



**RISING TO THE CHALLENGE:
VIRTUAL CARE AT BAYCREST 2021**





A NOTE OF GRATITUDE

Thank you for supporting older adults at Baycrest as well as our research, education and innovations that will improve life for all of us as we grow older.

Baycrest draws inspiration from the generosity of the community. We are most grateful to you for your gifts at a time when everyone, everywhere, faces challenges because of the pandemic. Your dedication is leading us toward a future that better responds to and anticipates the needs of Canada's aging population. Due to the challenges the pandemic poses, we have been forced to move quickly into a new era of communication and virtual care.

Our teams had already been imagining and starting some of these projects. COVID-19 changed everything in March 2020. Out of necessity, we had to move forward at a much faster pace.

On the following pages you will see how Baycrest is driving innovation and creating a world that will impact the workings of our society for decades to come.

It is thanks to you and the kindness of other donors that we are able to move forward.

All the best,

Josh Cooper

President & CEO, Baycrest Foundation



PANDEMIC SPARKS CHANGES TO THE DELIVERY OF HEALTHCARE

Like never before, Baycrest relies on new technologies to help care for patients in a safe and timely way.

Telemedicine:

Baycrest established the Telemedicine Rapid Implementation (TRIM) team in March 2020 to adapt services and support infection prevention measures. The team created remote forms of connection and social engagement, and facilitated clinical telemedicine for hospital patients, residents, and community members:

- Physicians received laptops and other resources for telemedicine, including instructions for digital stethoscopes to listen remotely to the heart and lungs.
- Training toolkit with troubleshooting tips was built for using Zoom and the Ontario Telemedicine Network.
- Adaptations were made for virtual medical record-keeping.

Mental Health:

The Geriatric Psychiatry Community Service provides mental health assessments, interventions and education to people living with mental illness. When home visits were not possible due to the pandemic, we shifted to virtual visits then gradually resumed home visits with stringent infection control practices.

Telepsychiatry:

Thanks to donor support for tech equipment, Baycrest is able to provide telepsychiatry via secure video connections to patients throughout Ontario, including Orangeville, Gravenhurst, Shelburne, Caledon, Bellwood, Orangeville, Grand Valley, Woodbridge, Midland, Barrie and Brampton. We also work with the Canadian Mental Health Association to provide services to six communities in Northwestern Ontario.

Audiology:

Baycrest patients can use an app for hearing tests at home, followed up by an in-person visit or online discussion about hearing aids with a Baycrest audiologist. Virtual group aural rehabilitation classes are also available. A smartphone can act as a remote control to adjust hearing aids.

“The classes are perfect; they have a very well-rounded program, especially for those who use a mobility aid. They listen to each person and give us enough time to tell our stories completely. We get the attention we need.”

- Patient in the Day Treatment Program

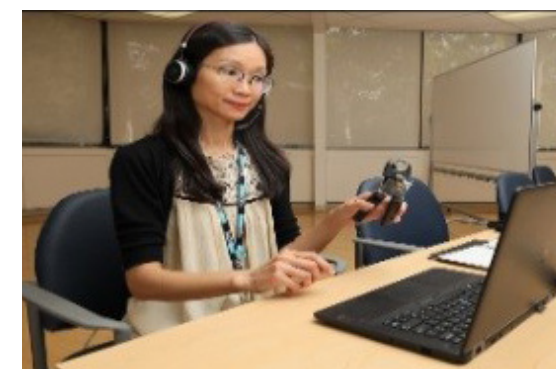
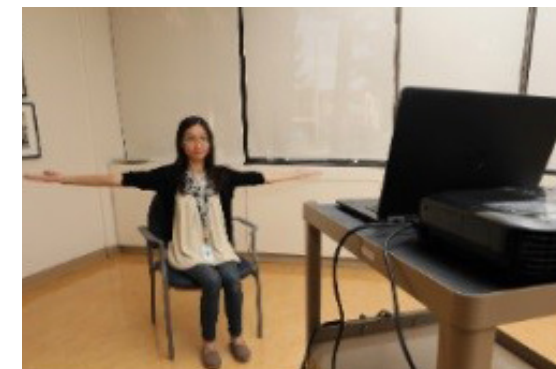
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“So many older adults were cut off from programs and services they had access to before, which was essential to support their physical and emotional well-being. It is important for us to reach out and connect with them during this difficult time, and we are proactively supporting older adults through our Virtual Day Treatment Centre program.”

