (Creswell, 1998). Qualitative methodology was chosen in order to enable Zenev and Associates to unearth and explore the complexities of different work environments, organizational cultures, information collection and sharing approaches, and valuation of collaboration on the part of the Working Group.

An engaged and participatory qualitative approach adds an additional dimension of complexity to the research, moving beyond one-way collection of data from study participants to involve participants in some or all aspects of the research. In this study, many research participants also sat on the Working Group and therefore played a role in shaping the research aims, provided feedback and contextualized findings, and helped to make sense of the research implications.

2.2. Methods

Research data for this Project was collected through a variety of mechanisms. Early in the Project Zenev and Associates hosted a conversation with Working Group members and facilitated a mapping of their connections. Data was also collected through a scan of information sources, a review of academic and grey literature (which was augmented after the change in program goals), and research conversations that included discussions with Working Group members and other stakeholders.

2.2.1. Mapping Working Group Member Connections

Working Group participants were split into small groups of 2-4 and asked to develop a visual map of their professional and organizational networks and lines of communication. The purpose of the mapping was to identify participants' various contexts and connections in order to identify key access points for Zenev and Associates to begin tapping into the collective wisdom and knowledge of Working Group members. The mapping exercise was also intended to surface any gaps in Working Group membership. The mapping was purposely open-ended, and participants were given the following instructions:

- What networks and connections do each of you have that might relate to the goals of the Project?

- Think broadly about other tables you might sit at that may be relevant to the development and implementation of an information system for seniors.
- List these, or create a map with linkages.

2.2.2. Scan of Information Sources

Early in the Project, Zenev and Associates began an environmental scan of information sources for seniors. The purpose of the environmental scan was to identify print and digital information sources currently available for Edmonton seniors. As a starting point, Working Group members were asked to identify sources of information that they were aware of, and how that information is collected or disseminated. This information was supplemented by Internet research. In addition, during the first round of data collection research participants were asked to identify information sources through the following questions:

1. What is your role in your organization and how does it relate to information for seniors?
2. What information do you collect? How do you collect it?
3. How do you disseminate it? In what format(s) do you disseminate it?
4. Who uses this information?
5. What barriers or issues do you face currently in this?
6. What helps you, what are the enablers?
7. How might you envision us working together to optimize provision of information to seniors, service providers and caregivers?
8. Who else do you think it would be good to talk to about the provision of information to seniors, service providers and caregivers?

Information sources and supporting information was analyzed to identify those sources that met the following inclusion criteria: they are specifically relevant to seniors, substantial in scope, from a reliable source, have a mechanism for regular updates, are widely distributed, and have information that is stable over time. Sources identified for inclusion were detailed in a table and shared with research participants at a second interview to confirm the accuracy of the information, identify any gaps or additional sources.

From this information we developed a list of the main information sources (both print and electronic) available to seniors in Edmonton.

2.2.3. Literature and Document Review

Initially, Zenev and Associates undertook a review of literature on sustainable, comprehensive, and coordinated communication models. The purpose of this review was to identify promising models to implement in the Edmonton region, lessons learned in the creation of such models, and evaluation of the models' effectiveness. As mentioned above, early in the research the Project goals shifted, although the aim of improving communication and information systems

with an eye to better serving seniors remained. However, Zenev and Associates was now tasked with a revised research goal: identifying ways to optimize existing communications systems, including promising opportunities for collaboration. This revised goal expanded our literature review activities.

The review of the literature was completed using multiple searches of grey (domestic and international) and academic literature from studies within and outside of Canada. The following terms were used to search for relevant materials:

- Access to information and the well-being of seniors
- How seniors gain access to information
- Information systems for improving the well-being of seniors
- Research into barriers and enablers to seniors accessing information on the Internet
- Comprehensive communication models
- Collaborative information systems for seniors
- Collaborative information dissemination for seniors
- Communicating with seniors in Canada
- Older adults, Canada, information

2.2.4. Research Conversations

The data collection plan was amended to accomplish the revised goals of the project. The research conversations included the following:

- The Working Group met four times during the Project, and the discussion during meetings was included as research data.
- Seven focus groups and 14 individual interviews, which took place in person or by phone.
- Interviews were conducted in two rounds. In most cases participants were approached multiple times throughout the Project.

In the first round of data collection, research conversations were conducted by Zenev and Associates in partnership with the Project Coordinator, who participated as a researcher. The purpose of these joint conversations was to support the process outcome of capacity building and learning, as well as the goals of building collaborative relationships and participatory inclusion in the research process.

In the second round of data collection, interviews were conducted by Zenev and Associates only. Participants were provided with interview questions, a draft proposal for an Information and Communications Network, and a list of information sources in advance of the interview.

Questions from both rounds of interviews, along with supporting documents, can be found in Appendix B.

Overall, ten different organizations were represented in the research conversations, including:

- Alberta Health (Ministry)
- Alberta Health Services
- Alberta Senior's Communities & Housing Association (ASCHA)
- Alberta Seniors (Ministry)
- ASSIST Community Services Centre
- City of Edmonton
- Edmonton Primary Care Network
- Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (ESCC)
- Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton (SAGE)
- The Support Network

3. Literature and Document Review

In this section we report on academic research, grey literature, projects, and initiatives that address information and communication as it relates to seniors and their well-being.

Information and communication is identified as one of eight key topic areas in the report *Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide* (WHO, 2007). The information and communication needs of seniors and those who love and care for them “...move beyond traditional concerns such as residential or community-based aged care services towards access to appropriate health and social services as well as recreation and leisure activities, transport, tourism, and lifelong learning to mention just a few” (Cawthra, 1999, p. 90).

3.1. Introduction

The academic literature relating to information, communication and seniors is not as well developed as other more generalized research on this subject. However, an increasing and more complex body of knowledge is currently emerging, which will be useful for those who are engaged in designing age-friendly programs and communities.

Grey literature is also increasing as the WHO Age-Friendly Cities initiative is taken up by municipalities around the world. World Health Organization, municipal, provincial, and project websites dealing with services for seniors or age-friendly projects provide important access to the work being done to improve the liveability of cities for seniors.

In this section we report on several key themes emerging from both grey and academic literature:

- Information matters to seniors’ well being
- Internet communication technologies and seniors-not a panacea
- Challenges and barriers to communicating with seniors
- Enablers to communicating with seniors
- Collaborating to improve communication

Who is a ‘senior’?

The term ‘senior’ can be used to refer to anyone from a healthy, mountain climbing 60-year old to a frail elder in their 90’s. Differences within the senior population include many factors such as health, physical ability and mobility, linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds, sexual orientation, citizenship status, length of time in Canada, etc. .A senior’s capacity to access and process information is mediated by much more than their chronological age, and information and communication systems need to consider the breadth and complexity within this demographic.

3.2. Key Findings from the Literature

3.2.1. Information Matters to Seniors' Well being

Access to good information is a key factor in “healthy, dignified, ageing” (Everingham et al., 2009). However, access to information cannot be conflated with better social and health outcomes for seniors. For example, access to information about a service or program does not directly translate into increased access to the service or program in question. Access to programs is dependent upon a number of other variables including cost, relevance and urgency of need.

“Knowledge about services that are available, transportation to get to the services, attitudes about accepting help, and costs of accessing services are among the barriers that have emerged in many of the studies (Minear & Crose, 1996, p. 58).”

Therefore, information is just one factor in seniors' ability to access services and programs. The following outlines the current state of how seniors access information, what some barriers to access might be and some promising practices to enhance information flow.

3.2.2. Information and Communication Technology for Seniors: Not a Panacea

While Internet use amongst seniors has steadily risen since the beginning of the twenty-first century (Hallows, 2013), as a rule seniors are not heavy users of the Internet for gaining access to information about health and wellness (Everingham, 2009; Goodall, Ward, & Newman 2010; Hallows, 2013). In Hallows's (2013) study on seniors' usage of digital technology in developed nations, the findings demonstrate that “despite its worldwide acceptance and usage, the Internet has not had an all-encompassing influence on the ability of seniors to make informed health decisions, which is the ultimate product of good health information literacy” (p. 39). Therefore, while the Internet can be useful for distributing information (and may particularly be of use for caregivers who are accessing information on behalf of seniors) it is not, at this time, the best way for seniors to directly access information. This research appears to recommend against focusing solely on technological solutions, such as an online information portal, as the solution to information provision for seniors.

Additional research indicates that male seniors and persons with a partner, those with a higher level of education, and/or a professional occupation (vs. retired or homemaker) are more likely to engage in Internet use. Selwyn et al. (2004) found that males, younger seniors (61-70), married persons with no long-term illnesses and those with higher education were more likely to be online.

Alternatively, the more marginalized the senior, the less likely they are to turn to the Internet for information or guidance. Research with immigrant, frail, and impoverished seniors (Goodall, Ward, & Newman, 2010; Hallows, 2013; Minear & Crose, 2008; Sourbati, 2009) demonstrates that at this point in time, online information is less likely to be accessed by these seniors. The digital divide (Friemel, 2014) for seniors is less likely to simply fall along the lines of age (older and younger seniors) and more likely related to socio-economic factors that marginalize seniors in other ways.

