



Links2Wellbeing

social prescribing for older adults

Links2Wellbeing aims to transform the way healthcare providers link older adults in Ontario to social and recreational opportunities to promote holistic health and wellbeing. Building on the work of [Rx: Community](#), a made-in-Ontario social prescribing program that began in 2018, **Links2Wellbeing** will enable family physicians, nurse practitioners and other allied health providers to link socially isolated older adults with community programs and services offered by Seniors Active Living Centres (SALCs).

A Unique Partnership

The **Links2Wellbeing** project is the result of a unique partnership between the Alliance for Healthier Communities and the Older Adults Centres' Association of Ontario (OACAO), powered by an Anonymous Donor. It began in April 2021 and will continue for three years. The project is being developed collaboratively by the two organizations and participating member agencies.

The [Alliance for Healthier Communities \(Alliance\)](#) is a network of over 100 community-governed, team-based primary healthcare organizations across Ontario. Alliance member centres are committed to supporting those who face the highest barriers to health and well-being, including marginalized seniors. In 2018, The Alliance brought social prescribing to Canada with Rx: Community, a made-in-Ontario approach built on the model that has revolutionized care in the UK.

The [Older Adults Centres' Association of Ontario \(OACAO\)](#) provides advocacy, education, networking, and resources to support a network of 200 community-based older adult centres and seniors serving organizations across the province. As the voice of older adult centres and Seniors Active Living Centres (SALCs), the OACAO supports member centres to come together to unify their efforts towards the development of comprehensive programs and services, to help older adults stay connected and active in their communities.

Next Steps

Links2Wellbeing will start with a small number of participating SALCs and Alliance member centres in local partnerships. With time, it will spread throughout Ontario and include additional healthcare providers. Participating organizations will join a provincial community of practice and a national social prescribing network to share learnings and develop best practices together.

Turn the page to learn more about social prescribing and its benefits...



Social Prescribing

Not all health and wellbeing needs are primarily medical in nature

Social prescribing is a structured process through which family physicians and interprofessional health practitioners can refer older adults to a range of local, non-clinical services.

From 2018 to 2020, the Alliance piloted social prescribing at 11 community health centres across the province. Participants reported increased social engagement and improvements in their mental health, including a 49% reduction in experiences of loneliness. In addition, from 2020-2021, the OACAO implemented the Social Inclusion through Social Prescribing – SITS Rx project in a number of Seniors' Active Living Centres (SALCs) across Ontario. The results were promising, demonstrating positive benefits for staff, volunteers and older adult participants.

Here's what the social prescribing pathway will look like as the project begins



The Benefits

Social prescribing benefits clients, providers, the healthcare system, and the community.

- Clients experience improved physical and mental health and increased social connectedness.
- Healthcare providers are able to use their time more effectively by redirecting clients to more suitable resources for their non-medical needs.
- New social connections are created, strengthening the community and building the client's network of peer support.
- Barriers are reduced as people are empowered to identify their needs and values and connect to what matters most to them.

Join Us

To find out more, contact the Alliance for Healthier Communities at communications@allianceon.org and the Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario at info@oacao.org.