- Shirley Lee, occupational therapist

SAUL AND RAE SALTZMAN DAY TREATMENT CENTRE

This rehab program assists older adults with complex medical conditions living in the community. Due to the pandemic, it is offering group sessions online. Volunteers help participants with any technical issues that arise.



Occupational Therapist Shirley Lee supports older adults remotely.

“Bruce is no longer experiencing the violent outbursts that he was in the summer and this is only possible because of the regular support I get from Dr. Freedman and (nurse) Mindy Halper. I was told to report behaviours and incidents to them on a frequent basis, and we could actually deal with behaviours in real-time. Bruce would have an incident, and I could show it to them through the laptop.”

- *The Honourable Lisa Raitt, October 2020*

SAM AND IDA ROSS MEMORY CLINIC

Throughout the pandemic, our team has been seeing patients via telemedicine. We are also exploring the creation of a novel web-based platform for precision medicine and personalized care for patients with cognitive difficulties. It would allow the team to front-load medical history taking and other administrative tasks before the first in-person or virtual visit. This platform would help us better manage the wait-list by engaging, triaging, educating and supporting clients and families with resources prior to the initial visit.

Lisa Raitt's husband, Bruce, has young-onset dementia. He was exhibiting difficult behaviours and was “a danger to my kids and me,” Raitt said. The support they received from Dr. Morris Freedman and the Virtual Behavioural Medicine program at Baycrest mitigated the responsive behaviours.

According to the Alzheimer's Society, at least 16,000 Canadians under the age of 65 are living with young onset dementia.

Altogether more than half a million are living with dementia, and that number is projected to rise to 912,000 in 10 years.



REDUCING STRESS AND ISOLATION

eVisits: When the government restricted visitors in the spring of 2020, residents and patients connected with loved ones on video calls using large screens or tablets mounted on special telemedicine carts (tCarts) that can be moved from room to room. The equipment was purchased thanks to generous gifts from donors. It was put to use thousands of times for every day chats and special occasions.



Technological Enablement of Older Adults (TEA):

Baycrest received a COVID-19 Emergency Community Support Fund federal grant, administered by the United Way, to create technical training for older adults. Led by the Baycrest Innovation Office, a team developed course materials in the fall and the first classes began in January 2021, offering a range of practical skills to help reduce social isolation. They also reached hundreds of people who signed up for educational Webinars on technical training for older adults.

Virtual Mindfulness:

Seniors may encounter challenges as they transition to retirement, cope with illness or experience bereavement. Many are vulnerable to developing depression and anxiety.

Some clinic patients have been candidates for Baycrest's Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program, a form of attention training which strengthens inner resources through self-discovery and acceptance of self in the present moment. During the pandemic, Baycrest is also offering virtual mindfulness sessions to staff.

“Oh, you’re all like doctors. You give us injections of happiness.”

- *Sharing Dance Seniors participant*



RECREATION AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Engagement in the arts improves mood, reduces social isolation and contributes to overall well-being. Research indicates that people who are physically active, cognitively stimulated and relatively free of anxiety might reduce their risk of dementia. During the pandemic, Baycrest devised ways to deliver programs virtually. Some arts and recreation activities are offered on the Baycrest campus, while others are delivered to Baycrest@Home clients in the community. Some programs are enjoyed by both groups.

Sharing Dance: Baycrest is a partner with Canada’s National Ballet School in offering this safe and accessible dance program designed for older adults. It features seated dance options, and takes participants through a creative dance-based experience tapping into cognitive stimulation, physical activity, imagination and familiar music.



Clowns and Dogs: In-person visits were replaced by virtual pet therapy and eVisits by therapeutic clowns during the pandemic.



“It was magical. I was almost in tears through the whole thing. I haven’t seen my mom smile like that in months!”