Information and communication technology (ICT) can be helpful to service providers and agencies. Websites, portals, repositories, and so forth can enable trusted contacts to discern and share, in a timely fashion, information required by seniors. Overall, Internet portals for seniors' direct use should be for the most part a future-oriented strategy, although there is no doubt that some seniors are already adopting it to access information about health care and social programs.

3.2.3. Challenges and Barriers to Communicating and Sharing Information

There are a number of factors that create challenges for those providing information to and communicating with seniors: the amount and complexity of information that requires dissemination, the many social and other factors that have implications for seniors' capacity to access and process information, and technologies of communication.

Increasing complexity and amount of information

The intersection of an increasing array of services and requirements for accessing services, plus an array of information sources and types, has resulted in a complex information field. Often services and programs intersect and conflict with one another or have complicated requirements for access or participation. For example, one's immigration status will have an effect on if, how, and when one can access pensions and other supports. In this example, the senior has to decipher information relating to immigration as well as information relating to pensions. Additionally, the senior may have to navigate more than one layer of government regulations (for example federal and provincial regulations).

There are many such examples where seniors may be navigating multiple systems simultaneously to gain the information required to address a question or concern: income supplement programs and housing, income supplements and transportation, health and housing or transportation, or immigration status and access to language learning. These are all examples of interlocking systems, and this complexity alone can act as a significant barrier to accessing information (Hallows, 2013).

Seniors health status, income, and language skills

In addition to a complex information field, when we recognize the diversity of the seniors' population the requirements for a comprehensive, effective, and equitable information system become even more challenging. Seniors occupy every strata of society and their capacities to access information vary considerably. Poverty, frailty, immigrant/newcomer status, and various issues with literacy are all factors that shape the way seniors can and do access information (Friemel, 2014; Goodall, Ward, & Newman 2010; Sourbati, 2009). While many seniors have the opportunity to gather information from a variety of sources and have the social networks that enable them to vet the information, other seniors have neither access to information (print, digital, nor telephonic) nor the social supports through which they might gain access to information.

When many barriers are present at the same time, they compound the challenges of communicating vital information to seniors. For example, translation of materials into another language may not be sufficient if that senior has limited vision, or is not literate in their own language, or does not get out to a place where they might encounter the print material.

Technology

While online access seems to mitigate some of the barriers posed by limited mobility, the cost of and skills necessary for effective use of information and communications technologies is often not present in seniors who are marginalized for one or more reasons. Complex phones and computers also present barriers, from design and font size to economic restrictions to access. "In these circumstances, new technologies can in fact be a barrier to access" (Everingham et al., 2009, p. 83). The explosion of digital information technologies and online information portals has not translated into easy access for seniors. As previously mentioned, "Older people generally use digital technologies less than those in younger age groups" (Goodall, Ward, & Newman, 2010, p. 28) so reliance on this type of information and communication system will by default exclude a significant number of seniors from having direct access to the information they need.

3.2.4. Enablers to Communicating with Seniors

Design

There are a number of design elements that have long been understood to be central to developing good print communication for seniors, both for printed materials and online text . For example, the Government of Canada has excellent guidelines for communication with seniors: *Age-Friendly Communication Facts, Tips and Ideas* (www.hss.gov.yk.ca/pdf/afcomm-commavecaines-eng.pdf). Attention to font size, page layout, colour and using images that are

representative of diverse seniors are examples of important elements in ensuring that information is appropriate for the target audience.

Web-based resources must also attend to navigational design, and there is emerging research on the kinds of designs that work well for those who are not familiar with web-based media, including many seniors. The National Institute on Aging and the National Library of Medicine have published an accessible resource with an extensive bibliography, *Making your Website Senior Friendly: A Checklist* (www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/checklist.pdf), which outlines basic elements of good web design.

Relevance: Just in time access to information

According to Everingham et al. (2009), “It is widely agreed that for information provision to be effective the information provided must be relevant and appropriate to needs” (p. 82). One important aspect of relevance is that it comes at the right time, that is, information is deemed to be relevant if it is relevant to seniors’ current state rather than some possible future state (Cawthra, 1999, Everingham et. al, 2009). For some seniors, being presented with information about some possible future need can simply be overwhelming. If this is the case, those around the senior need to be well informed in order to help determine when information is timely.

Diversity of sources

Generally speaking, seniors prefer to have a variety of access points and formats for gaining information relevant to their concerns and interests. This includes what the literature refers to as ‘trusted sources’ - personal or professional individuals with whom the senior has a relationship and a history of receiving sound information, such as family members, caregivers, and well-known professionals. Therefore, depending upon the issue being faced by the senior and their life circumstances, the senior may turn to print information, a telephone information line, a website, a neighbour or family member, or their medical professional. There is no research to indicate that a single source of information, such as a portal, would improve access to information or the well-being of seniors. Rather, the literature shows that good information, made available in a number of formats and at a variety of sites increases seniors’ overall access to information (Neal & DeLaTorre, 2007). As Goodall, Ward, and Newman (2010) wrote, “...our study population did not use ICT to access information, but nevertheless obtained access to the same information via different routes” (p. 31).

Make reliable information sources widely known to seniors and those who care for them

While the WHO (2007) report on age-friendly cities suggests that “People want information to be coordinated in one easy-to-access service that is widely known throughout the community” (p. 61), it also points out that local infrastructure, seniors’ social location, ability, and health

status will also determine their ability to access information, even if that information is housed in a well-publicized portal.

A number of studies indicate that seniors actually prefer getting information from trusted sources compared to other formats. One way of ensuring effective information dissemination is to ensure it finds its way to those who work with and care for seniors. In this regard, ICT or comprehensive print guides are very helpful to service providers and agencies and enable them to more efficiently pass on in a timely and appropriate way the correct information required by seniors. These 'trusted sources' can direct seniors to information that is specifically relevant to them.

3.2.5. Collaboration and Information Sharing

The literature on collaborative information systems for seniors is scarce, as it is a specialized subset of research pertaining to information sharing and seniors, but is increasing as global demographics shift and senior populations increase. We looked for research on collaborative information sharing models in social service sectors more broadly to supplement the scant research in the specific area of seniors' service provision. In this section, two general types of information-sharing approaches are presented: centrally coordinated models and non-centralized collaborative models.

Centrally coordinated models

Centrally coordinated models can range from complex electronic portals to phone lines to bulletin boards to directories. The goal of this type of system is to create a central clearinghouse for information (e.g. in local newspapers, on a website, at a grocery store) and to encourage the collection of information in that one site. The advantages of this type of system is that information can be vetted for accuracy and appropriateness and that seniors can find the information they require in one site, rather than having to visit a number of literal or figurative places to find information.

Portals can be multi-faceted (like seniors' portals which bring together information on a number of different issues and services) or unidimensional (such as a diabetes portal). In North America, there are a number of online seniors' portals, often sponsored by a level of government. The City of Ottawa has a multifaceted seniors' portal (coaottawa.ca). Professionals and seniors alike can visit this portal to learn about age friendly initiatives and find resources on aging.

The McMaster Portal for Optimal Aging is an example of a more focused or unidimensional information site (www.mcmasteroptimalaging.org/). This health related site vets information

on health issues for readability and reliability. The general public can register on the site and be alerted when new information on specific topics of interest becomes available.

There are also good examples of portals in Portland, Oregon (agefriendlyportland.org/), the Province of Ontario (www.seniors.gov.on.ca/en/index.php), and the City of Montreal (ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page?_pageid=5798,131471594&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL). The Canadian Motor Association has a single focus portal for senior drivers (seniorsdriving.caa.ca) and the St. Albert Public Library (www.sapl.ca/great-sites-for-seniors.html) sponsors a portal for local seniors.

The increase in the number and types of portals targeting seniors is consistent with research that demonstrates that more seniors are gaining access to and using the Internet to get information.

Collaborative Systems Model

Because collaborative projects to develop comprehensive online portals are only just emerging and require a kind of coordination that can be challenging for a communications field that crosses sectors and service types (direct, policy making, etc.), we turned to research on other types of collaborative projects and processes to inform a possible framework for the Edmonton context. The work of Herbert and Mackenzie (2014) proved fruitful in its description of and research on an integrated service delivery model that could easily be adapted to create a collaborative information and communication system for seniors that addresses some of the challenges and barriers outlined in the literature.

In *The Way Forward*, the authors draw upon the metaphor of the London Underground to describe a comprehensive system that allows for integrated service delivery and information sharing, while respecting multiplicity and autonomy within the service provision community. The key to such a system's success are clear information pathways. Those who provide services and information (agencies, levels of government, program providers, etc.) work together to make it possible for users of the system to enter into it from any number of 'stations', because the providers of services (and therefore information) communicate with one another. The service providers also work to develop coherent language and shared understandings of how larger systems such as housing and transportation function to ensure each partner in the system is sending a message that is consistent with the others.

