

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ageism Widespread in Canada, Limiting Independence and Choice for Older Adults

***Revera Report on Ageism Reveals Warning Signs and Provides Action Plan;
Company Announces \$20 million Investment for Innovation in Aging***

MISSISSAUGA, May 30, 2016 - Ageism is the most tolerated form of social prejudice in Canada compared to racism and sexism, and many well-intentioned Canadians are, in fact, depriving their elders of the independence and choice that are crucial to aging well. These are among the findings of the *Revera Report on Ageism: Independence and Choice As We Age*, released today by Revera and the Sheridan Centre for Elder Research. The report accompanies the launch of the *Revera Innovators In Aging* program, a \$20 million commitment by Revera to bring promising innovations to life that help seniors maintain their independence.

“Ageism is the next great social issue that demands our attention, and together, individuals, organizations and governments need to take action,” said Thomas Wellner, President and CEO of Revera. “In addition to conducting research on ageism and raising awareness of this issue through our Age is More initiative, Revera is committing \$20 million to fund entrepreneurs who have developed innovative new products and services that will enhance the aging experience and help seniors live life to the fullest.”

Ageism: A Widespread Problem

According to the report, more than four in ten Canadians (42 per cent) feel ageism is the most tolerated form of social prejudice; more than double that of racism (20 per cent) and sexism (17 per cent). Additionally:

- Fully one in four (25 per cent) Canadians – from Gen Y to Boomers — admit they have treated someone differently because of their age.
- More than half (51 per cent) of Canadians ages 77+ report that others assume they can't do things for themselves.
- One in four (26%) respondents 77+ report that, because of their age, people make choices for them without asking their preference.

The Importance of Independence: A Perception Gap

Canadians strongly agree that independence is important, but younger adults have a blind spot when it comes to older Canadians:

- Almost 100 per cent of Canadians, in every age cohort, agree that maintaining independence is important to them personally.
- However, younger adults (ages 20-34) are more than five times as likely (21 per cent) to say that independence is not important to those 75+ than those who are near or at that age themselves.

“Ageism is getting old! Every person, young or old, can live life with purpose,” says 95-year-old former Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion, now Chief Elder Officer at Revera and Chancellor of Sheridan College. “This purpose doesn’t end when you get older; society must recognize that older people can and want to continue to make a contribution, and this begins with tackling ageism.”

Making Decisions for Others: Helpful or Hurtful?

The report finds that in many cases, well-intentioned efforts to help by family and friends may be hindering older adults from maintaining the independence they want. For example:

- Canadians use words like “helpful” (32 per cent) and “responsible” (26 per cent) to describe the way they feel when they make decisions on behalf of another adult in their lives. Conversely, those 77+ say they feel “controlled” (28 per cent) and “annoyed” when choices are made for them.

“Taking immediate steps to address and reverse negative stereotypes and assumptions about older adults is something all Canadians can do, and the positive outcomes are well documented,” said Pat Spadafora, Director, Sheridan Centre for Elder Research. “Every social movement begins with awareness, and we are confident that the Revera Report on Ageism will also inspire action.”

Recommendations

The Revera Report on Ageism includes a number of key recommendations, among them:

- **For non-seniors: Avoid making assumptions about what older adults want or can do.** More than half of Canadians ages 77+ feel others assume they can’t do things for themselves. By removing this prejudice and allowing older adults to try things themselves, they will feel less frustrated and more independent. Support can always be offered, but should not be automatically delivered. It is also important to recognize your own stereotypes and prejudices about aging, and how that might be perceived by others.
- **For seniors: Don’t let yourself be defined by a number.** By not accepting self-limiting beliefs and unintentionally contributing to outdated age-based stereotypes, you can help others to remember that you are not defined by your age.
- **For policy makers: Ensure consultation on public policy permanently includes the voice of older Canadians.** Older Canadians of all ages, including those 75+, should always be at the table when discussion takes place to ensure their needs and wants are addressed.



Working together to overcome ageism. Visit AgeIsMore.com



Consider health care service delivery options that allow the end user to have more choice in how their care is delivered.

- **For organizations:** Invest in innovation that will support older people's desire for independence as they age. Independent-minded seniors represent a large opportunity for innovative product and service providers that should not be overlooked. Recognize older adults as their own consumer market with diverse needs and interests.

Revera Innovators in Aging

Revera is earmarking \$20 million to invest in some of the companies that participate in the *Revera Innovators in Aging* program, focusing on innovations expected to bring the most benefit to older adults, families and staff. Through this program, entrepreneurs will partner with staff and residents in Revera's retirement communities and long term care homes to test and evaluate new innovations designed to improve quality of life, enhance independence and choice, and help people age well.

Revera Report on Ageism: Independence and Choice As We Age

The report is based on a survey of over 2,400 respondents in Canada, including a robust sample of almost 600 people ages 77+. The complete report, including all of the recommendations and the survey methodology, may be accessed at AgeIsMore.com. Also available on the site are videos of older adults talking about independence and choice, an infographic of the survey findings, the *Revera Report on Ageism (2012)*, and an opportunity to take the "Are You Age Aware" self-assessment test.

About Revera Inc.

Revera is a leading owner, operator and investor in the senior living sector. Through its portfolio of partnerships, Revera owns or operates more than 500 properties across Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom, serving more than 50,000 seniors. The company offers seniors' apartments, independent living, assisted living, memory care, and long term care. With approximately 45,000 employees dedicated to providing exceptional care and service, Revera is helping seniors live life to the fullest. Through [Age is More](http://AgeIsMore.com), Revera is committed to challenging ageism, the company's social cause of choice. Find out more at ReveraLiving.com, [Facebook.com/ReveraInc](https://www.facebook.com/ReveraInc) or on Twitter [@Revera Inc.](https://twitter.com/ReveraInc)

About the Sheridan Centre for Elder Research

The Sheridan Centre for Elder Research is an organization that develops innovative approaches and creative interdisciplinary partnerships that focus on enhancing the lives of older Canadians. The Centre does this by providing a unique environment for conducting applied research into areas of practical concern and immediate relevance to older adults and their families. The Centre for Elder Research was launched in 2003 at the Oakville, Ontario campus of Sheridan College. The Centre has an established track record in applied research and a reputation as a leader that challenges traditional thinking, creating possibilities that transcend historical boundaries.



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