- Dana Francoz, whose 85-year-old mother took part in a music session

Virtual Bingo:

Residents of the Terraces of Baycrest have spent a lot of time in their suites because of COVID-19 concerns. To maintain a sense of community, a number of virtual programs were organized. Anne Burke says she enjoyed participating in virtual bingo using a donated iPad because it allowed her to stay connected and engaged with her friends from the comfort and safety of her room. Other programming includes:

- Museum on Wheels
- Art-on-the-Brain, an evidence-based, online activity developed at Baycrest that promotes brain health, wellness and a sense of community
- Virtual Book Club
- Bringing the Art Studio Home

Azrieli Foundation Café Europa:

Social gatherings of Holocaust survivors at the Azrieli Foundation Café Europa are suspended but we remain connected. Members receive monthly activity booklets called “Embrace Your Home Base,” filled with brain games, Jewish learning, delicious recipes, health and wellness tips, music appreciation, creative expression and jokes and stories that bring a smile to people’s faces. We sent gifts to mark the holidays, and Baycrest social workers phone and email regularly to stay in touch with members and help resolve issues that arise.

Symphony Youth Orchestra:

Members volunteered for virtual sessions with seniors at Baycrest. Before the sessions, the young musicians received training on the use of music in care homes and effective communication with older adults. The sessions included five pieces of music with discussion about the composer and the musician’s experiences.

The Ron and Nancy Kalifer Culture Hub:

The Ron and Nancy Kalifer Culture Hub presents themed art exhibits on a rotating basis. To ensure those in our care could continue to engage with art on campus during periods of social isolation, the Arts Projects Coordinator and Curator joined in virtual delivery with exhibit tours being recorded and broadcasted for patients, residents, and community members to enjoy. The space is also used for livestreamed fundraising events in lieu of in-person galas.



BAYCREST@HOME

Baycrest@Home is a new project that offers a range of virtual and web-based resources, social worker support, programs and services easily accessible from the comfort and convenience of clients' homes via phone, video conferencing and the internet. It was launching as the pandemic arrived in Canada. In addition to social and recreation programs described on previous pages, it offers discussion groups, chair exercise, morning stretch & move, brain games, trivia, relaxation classes, instructional art, music, spiritual care, a storytelling club and more.

Freeman Family Day Centre & Samuel Lunenfeld Mountainview Club

When hundreds of members of Baycrest's adult day centre could no longer attend in-person, our Baycrest@Home team filled the void with virtual sessions for older adults and their family caregivers who were stuck at home.

Families of B@H participants notice a difference:

“There is a huge improvement in my dad’s sleep pattern. He is certainly more tired at the end of the day, especially on the days where he is involved with numerous activities. His sleep is less interrupted and his concentration has improved. He seems more engaged with the caregivers and his mood is better. He seems happier and certainly spending a little less time taking naps. He is engaged with the activities, the people running them and with his caregivers.”

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“We got her a computer. She’s enjoying the programs, especially bingo. She wakes up earlier than she used to. She looks forward to doing something. It keeps her busy for a few hours a day. She listens to music, she does the exercise programs. I think it’s very innovative. Especially now when she can’t have a lot of visitors, I think it’s great. It takes her away from the TV. It’s a different activity. I think she’s a lot happier than before.”

Family Caregiver Support

In partnership with the Baycrest Foundation, Baycrest@Home presents webinars focusing on families supporting their loved ones.

The webinars have attracted hundreds of people for topics such as:

- Resiliency Training for Family Caregivers: Standing Up to COVID-19
- Insights into Caregiving: Understanding this Challenging Role
- Caregiving 101: What you need to know if you are a family caregiver
- The Sandwich Generation: Caring for the Caregiver During COVID-19
- How To Initiate Difficult Family Conversations
- Combating Isolation Through Self-Care in the Age of COVID-19
- Hearing Loss and Dementia: Connections, Impact and What You Can Do About It.

Past webinars are also available for viewing at the Baycrest@Home website under Articles & Webinars.

Webinar Feedback

“Lots of valuable, interesting information.”

“I appreciate what you are doing. It helps me in not feeling alone.”

“It helped me to understand I am not alone in this and that there is support if needed.”

“It was helpful to ‘validate’ elements of caregiver stress and to learn of resources to support family caregivers.”

“Our efforts enhanced physical distancing and infection prevention and control practices; increased access to virtual care; and mitigated unnecessary emergency department use in North Toronto.”

- Jagger Smith, Program Director,
Ambulatory Services Transformation

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“Knowing that I don’t have to leave my apartment, and having nurses come to us with their gowns, masks and face shields, I was so happy I could get my flu shot and stay safe too.”