Another strength of this model is that agencies retain local autonomy, and there is recognition that each serves a particular community or a specific need. As with the London Underground, regardless of where you enter the system, you can travel to any other station if you have a map of the system and understand how the pathways work.

This type of system allows for a shared understanding of the issues and works best when there are strong relationships amongst the network partners. A networked information and communications system requires that network members ask themselves two questions: ‘what are the key issues in information sharing and communication for our jurisdiction?’ and ‘how can collaboration make life better for seniors and their caregivers?’

3.2.6. Conclusion

While the field of research on information and communication as it relates to seniors is currently emergent, there are a number of studies which suggest the way towards communication practices that account for the complex identities and needs of seniors and the equally complex networks of services, programs and information related to seniors and aging.

Seniors are diverse and have varied information needs. This diversity must be accounted for in any model for information and communications with seniors. The complexity of information that requires dissemination, the many social and other factors that have implications for seniors’ capacity to access and process information, and the limitations of technology use all pose challenges to communication with seniors. By harnessing enablers such as design, relevance, diversity of sources, and wide dissemination of information, organizations can better communicate with seniors while also respecting their diverse information navigation skills and preferences.

Models for collaboration in the provision of information to and about seniors include both centrally coordinated and collaborative systems. Both models have merit, and are being used in different contexts. The most important consideration for the development of a model for information and communication for seniors in Edmonton, then, is to identify a model that is best aligned with the local context.

4. Discussion of Findings

As mentioned earlier, the original goals of the Project shifted early in the research process. As a result of learning about the costs and challenges of creating a comprehensive system, the complexity of the field of information and communications for seniors, and recognition of intersectoral differences in ability to reshape policies and processes, the Project Coordinator and Working Group members recognized the need to shift the focus of the Project.

While the overall aim of improving communication and information systems in order to better serve seniors did not change, the goal of developing a sustainable, comprehensive, coordinated communication model shifted to the following:

Project Goal:

Develop a model and research-based recommendations for optimizing existing information and communication systems of organizations involved in providing services and information to seniors, through collaborative and coordinated actions.

This section provides a summary and discussion of the findings of the research based on the revised Project Goal. The findings are based on feedback from all research participants, with the exception of the visual mapping activity which only included Working Group members.

4.1. Findings - Complexity of the Field Connections

4.1.1. Visual Maps

The complexity of the field of information and communications for seniors was elicited by Working Group members visually mapping their professional and organizational networks and lines of communication. In total, three maps were produced. Photos of the results of the visual mapping exercise are included in Appendix B.

4.1.2. Findings

Analysis of the visual maps revealed the incredible complexity in the networks and lines of communication between Working Group members, as well as the lack of connections between sources of information for seniors and between organizations collecting and disseminating this information.

Complexity of networks and lines of communication

The sheer number and diversity of network actors, communication lines and sources of information for seniors was immediately obvious in the visual maps. While there was some duplication of network actors, organizations and information sources across the three maps, in

many cases they were divergent. Each map included different actors and sources of information. While this finding was positive in that it pointed to the diversity of the Working Group members' networks, it also revealed a more complex field than we originally anticipated. Given this complexity, Working Group members immediately remarked that any attempt to create a single comprehensive system was going to be problematic.

Lack of connections

The visual maps included a number of organizational inter-connections. However, they also revealed many disconnected network and communication lines that indicated a lack of coordination amongst organizations.

Duplication of efforts

As Working Group members discussed the visual maps, they saw duplication in many of their information collection efforts. Information was being collected in isolation instead of in collaboration - for example, a new information source was being developed by one organization with clear connections to the work of other organizations, yet this work was not known by those others. This indicates a lack of information sharing about existing and upcoming programs and activities, which is a precondition of effective collaboration and partnership development.

4.2. Findings - Information Sources for Seniors

An environmental scan was conducted to identify key print and digital information sources currently available for Edmonton seniors. This section includes a summary list and some key observations about the sources.

4.2.1. List of Information Sources for Seniors

In total, we identified 16 key sources maintained by 14 different organizations. The following table provides a summary of the information sources. A more detailed list with additional information about each source is included in Appendix C.

Information source	Organization	Distribution Method
1. Information for Seniors	Alberta Health Services	Website
2. Seniors' Transportation Resource Guide	Alberta Motor Association (AMA)	Website
3. Alberta Provincial Seniors Housing Directory	Alberta Seniors Communities and Housing Association (ASCHA)	Online database
4. Alberta Seniors Directory	Alberta Seniors Directory	Printed guide

5. City of Edmonton Services for Seniors	City of Edmonton	Website
6. Seniors Centres Guide	City of Edmonton	Website
7. Recreation and Wellness Directory for Older Adults (Formerly the Physical Activity and Recreation Directory for Older Adults)	Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council	Printed guide; website
8. 211 Seniors Information Phone Line 9. Resources for Seniors and Older Adults, May 2015 (1 page)	Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)	Phone line
10. Housing information	GEF Seniors Housing	Website
11. Seniors Services and Housing	Government of Alberta, Seniors Department	Website
12. Seniors Programs and Services Information Guide	Government of Alberta, Alberta Seniors	Website
13. Alberta - Information for Seniors 14. Services for Seniors	Government of Canada	Website
15. A Guide to Mobility and Independence	Medically At-Risk Driver Centre (MARD), University of Alberta	Website
16. Directory of Seniors Services	Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton (SAGE)	Website and Printed directory

Table 1: Summary of Information Sources and Organizations

This list does not include sources of information that are relevant to and may be used extensively by seniors but are targeted to the general public (e.g. Health Link, a 24/7 phone line that provides health information). Other sources that are not included are ones that may not be widely available or are updated very frequently (e.g. lists of family physicians, program directories from seniors centres and other service providers, etc.). Many organizations maintain information for their own needs (agency information for referrals by social workers, information on specific housing facilities for outreach workers, etc.) and these kinds of sources are also not included in the above list. As was previously mentioned, the information sources included are those that are relevant to seniors, substantial in scope, from a reliable source, have a mechanism for regular updates, are widely distributed, and have information that is stable over time.

4.2.2. Findings

This section includes participant feedback and some key observations about information sources for seniors.

Characteristics of the information sources

The information sources available for seniors cover a range of areas. Some sources are related to a specific sector (e.g. housing or health); others like the Directory of Seniors Services produced by SAGE include a broad range of information relevant to seniors. Generally, each organization responsible for creating the information source collects and disseminates information independently, even though there is some overlap in the information between sources. Sources are stored in a variety of formats, and each organization has its own mechanism for updating information. The methods for dissemination include phone lines, websites and printed materials.

Users/Data about users

The information currently provided for seniors has a broad audience that extends well beyond the senior population of Edmonton. In addition to seniors themselves, information sources are also accessed by families of seniors, health care workers, social workers, health educators, staff of organizations that provide programs and services for seniors, seniors' housing operators and the general public.

Although the organizations that maintain the information sources do have a general sense of who accesses the information source they provide, few collect data on the type and number of users and their degree of satisfaction with the information. Organizations generally receive feedback on the relevance and accuracy of information through feedback about incorrect information from individual users, or through requests for new information. The degree to which a particular source is used (e.g. number of phone calls to a phone line, number of directories being printed) provides some indication of user demand and satisfaction. However, participants reported that systematically collecting accurate data on users and their levels of satisfaction would require more resources than are currently available to organizations.

Challenges to collecting and disseminating information

Participants were asked about any challenges they face in collecting and disseminating data for the information sources they maintain. These challenges fall into three areas: challenges related to the specific information that is being provided, organizational challenges and policy related challenges.

Information related challenges

Gathering information to populate an information source can be challenging for a number of reasons. In order to get the right information, those collecting it need to understand the level of detail and the particular information required to meet specific needs that are sometimes hard to anticipate. In some cases, service providers are over-consulted by those collecting information, receiving many different calls asking for similar information. This can lead service

providers to be fatigued by requests and can affect their ability and willingness to respond to requests.

Information about programs and services is dynamic and changes quickly, and it can be difficult to keep sources up to date without a lot of time and effort. Likewise, the volume of information is a source of difficulty for those collecting it. On some topics relevant to seniors, there is so much available information that it can become overwhelming to determine what is useful and relevant.

The complex needs of seniors make it difficult to ensure that they have access to the information they need from various sources, and for different programs, services and issues. For example, aging in place requires information about subsidy programs, snow removal, transportation supports, home care, etc. making it difficult to know where to draw the line on information provision. The challenge of collecting relevant information is exacerbated when information providers are unsure about what seniors want to know and how they want that information presented.

Sometimes information is available but the terminology used is not consistent between organizations, leading to confusion. Information verification is also problematic. It can be difficult to know if the information shared is accurate and in some cases organizations cite one another as the source of information in a circular fashion. This dynamic exacerbates problems with accuracy when incorrect information makes its way into an organization's materials and is then used as the basis for information distributed by other organizations.

