

Cathy Bennett has worked with community-based funding programs, within the Federal Government, for the past 16 years. She has worked at both the regional and national levels on a range of health promotion issues including tobacco cessation, HIV/AIDS and diabetes.

Since 2000, she has been working with Division of Aging and Seniors within the Public Health Agency of Canada, primarily focused on seniors falls prevention initiatives. From 2000 to 2004 she was the national coordinator for the Health Canada/Veterans Affairs Canada - Falls Prevention Initiative.

Driving Action on Seniors Falls in Canada: A Journey to Getting the Information We Need

Information on seniors falls and injuries drives new directions in policy, programming, research, and practice. Unfortunately, significant gaps in our knowledge remain. This presentation will highlight the journey of identifying data and information challenges to mobilizing the seniors falls prevention community to address them.

Through the development of the Report on Seniors Falls in Canada, significant gaps and limitations to the available data on seniors falls became apparent and necessitated further exploration. The Public Health Agency of Canada commissioned an environmental scan to determine current knowledge about seniors falls data. February 2007, PHAC invited key stakeholders from across Canada to a workshop to discuss how we currently use seniors falls data; and to explore successes, challenges and future directions. From this meeting, a Seniors Falls Data Planning Committee was formed. A second meeting of the planning committee was held in February 2008 with the purpose of looking more closely at steps to address these challenges and gaps.

For the first time in Canada, multidisciplinary stakeholders, including both producers and users of information on seniors falls, met to discuss improving data and knowledge translation activities that support falls prevention. Initial consensus confirms that although good quality data from several sources already exist there are ongoing challenges including: data gaps, sub-optimum use and linkage of data, and capacity limitations for expert analysis and knowledge translation. This presentation will outline emerging options to address these challenges. This journey towards more and better information to inform policy and programs on seniors fall prevention has strengthened connections between those using the data and those responsible for collecting data and producing information. This provides the injury prevention community with a unique opportunity to move forward collaboratively with the aim of preventing seniors falls.