Organizational challenges

A number of organizational considerations present challenges in collecting and disseminating information. Staff changes occur in all organizations and create a kind of flux that can affect information services. Staff members often secure information through a trusted contact or through their networks, and when staff members leave an organization, they may take their networks with them. Even if staff members leave behind contact information and instructions, it is their relationships that are central to obtaining the information needed in a timely manner. Thus, staff changes can make gathering and disseminating information difficult.

In addition, there is often a shortage of funding to support staff in what can be labour intensive fact checking and information gathering/verification processes. Resources for research in the form of needs assessments or evaluations are often scarce. As a result, there are few evaluation mechanisms to assess whether information produced is meeting the needs of seniors.

Finally, in larger, bureaucratic organizations it can be difficult to change information systems, as it takes many levels of approvals to move from the planning stage to the action stage.

Participants reported that sometimes the momentum is lost before impactful changes to information systems can be made.

Policy related challenges

Participants noted the challenge of working in a context where political will and vision for a coordinated approach to addressing seniors' issues are not always obvious. There is no overarching provincial strategy that prioritizes the specific and unique information needs of seniors, which means that there is little provincial level planning related these needs. In the absence of high level coordination, gathering, collating, and disseminating information is more challenging. This lack of coordination is reflected in an absence of shared and consistent use of language and terminologies. As a result, working on seniors' issues that cross ministries is difficult.

Enablers for collecting and disseminating information

Study participants noted that in addition to challenges, there are a number of enablers that make the work of collecting and disseminating information easier. These enablers include having organizational priorities, common language between organizations, and having extensive networks.

Having organizational priorities was seen as important in that it enables staff to do a few things really well, rather than scatter their efforts. It also ensures the work will be valued as a core task in the organization and not managed haphazardly off the side of a desk. When working across organizations, the use of common language or terminology is an important enabler. Information is much easier to find when search terms are consistent. Finally, given that much information is encountered through relationships and sought out through networks, particularly information at a level of detail not available from public sources, having large personal and professional networks was mentioned as an enabler. The ability to network with others and maintain these connections is important for those gathering and disseminating information. Therefore, organizational support for these activities is also important.

The discussion of barriers and enablers to collecting and disseminating information highlights the importance of networking opportunities for professionals in this field. Networks can enable professionals to share promising practices, gather information, and make important connections. While organizational supports may not present an opportunity for collaborative efforts, policy changes can certainly be influenced collectively. Strategies for information sharing, such as the adoption of common language or terminology, can also be undertaken collaboratively. The development of a network to facilitate relationship development and build on existing enablers to coordinate these kinds of projects is crucial to support this work.

4.3. Findings - Collaboration

Research data revealed that participants were very interested in pursuing opportunities for collaboration. Study participants' key rationale for the development of collaborative processes and projects is to work together to achieve efficiencies, produce better information, and enhance the professional profile of those involved in communications and information processes with seniors serving agencies and programs. Many participants articulated a desire to strengthen the professionalism and expertise within the field in order to ultimately better serve the interests of seniors.

4.3.1. Opportunities for Collaboration

Participants supported the idea of collaborating with one another and articulated a number of ways in which collaborative processes would be helpful and relevant to their current work. Participants noted that there is an opportunity to work together to develop more efficient and streamlined methods of sharing of information amongst service providers with respect to new programs and services and to distribute the work of collecting and disseminating information. This was noted as one way that those tasked with providing information could avoid what one participant called "information provider fatigue".

The potential to develop opportunities to engage in mutual accountability regarding the development of age-friendly communications processes was also noted by participants, as well as the potential to develop shared terminology. Both processes might lead to a higher quality of information (more accurate, more up-to-date), which participants noted was a key advantage of working together.

Another finding of the Project was that some groups of seniors (immigrant and refugee seniors, seniors with disabilities, seniors living on a low income) are not as well served due to a dearth of data/research about their needs and conditions. Participants suggested that collaboration would enable them to conduct research and assessment projects to discern and address unmet needs of these seniors.

4.3.2. Challenges of Collaboration

Although research participants were enthusiastic about the advantages of collaborating to improve information systems, they also spoke about the challenges they might encounter, from the perspective of their respective organizations. These included a lack of resources and expertise as well as a range of organizational constraints.

Several participants said that a lack of resources was a barrier to participation. This included the time to participate in collaborative activities, since these activities might not necessarily fall

within their current job responsibilities and would take up additional time. Some organizations might be able to participate in activities with a short time frame but may not have the resources to commit to longer projects.

A lack of expertise may also be a barrier to working together on projects to enhance information provision. Some participants felt that the field of information and communications was not an area of expertise for them, and this would limit what they could contribute to a collaborative project or activity.

The organizations that participants represented have different mandates and roles with respect to providing information relevant to seniors. Some organizations have a very specific mandate to provide information to a particular target group, so collaboration may not be relevant or of benefit to them since the collaborative activity would have to align with their organization's goals. Other organizational constraints included the various levels of approval participants might require to engage in collaborative projects, the amount of time it might take to receive these approvals and limits to the kinds of activities they could participate in. Finally, some participants noted that their organizations might not be able to easily change their communication processes or information sources, particularly where those practices and sources are aligned with legislation and embedded within large bureaucracies.

Recognizing these challenges, collaborative work is more likely to be successful if it focuses on information sharing amongst information providers and small scale projects that realize efficiencies in the current work of members and do not overburden them by adding to their workloads. To achieve these aims, collaborative efforts will require support. Any support mechanism developed will need to ensure it can enable diverse levels of participation on the part of organizations. Given the diversity of organizations involved in the provision of information for seniors, including across sectors, a one-size fits all approach will not suffice. Each organizational mandate needs to be respected and collaborative projects need to be diverse enough to offer different sectors and organizations a way into the collaboration. Research activities may be promising in this regard. Collaborative research may provide an opportunity for learning, relationship building and process improvement and can be done in a way that enables each organization to implement what is learned in their unique context.

4.4. Findings - Developing an Information and Communications Network

Given the recognition early in the project that a sustainable, comprehensive model for information and communications may not be most suitable for such a complex field, an information and communications network (ICN) emerged as a potential collaborative mechanism. Some sort of ICN was proposed by the Project Coordinator in the first round of

interviews as a potential way forward, and study participants expressed interest and support for this idea. The second round of interviews included questions intended to flesh out what an ICN might look like and, as stated earlier, participants were provided with a draft outline of a network to prompt their thinking (see Appendix B). The following section captures the most salient findings pertaining to an ICN.

All participants we spoke with expressed an interest in being part of a network in some way, and many viewed the network as an exciting development that would be helpful for their work.

4.4.1. Purpose of the Network

Study participants noted the importance of having a clear purpose for the ICN in order to ensure success. The vast majority of participants believed that the network could successfully be structured as a group aimed at information sharing and best practices along three main lines:

1. Communicating best practices in their own work, or having educational speakers who would share best practices.
2. Updating one another on new projects and services or recent developments in their organizations.
3. Sharing ideas and learning from one another through conversation. The emphasis here was also on networking, including opportunities for both formal and informal dialogue.

Framing the ICN as a body focusing on communications and information was noted as important by some participants, and undertaking “quick win” projects in the early stages was also seen as important.

Participants raised a number of questions about whether the ICN would be limited to organizations touching the lives of seniors in the Edmonton area only, and about the topics that might inform information sharing activities.

4.4.2. Structure of the Network

Participants emphasized the importance of a clear organizational structure for the network, including parameters for membership as well as roles and responsibilities of members and/or leadership. A number of participants raised the idea of making use of working groups and subcommittees to enact particular projects or coordinate events. A number of participants were interested in seeing the core information sharing and networking activities of the ICN augmented by specific projects that would arise as needed.

The majority of participants indicated that meeting quarterly would be manageable for them, given their current workloads, and would also ensure network momentum is maintained.

Contributions

When asked about their willingness and ability to contribute to an ICN, participant responses fell into three categories. First, participants are very willing to share what they know and how they work with others, as well as provide updates on their organization and any relevant initiatives and findings. Second, some participants pointed to particular areas of skill or expertise that they possess which they would be willing to share with others by facilitating learning sessions or professional development seminars. Third, a couple of participants who have experience with organizational development noted that they might be able to assist with some of the network's logistics.

Considerations for moving forward with an ICN

Participants brought up several considerations for moving forward with an ICN, outlined below.

Importance of communications

Participants noted that in order for the ICN to be successful, potential network members need to see the value in communications work in the sector. For this reason, participants noted the importance of promoting the importance of communications in the seniors serving sector alongside the ICN.

Membership

Participants noted that recruiting members to the ICN will depend on a clear articulation of 'what's in it for me?' that demonstrates the network's value to potential members or to those who might need to approve their participation. Having some tangible results emerge from the network early on, such as shared projects with concrete outcomes or learning results from the information shared and/or best practices, would be helpful.

Logistics

Participants also talked at length about the importance of logistics to support a successful network. Participants raised questions about the functional logistics of a potential ICN:

- Where would ICN information such as meeting minutes, terms of reference, etc. be kept and how would members access this information?
- What would be the governance structure of the network? What about ownership or accountabilities? Who would chair the network if a chair is needed and how would the network relate to working groups?
- How would decisions be made?
- Would there be a cost to participation?
- Would there be a communications plan for the network to educate publics about it?
- How would the effectiveness of the network be evaluated?

- Who could become a member?
- Would the network require funding and if so, who would fund it and/or hold funds on behalf of the network?

As these questions indicate, participants attended carefully to the draft ICN proposal shared in advance of the second interview and gave a lot of thought to ICN specifics. Many of these questions are directly in line with considerations for the development of a set of terms of reference and/or an MOU for an ongoing network and are very encouraging in this regard.

ICN connectedness

Finally, participants noted that some thought needs to be given to how this network will relate to other existing networks, interagency groups and communications oriented organizations.

Overall, interest in a network of some sort is high amongst research participants. The benefits of a network, and the ways in which it could contribute to, and make easier, the work being done by professionals in the field of information and communications for seniors, are well understood by research participants. The challenges identified in network development were for the most part practical, not ideological, and can therefore be addressed through the network design.

A high level of agreement exists about the focus of the network, activities it might undertake and the frequency of meetings. Almost all participants were interested in participating and many offered to contribute to the network's establishment and functioning. In order for this work to be carried forward, however, some resources are required. In particular, given the workload pressures of many participants, a network coordinator would be important to ensure that the work of building the network is supported. The coordinator could also help to answer questions raised here about the network, many of which are excellent considerations that are best decided on by network members and/or leadership.

4.5. Findings: Projects of Interest

During the research conversations, a number of suggestions for potential collaborative projects and activities emerged. Participants contributed ideas for projects that they would be interested in collaborating on with other members of the Network, and that would contribute to improved delivery of information to seniors. Potential projects included:

1. Research Projects:
 - Evidence-based research on how best to streamline data collection.

- Ongoing assessment of the emerging and changing information needs of seniors. research on emerging best practices in information communication with seniors
2. Training and development to enhance knowledge and skills in the information and communication field.
 3. Development of guidelines for effective communication strategies that can be used to enhance delivery.
 4. Creation of shared language and terminology related to programs and services for seniors (e.g. common terminology for housing options for seniors).
 5. Projects to identify and reduce duplication of information across the different information sources.
 6. Development of a single, online repository of information that would consolidate all the existing information sources.

Because the original goals of this project included a comprehensive and coordinated system, participants had been reflecting on an information portal being a mechanism for ongoing collaboration. The following section provides details on participants' views on the creation of an information portal.

Information portal for seniors

Many participants spoke about the possibility of creating a single, centralized, online repository of information relevant to seniors, referred to as a portal. A portal could provide the following advantages:

- Information relevant to seniors is available from one source, making it easier to locate and access a variety of information sources.
- Seniors would be able to easily browse a variety of information sources if they were unsure of exactly what they needed.
- A centralized information source that is kept up-to-date would reduce duplication of information and/or confusion about the validity and accuracy of the information being provided.
- Information could be presented in ways that would best meet the needs of target audiences e.g. different levels of detail for different audiences.

Although an information portal seems to offer opportunities for streamlined data collection and dissemination, participants also talked about the many challenges associated with creating a portal, given the current landscape of many different and disparate information sources and systems.

The challenges of creating a portal include:

- Within the systems that currently exist to provide information relevant to seniors, there are considerable differences in the strategies used to collect and disseminate information, as well as in the formats used to store the information. The effort to consolidate these systems into one single portal would require a high level of commitment and collaboration between the various organizations maintaining the various information sources.
- A portal that includes all the current sources of information may be unwieldy and difficult for users to navigate and access.
- It would be a challenge to keep large amounts of information in a portal consistently updated and accurate, especially information that is very dynamic.
- Existing information systems have been created and are maintained by organizations within different sectors, and who have specific mandates related to that sector (e.g. health, housing). Obtaining organizational commitment to participate in a project to create and maintain a portal which provides information outside their specific mandate may be difficult.

Participants also raised many questions that would need to be answered before beginning to conceptualize what a portal might look like. These include:

- How would a portal effectively provide information to the many different groups who access information relevant to seniors?
- How would the portal design consider the many differences within the senior population (e.g. language, literacy levels, and many others)?
- What would be the geographical scope of the information included (municipal or provincial)?
- What kinds of organizations would be included, ranging from large service providers like seniors centres to smaller drop-in centres for targeted groups?
- Given the large amount of information that could be relevant to seniors, what type of information and level of detail would be included in a portal?
- How could a portal's effectiveness be evaluated?
- Since a portal would most likely be online, how could it respond to the known need for information to be available in a variety of formats (in-person, over the phone and in print format)?

While there was interest in a portal amongst some participants in this project, both the literature and issues raised in the research point to the need for longer term thinking about a portal type information source. Given the difficulties in establishing an effective portal, particularly when working across sectors, and the challenges of keeping information up to date and accurate without significant organizational investment of time and resources, this activity is not an effective “quick win” for a fledgling ICN. That said, some kind of information hub that simply collates electronic links and resources for ICN members and others may be a short term

compromise that offers some digitized support while the ICN explores the feasibility of a full online portal.

4.6. Findings - Informing and Communicating with Diverse Seniors

Research participants did not frequently mention the particular needs of diverse seniors (immigrant, refugee, LGBTQ, living with disabilities, living in poverty, and so forth). Despite direct questioning, there were only five references to diversity and communication that emerged from the interviews and focus groups. Two themes emerged in this area: a lack of knowledge about effective communication, and the need to expand access to information.

4.6.1. Lack of Knowledge

Some participants noted that a lack of knowledge around effective communication and information sharing practices with diverse seniors is a huge barrier for them. This speaks to the possibility of unidentified, and therefore unmet, information needs of marginalized seniors. A number of those we spoke to identified the possibility for collaborative research projects and assessment activities to discern and address these unmet information needs of seniors.

4.6.2. Expanding Access to Information

Some participants recognized that having information for seniors available in English only was a barrier that required attention and that translating materials could easily address this barrier. While ensuring that print materials and web based text can be and are translated into as many languages as possible is an important aspect of improved communications practices, it is not sufficient on its own. Some immigrant seniors may not be able to read and write in any language and some seniors who are not immigrant and refugee seniors may have low literacy skills. To broaden the possible reach of information, some participants suggested including infographics or other non-textual forms of representation.

Messages may also need to be vetted for their cultural/social appropriateness to ensure that information is offered in a way that responds to the cultural perspective of the client and other differences that marginalize seniors. Participants noted that those providing information to seniors often make assumptions about the seniors, defaulting to a view of seniors that obscures difference. Some participants noted how seniors' differences (e.g. first language or health status) influence the level of support that they have in their lives. To this end, information providers should closely consider whether their information materials or methods of communication are sensitive to the economic, physical, emotional, or other circumstances of diverse seniors.

Being intentional about considering the communication needs of diverse seniors was seen as one way to keep this issue on the agenda. In this regard, it was suggested that information and communications professionals working with seniors might challenge themselves to create a statement of principle or a guiding ethic which acknowledges the need to attend to marginalized seniors.

5. Recommendations

This section provides a set of recommendations based on the findings of the Project. The recommendations have been framed using a conceptual model adapted for use in this Project.

Currently, each information source for seniors can be thought of as an individual system, guided by an organizational mandate and using a certain set of processes for collecting, updating and disseminating information. The conceptual model presented in the next section provides a way to think about how best to develop a collaborative system that connects the existing individual systems without having to consolidate them.

The model has been used to organize and present the recommendations. The recommendations include actions that organizations can take on their own, as well as collaborative projects that one or more organizations can jointly undertake. The model also provides suggestions for creating the infrastructure necessary for organizations to collaborate on an ongoing basis. The conceptual model fits well with the ideas that emerged from the survey of relevant literature in this Project, as well as the research findings.

5.1. A Collaborative Systems Model for Information and Communications

The Collaborative Systems Model (CSM) is an adaptation of the evidence-based “integrated system” model proposed by Herbert and Mackenzie (2014) to better address gender-based violence in New Zealand. The model uses the metaphor of a subway system, which is an integrated system that is comprised of many individual systems, or subway stations.

When adapted and applied to information and communication systems, the model has six key components:

1. **Coordinating body:** The system is supported by a coordinating body that ensures that it works effectively. This body may not be visible to the user but is crucial for the long-term success of the system.
2. **Multiple unique entry points:** Users (information seekers) can enter the system at any point and each entry point can have a unique look, feel and design. Because each



entry point links to the others, there is no need for similarity in the entry points themselves.

3. Connection and overlap: Multiple entry points and ways to access information allow for flexibility and different ways of navigating the system. Duplicate information is not an issue, unless the information across sources is inconsistent or contradictory. System users who are more comfortable with a particular entry point do not have to change their habits or preferences, and can find different ways to reach any given destination.
4. Clear pathways between points: Information points are linked and system users can easily see how to move from one point in the system to the next.
5. Consistent standards: Each information line in the system is consistent enough that users are comfortable in the system. For example, in a subway system, standards of safety and pricing ensure consistency and reliability. In an information system, consistent standards might include common language and/or translation tools to ensure the user can translate information themselves.
6. Local autonomy: Each information line is designed and maintained by the body that has authority for it. This means collaboration can happen without any organization having to give up decision-making power.

The CSM model provides the following advantages:

- Any entry point links the information seeker to the information system. This allows for many unique entry points into the information system.
- The system provides clear pathways so that information seekers can be linked with the information they need, in the way they need it. This ensures that the senior is kept at the center of the system, which is key to reducing client confusion.
- Lines of information link to other lines of information. These connections can help to facilitate collaboration and information sharing, and make it easier for new organizations or information sources to be linked into the system.
- There is no need to make individual entry points consistent. Instead, this approach focuses on creating smooth linkages between entry points and the overall information system.
- Decentralization is an important component of the system. While collaboration is key to the system, individual organizations can retain autonomy over their information and communications activities, while agreeing to consistent standards and committing to linking in with others.

The following are some considerations for implementing a CSM:

- A coordinating “backbone” organization or individual is required to create standards, facilitate linkages between information lines and identify opportunities for future collaboration.
- The system requires engagement and not just consultation between organizations responsible for information pathways. This ensures shared power and commitment.
- Once individual systems start to connect and integrate, there may be gaps that emerge, either in information content or in services for seniors. These gaps can then be addressed either by individual organizations or the coordinating body.
- The system requires attention to current service use to ensure programs and supports can handle the demand that comes when information is more readily available.
- In the short term, there may be some costs to connect and align information lines but these can lead to long-term savings as systems are optimized.

5.2. Recommendations Based on the CSM

The following are a set of recommendations organized by the six key components of the CSM.

5.2.1. Coordinating Body

Recommendation 1:

Interested agencies, organizations, and key stakeholders should form an Information and Communication Network (ICN) to identify processes for collaboration and projects that would benefit from working in concert.

The goals of the ICN would be to:

- Plan and implement shared projects to help align information and communication activities.
- Provide a mechanism to facilitate information sharing between organizations about current and new initiatives related to information delivery.
- Facilitate opportunities for networking and professional development in the field of information and communications for seniors.
- Advocate for any policy changes necessary to enhance information and communication for seniors, and for resources and funding to support ongoing work in this area.

Some considerations for developing a formal structure have been included in Appendix D.

Rationale:

A coordinating body is required to maintain the momentum created by this Project and to support ongoing collaboration between organizations interested in and committed to enhancing information and communication for seniors. The coordinating body can facilitate information

sharing, identify ongoing opportunities to enhance the system and coordinate collaborative action.

Recommendation 2:

Allocate resources for an ICN Coordinator to support the development and ongoing operation of the Network.

The ICN would be supported by a Coordinator to oversee the operation of the group. The Coordinator would design an initial framework for the ICN, support the creation of a collaborative team and develop relationships of trust with organizations. Once the Network has been established, the ICN Coordinator can facilitate the development of a formal structure and determine longer-term operations issues such as a governance structure, eligibility for membership, fees, etc. and begin to build the capacity to engage in collaborative projects.

Rationale:

Given the responsibilities and workload pressure of professionals in this field, support is needed, at least in the short term, to coordinate ICN activities. The ICN Coordinator would be responsible for creating systems that would sustain the work of the ICN.

5.2.2. Multiple Unique Entry Points

Recommendation 3:

Document current information sources by creating and maintaining an inventory of all available sources.

Although some currently available information sources do include information about other available sources in their lists and directories (e.g. the Directory of Seniors Services produced by SAGE, 211 phone line), there is currently no dedicated inventory of information sources that is available to users and organizations. An inventory would be useful to organizations trying to assess the need for a new information source, and could be used to populate an online hub (see Recommendation 7), which has links to all available information sources.

Inventory of Information Sources:

The list of Information sources provided in this report can be used as a starting point for the inventory. The inventory could be updated and maintained by the ICN Coordinator.

Rationale:

Information providers would have access to a complete list of information sources and could use this list to create links and to identify gaps that need to be addressed.

5.2.3. Connection and Overlap

Recommendation 4:

Identify incorrect or inconsistent information and establish a mechanism to ensure the accuracy and reliability of information across sources, and to coordinate the verification of information.

A key issue that arose in the findings of this Project was inconsistent or contradictory information. Although information that is repeated across sources is not an issue and can in fact be beneficial, incorrect information is frustrating for users and contradictory information can compromise the trust that users have in a particular source. We recommend that the ICN create a mechanism to identify incorrect information and bring it to the attention of the organization that maintains the information source.

Rationale:

Data checking and correction will help to ensure consistency of information, avoid reproduction of incorrect information and enhance user trust in the information source. In some sectors such as health, it is useful to be able to refer back to a “body of truth” as a verified source of information.

Recommendation 5:

Encourage and support organizations to provide information in alternative formats suitable for all seniors, including vulnerable and marginalized seniors.

The findings of this Project indicate that current information sources do not adequately respond to the needs of marginalized seniors. Developing multiple ways to access information would address and cater to differences within the senior population such as first language, ability, access to technology, preferred source of information, etc.

Rationale:

Seniors need information in formats that are appropriate for their specific needs. A collaborative approach to providing materials in alternative formats could realize efficiencies not available to any single organization acting on its own.

Examples of actions to provide information in alternative formats:

- Ensure printed information sources are available online and vice versa.
- Translate English information sources into other languages (see the Guide to Programs and Services for Seniors in Ontario <http://www.seniors.gov.on.ca/en/seniorsguide/index.php>).
- Collectively apply for grants to translate existing resources.
- Provide information to trusted individuals (outreach/community workers, staff of ethnocultural organizations, religious leaders, etc.) who can help disseminate information to seniors.

Recommendation 6:

Draw on past research that identifies the information needs of vulnerable and marginalized seniors, and use it to develop a plan to address needs and gaps.

A number of research studies have identified the needs of vulnerable and marginalized populations in Edmonton, and these studies can be used to determine the information needs of various groups. This can be a valuable resource for organizations serving these populations.

Rationale:

Gaps in the way information is currently provided need to be addressed to enhance the system and make it available and useful to seniors and the many different people that access information for seniors.

Examples of useful research:

Age Friendly Edmonton - How Edmonton Seniors Access Information - Phase 1 at http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/AFSeniorsAccessInformationReport.pdf

Age Friendly Edmonton - The Age of Wisdom: Giving Voice to Edmonton's Immigrant Seniors and Identifying their Needs <http://aaisa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/AOW-DRAFT-Report-Zenev-and-Assoc-Aug-17-2015.pdf>

5.2.4. Clear Pathways between Points

Recommendation 7:

Design and develop an online information hub that contains a set of links to existing, stable information sources for seniors that are maintained by individual organizations.

Once an inventory of all information sources has been created (see Recommendation 3), it can be used to create an online directory with links to all existing sources. The hub can be simple to start with, using the list of information sources provided in this report, and can be added to over time. The hub could be hosted by one of the collaborating organizations of the ICN, or by the Network itself with the ICN Coordinator being responsible for maintaining the hub.

Rationale:

An online hub would provide an easily accessible map of all available sources of information which would be especially valuable to organizations, and accessible to users who have access to technology.

Examples of online hubs:

See the City of Ottawa's website 'Information and Services for Adults 50+' at <http://ottawa.ca/en/residents/older-adults><http://ottawa.ca/en/residents/older-adults>

Recommendation 8:

Wherever possible, modify current information sources to provide links to other relevant sources and organizations in order to facilitate connection within the system.

Some existing information sources include information about other available sources in their lists and directories (e.g. the Directory of Seniors Services, 211 phone line), which allows users to broaden their knowledge of and access to a variety of information. Cross-referrals to other sources should be adopted as a useful practice, rather than being seen as duplication of information. The inventory of information sources (see Recommendation 3) can be used to create these links. This recommendation can be adopted by individual organizations and does not necessarily require collaboration.

Rationale:

Allows users to find the same information even if they enter the integrated system from different points and to clearly see the linkages and connections between various sources.

5.2.5. Consistent Standards

Recommendation 9:

Where possible, create shared language and terminology related to programs and services for seniors, and include a glossary with the information source.

Current information sources use terminology that is specific to their organizations or sectors. If creation of shared language and terminology is not possible or practical, each information source should provide a glossary of terms so users can see what the various terms mean.

Rationale:

Encountering different terminology can be confusing to users, particularly when consulting several different information sources. If certain terms are deemed necessary for a particular organization, sector, or user group, then a glossary of terms can allow users to translate different terminology across sources.

Example of common terminology:

Alberta Seniors Communities and Housing Association (ASCHA) has developed common terminology for seniors' housing options. See Common Terminology Summary at http://www.ascha.com/pdf_files/rolout/2014/aschacommonterminologysummaryjan132014.pdf

Recommendation 10:

Provide education to enhance knowledge and skills related to communications with seniors in the information and communication field.

Personnel responsible for maintaining information sources have a variety of professional backgrounds. Some have extensive knowledge and expertise in the area of information and communication, but others do not. Educational materials would provide a way for organizations to share this knowledge and enhance current levels of skills and expertise in the area.

Rationale:

Seniors' information needs are unique and professionals providing information to this group need to be skilled at responding to these needs. Education and training opportunities will also further contribute to the valuation of information and communications to seniors as a field of professional practice.

Recommendation 11:

Develop standards and tools to collect data about users of information sources and evaluative data about user satisfaction.

Although some information providers collect demographic data about their users and have mechanisms in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the content and delivery methods, many do not. Information providers would benefit from standards for collecting data, and tools and templates to collect data about users and levels of satisfaction.

Rationale:

Data on the effectiveness of various information delivery methods would help to optimize systems and to identify gaps. Consistency in the collection of data would enable organizations to combine their data and identify patterns in the field of information and communications to seniors.

Recommendation 12:

Develop guidelines for effective communication strategies for users and ensure these guidelines are incorporated into information sources.

Information users include seniors from diverse groups, as well as other target groups such as families, caregivers, etc. It is essential to consider these differences and where possible, tailor communication strategies (both information content and delivery method) to meet the needs of these groups. There are many resources and guides that can be utilized to develop a set of consistent guidelines and promising practices for designing strategies. These guidelines could be developed by the ICN and implemented by individual organizations.

Example of guidelines for communicating with seniors:

Public Health Agency of Canada's Age-Friendly Communication Facts, Tips and Ideas at <http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/pdf/afco-mm-commavecaines-eng.pdf>

Recommendation 13:

Create an online repository for sharing tools and promising practices for information providers, including those developed through the ICN's activities.

The shared language glossaries, educational materials, tools and templates to collect user and evaluative data and guidelines for effective communications strategies could all be shared through an online repository specifically for information providers. This repository could be created and maintained by the ICN Coordinator and could be added to and developed over time.

Information about Online Learning Repositories

http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infoav/d2l/instructor/9.2.1%20Instructor%20Course%20Designer%20Help/learningrepository/about_learning_repository.htm

Rationale:

A shared and easily accessible online repository would create organizational efficiencies by allowing professionals to build on and learn from each other's work, rather than having to 'reinvent the wheel'. It would also provide a method of ensuring the continuity of collaborative efforts to enhance information and communication for seniors over time.

Appendix A - Working Group Charter and Meetings

The following Charter was presented at the first Working Group meeting to clarify the purpose of the group and the roles and responsibilities of members. The Charter was accepted by Working Group members and was used to guide the activities of the Working Group.

Working Group Charter

Purpose	The Working Group will contribute to the development and selection of a sustainable, coordinated, comprehensive communication model for Edmonton seniors.
Duration	The Working Group will be formed for the duration of the project and will disband or transition to a new group upon project completion.
Role of members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attend and participate fully in four Working Group meetings• Attend and participate fully in one decision-making workshop to select a model• Share information, resources and networks• Participate individually in the data collection phase of the project as required• Communicate with the consultants and other Working Group members as required

Working Group Meetings

The Working Group met four times during the Project.

- The first meeting was an orientation to the project, and provided members the opportunity to meet each other, map their organizational and personal connections related the Project, and identify resources that might be important to the environmental scan and literature review.
- Initial findings from the environmental scan and literature review were presented at the second meeting to elicit members' feedback about interviews and focus group questions.
- The findings and emerging themes were presented at the third meeting.
- The fourth meeting was used to present the draft recommendations. Feedback on the recommendations was incorporated into the final report.

Appendix B - Data Collection

This section provides information related to the data collection phase of the Project.

Mapping Working Group Members' Connections

The purpose of mapping was to identify participants' various contexts and connections. The following are images of the maps created by the members of the Working Group.

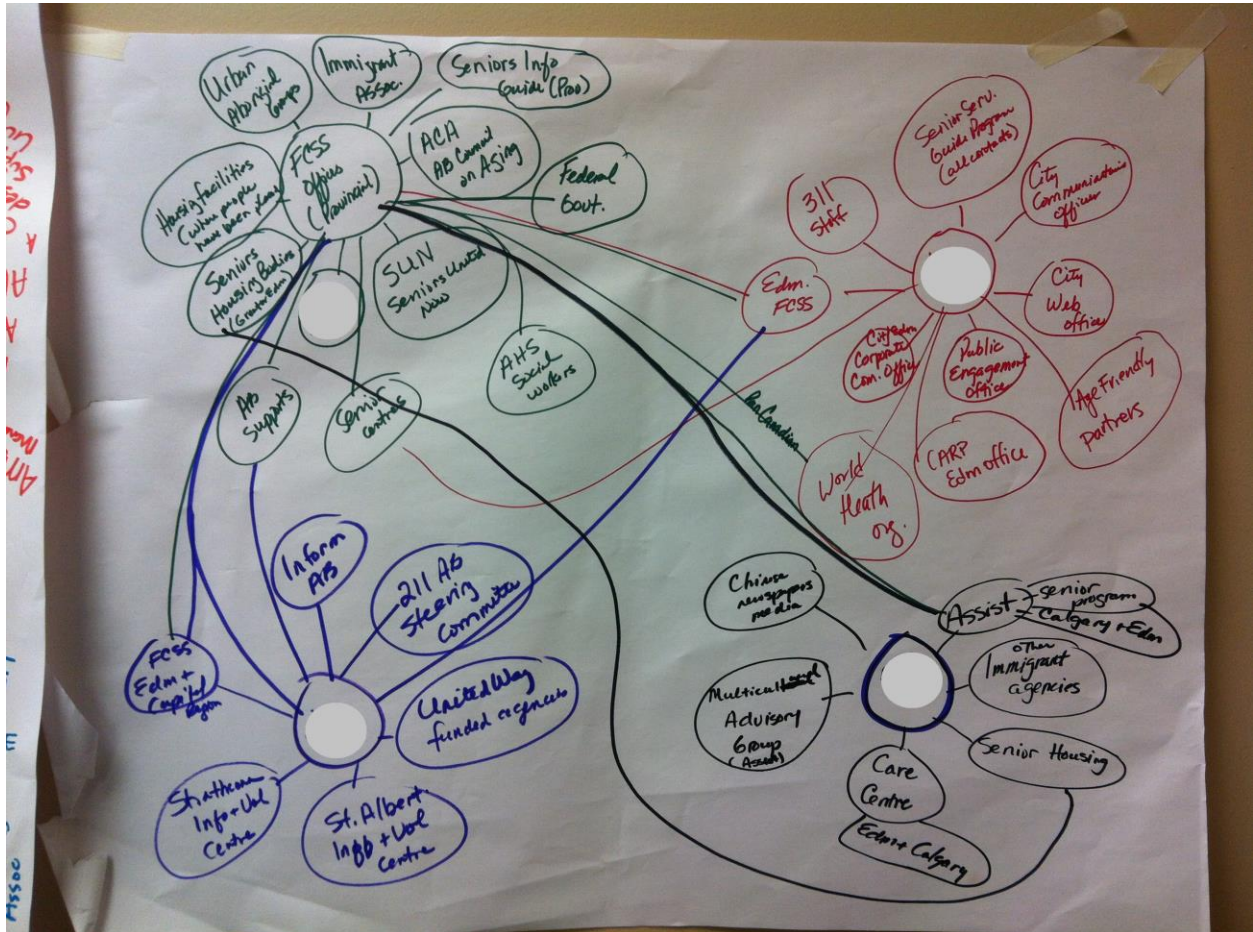


Figure 2: Visual Map 1

7. What barriers or issues do you face currently in this?
8. What helps you, what are the enablers?
9. How might you envision us working together to optimize provision of information to seniors, service providers and caregivers?
10. Who else do you think it would be good to talk to about the provision of information to seniors, service providers and caregivers?

Second Round of Focus Groups and Interviews

The following questions were used to guide the second round of focus groups and interviews:

1. Looking at the list of information sources shared with you:
 - a. Is there anything you would add to this list?
 - b. What opportunities do you see for collaboration or efficiencies based on this information?
 - i. In terms of data collection?
 - ii. In terms of data dissemination?
 - iii. Other ideas?
 - c. If you are responsible for one of these sources, is the information related to that source accurate and complete?
2. Research to date has pointed towards the value of an Information and Communication Network for optimizing existing information and communication systems to ultimately better the lives of seniors in Edmonton. Looking at the draft proposal for the Network:
 - a. What kind of network would be most useful for you?
 - i. Information and best practice sharing?
 - ii. Undertaking shared projects?
 - iii. Undertaking lobbying and advocacy?
 - iv. Training and professional development?
 - v. Other?
 - b. How often would you like to meet?
 - c. What would you like to, or could you, contribute?
3. Ideas for collaboration have emerged in three areas: research projects, creating a shared access point (portal) for information, and streamlining data collection and dissemination.
 - a. What would you select as a priority area?
 - b. What role might you play or how might you be involved in these projects?

Draft proposal for an Information and Communication Network (ICN)

The following draft proposal was shared with participants during the second round of data collection to elicit their comments and feedback.

Preamble

An important characteristic of an age-friendly city is the availability of relevant and timely information for seniors and those who support them. A coordinated approach to communication and information provision can support effective utilization of programs and services for seniors.

Purpose

The Information and Communication Network supports information sharing and collaboration in order to assist organizations to provide the best information and communication services possible, and thereby improve the lives of seniors in the Edmonton area.

ICN will support collaboration in:

- Sharing information and best practices relating to all facets of communication, including information collection, analysis, presentation and dissemination.
- Research on topics and areas important to members
- Projects and activities that optimize existing communication systems.

Membership

Membership in the ICN will include:

- Communications and other professionals in organizations that serve seniors or whose programs and services touch the lives of seniors
- Individuals interested in information and communications related to seniors

Meetings

The ICN will meet approximately 4 times a year.

Potential ICN Activities

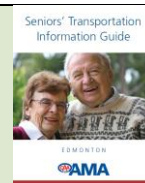
Sharing Information/ Best Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communications strategies specific to the seniors population and their families, caregivers, supporters• How to ensure accuracy of information• Organizing information for easier user navigation• Welcoming seniors, including immigrant seniors, when they enter this phase of life• Effectively managing communications portfolios off the side of your desk
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Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs assessment to understand what information seniors and their families, caregivers, supporters want to receive, and how • Evaluation of communications tools/sources to determine if they meet user needs
Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing an information portal • Developing protocols for primary sourcing of information and identifying source leads • Identifying and testing translation strategies so that information for seniors can be more readily available in multiple languages • Applying for shared grants to support translation of resources • Developing shared language/terms for more consistent communication with seniors and their families, caregivers, supporters • Developing standards of practice and training for the field • Creating or approaching funders to create a database of funded projects relating to seniors

Appendix C - Information Sources for Seniors

The following list of includes information sources that are relevant to seniors, substantial in scope, from a reliable source, have a mechanism for regular updates, are widely distributed, and have information that is stable over time.

1. Information for Seniors	
Creator/Owner	Alberta Health Services
Scope/Jurisdiction	Alberta
Content	Care Options; Wellness Information; Programs, Services & Facilities by Zone; Information for health professionals
Distribution mechanism	Website: http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/3880.asp
2. Seniors' Transportation Resource Guide	
Creator/Owner	Alberta Motor Association (AMA)
Scope/Jurisdiction	Alberta
Content	Transportation options and other services for seniors
Distribution mechanism	PDF file available at http://ama1.wpenline.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/162523_senior_transportation_guide_edm_f1.pdf
3. Alberta Provincial Seniors Housing Directory	
Creator/Owner	Alberta Seniors Communities and Housing Association (ASCHA)
Scope/Jurisdiction	Alberta
Content	i. Provincial Seniors Housing Directory ii. ASCHA's Common Terminology Summary
Collection mechanism	Provided by housing operators
Distribution mechanism	i. Online searchable database http://www.ascha.com/ ii. http://www.ascha.com/PDF_files/rollout/2014/ASCHACoCommonTerminologySummaryJan132014.pdf
4. Alberta Seniors Directory	



Creator/Owner	Alberta Seniors Directory
Scope/Jurisdiction	Alberta
Content	Programs and Services for Seniors/Advertising
Distribution mechanism	25,000 copies distributed by Canada Post every January directly to Seniors across Alberta. Copies are also found at high traffic areas frequented by seniors
5. City of Edmonton Services for Seniors	
Creator/Owner	City of Edmonton
Scope/Jurisdiction	Edmonton
Content	Recreation, housing and transportation information
Distribution mechanism	Website: edmonton.ca/seniors
6. Seniors Centres Guides	
Creator/Owner	City of Edmonton
Scope/Jurisdiction	Edmonton
Content	Information about seniors centres
Distribution mechanism	Website: http://www.edmonton.ca/programs_services/for_seniors/senior-centres.aspx
Information user/s	Seniors centres; Other senior-serving organizations; Alberta Health Services (various depts., home care, day programs); PCNs and doctor's offices; Glenrose, Grey Nuns and Misericordia; Libraries; Seniors residences. The groups that request the most directories for distribution are the seniors centres and the health organizations like Misericordia and PCNs.
7. Recreation and Wellness Directory for Older Adults (Formerly the Physical Activity and Recreation Directory for Older Adults)	
Creator/Owner	Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council
Scope/Jurisdiction	Edmonton
Content	Physical Activity and Recreation activities and programs
Collection mechanism	ESCC maintains a list of contributors from previous years/potential contributors and emails these organizations in the spring every year to ask if they want to contribute to the directory for the upcoming year. A form is provided for them to submit their information (an Excel spreadsheet).
Distribution mechanism	i. Hard copy (local seniors organizations, recreation centres, ESCC).



	ii. PDF file available at http://www.seniorscouncil.net/uploads/files/ESCCRecDirectory2014.pdf iii. Online searchable database at http://www.seniorscouncil.net/programs
8. 211 Seniors Information Phone Line 9. Resources for Seniors and Older Adults, May 2015	
Creator/Owner	ESCC and partners
Scope/Jurisdiction	Edmonton, Strathcona County, Parkland County and Leduc
Content	Provides information and referrals to seniors living in Edmonton, Strathcona County, Parkland County and Leduc
Distribution mechanism	i. Phone line ii. Resource list available at http://211edmonton.com/upload/2015-05_211ResourceList_Seniors.pdf
Information user/s	All
10. Housing information	
Creator/Owner	GEF Seniors Housing
Scope/Jurisdiction	Edmonton
Content	Housing information
Distribution mechanism	Website: http://www.gef.org/Housing.aspx
11. Seniors Services and Housing Information	
Creator/Owner	Government of Alberta, Seniors Department
Scope/Jurisdiction	Alberta
Content	Programs and Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seniors Programs • Housing • Seniors in the community • Related information • Awareness & information • Seniors Advocate
Distribution mechanism	i. Website http://www.seniors.alberta.ca/ ii. Searchable database http://www.programs.alberta.ca/Living/653.aspx?N=770+176
Information user/s	Facilities, service providers in area, i.e. FCSS and social workers, seniors and their families, housing operators, general public, especially caregivers

12. Seniors Programs and Services Information Guide		
Creator/Owner	Government of Alberta, Alberta Seniors	
Scope/Jurisdiction	Alberta	
Distribution mechanism	PDF file available at http://www.seniors.alberta.ca/documents/Seniors-ProgramsServicesGuide.pdf	
Comments	Updated every year in July or if information changes	
13. Alberta - Information for Seniors		
Creator/Owner	Government of Canada	
Scope/Jurisdiction	Canada	
Distribution mechanism	Website: http://www.seniors.qc.ca/eng/sb/ie/ab.shtml	
14. Services for Seniors		
Creator/Owner	Government of Canada	
Scope/Jurisdiction	Canada	
Distribution mechanism	Website: http://www.servicecanada.qc.ca/eng/audiences/seniors/index.shtml	
15. A Guide to Mobility and Independence		
Creator/Owner	Medically At-Risk Driver Centre (MARD), University of Alberta	
Scope/Jurisdiction	Alberta	
Content	A comprehensive list of essential services and transportation providers in Edmonton and Outlying communities (6th ed.)	
Distribution mechanism	PDF file available at http://www.mard.ualberta.ca/~media/mard/Mobility_Guide_6th_Edition_web.pdf	
16. Directory of Seniors Services		
Creator/Owner	SAGE	
Content	Services and resources for seniors in Greater Edmonton.	

	Includes information from non-profit senior-serving organizations and for profit businesses
Collection mechanism	Updated annually
Distribution mechanism	1. Hard copy 2. PDF file available at http://www.mysage.ca/public/download/documents/9004

Appendix D - Resources to Support Implementation of Recommendations

Developing a Structure for the Information and Communication Network (ICN)

The following questions can be used to guide the development of a formal structure for the ICN:

Purpose of the Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why has your group come together?• What is the overarching purpose of your partnership and/or your projects?
Guiding Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What kinds of principles will guide you in every aspect of your work together? For example, is sharing power a key principle for your group? Is inclusion a key principle? Respect for diversity?
Description of Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do the members of your group represent particular communities? If so, by what authority (democratically elected, designated, by virtue of their representative characteristics, etc.)?• What is the decision-making scope of the members?• How will you handle it when a member leaves (i.e. they change jobs and can no longer represent an organization, or they go on leave, etc.)?
Roles and Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What needs to be done?• Who will do what?
Decision-Making Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How will you make decisions? By consensus? Democratic vote? Hierarchically?• Are all decisions handled in the same way or will different decisions use different processes?
Conflict Resolution Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What will happen when conflicts arise?• Is there a resolution process you can agree on now – before conflict begins?

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