- resident of Senior Housing at 4455 Bathurst Street

COMMUNITY RESPONSE TEAM

Baycrest is leading a COVID-19 Community Response team that has established clinical spaces in some Toronto Community Housing buildings to support seniors. The team connects people with primary care physicians and specialized geriatric services. It also helps support tenants who may not have access or aptitude with digital devices but can still interact virtually with health professionals.

Adrian Vecchio, Advanced Practice Nurse at Baycrest, and Tracy Zhang, Pharmacist at Baycrest, joined forces with the North Toronto Ontario Health Team to lead and mobilize an effort to help 700 older adults receive the flu shot at their residence.



“After attending our education sessions, many of our participants felt better prepared to deal with potential COVID-19 cases in long-term care.”

- Lisa Sokoloff, Manager, Training and Simulation and Program Director, ECHO Care of the Elderly

EDUCATION

Health Information Portal:

Baycrest’s Centre for Education, in collaboration with the Marketing & Communication Department and with the support of donor funds, launched a new Health Information portal at baycrest.org. It provides resources, links and tools in multiple formats from Baycrest experts and vetted external resources of value. Staff can refer patients and families to reliable and up-to-date health information.

COVID-19 Care Resources for Healthcare Professionals:

Baycrest is curating and updating helpful resources on COVID-19 for our community and beyond. Our education leaders are creating materials for public websites on topics such as infection control; PPE for family caregiver visits and hand-cleaning; communicating with residents and supporting families; person-centred language and getting to know a resident. Other subjects include supporting residents living with dementia; supporting mobility in long-term care; recreational activities and self-care.

SAGE:

Simulation Activities for Gerontological Education (SAGE) is a collaboration between the Centre for Education and Volunteer Services. SAGE volunteers posed as patients to allow psychologists to practise neuropsychological testing in a virtual setting before treating their actual patients. The psychologists were grateful for the opportunity to get more comfortable with the online format.

Webinars with Strategic Reach:

For several years, Baycrest has coordinated Project ECHO - Extension of Community Health Outcomes (ECHO) Care of the Elderly. Webinars are attended by health professionals throughout Ontario. We launched a COVID-19 program in April 2020. By May, about 250 participants from 140 LTC homes were involved. Topics included:

- Preparing your long-term care home for COVID-19
- Stress-Anxiety and Healthcare Providers
- Delirium: Prevention, Assessment & Management during COVID-19

“Given the status with COVID-19, we’re starting out virtually with people in their own homes. Looking ahead, Stan’s Gym will be the focus of exercise programs for dementia prevention.”

- Dr. Howard Chertkow, Director,
Kimel Family Centre for Brain Health and Wellness



RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Donors have generously supported creation of the Kimel Family Centre for Brain Health and Wellness, which integrates research with personalized wellness therapies and education. Construction is underway to renovate Stan’s Gym into a state of the art fitness facility, and create activity rooms, treatment and assessment rooms, office areas and more. The centre will be the flagship for a national dementia prevention program by the Canadian Consortium on Neurodegeneration in Aging (CCNA).

COVID-19 Research:

You have probably heard about COVID-19 long-haulers suffering effects on thinking, learning and memory. Rotman Research Institute scientists are co-leading a study called NEUROCOVID-19, and are involved in many other research projects and clinical trials with a focus on the population most vulnerable to the disease: older adults.

Other Novel Rotman Research Institute Projects include:

- Exploration of the benefits of a personal meditation assistant with clients and caregivers at the Sam and Ida Ross Memory Clinic
- Investigation into the effectiveness of falls detection technology
- Evaluation of a social robot to help address social isolation and loneliness
- Development of training programs to improve hearing in older adults, with the aim of preventing Alzheimer’s disease
- Language training to boost abilities that are protective against dementia.

What’s Next Canada Conference:

In March 2020, the Baycrest-led Centre for Aging + Brain Health Innovation (CABHI) quickly switched its conference from being in-person to a successful virtual event with 43 international speakers and thought leaders, and a global pitch competition.



TIME-SAVING TECHNOLOGY

Ultraviolet Disinfection System: Automated disinfection technology was introduced to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and eradicate drug-resistant organisms such as C. difficile, MRSA and VRE. It can be set up in individual rooms to disinfect when patients or residents are out of the room.

Smart Suites: Baycrest has installed smart technology in several long-term care rooms to enhance everyday life. Voice commands adjust lights, blinds, set reminders, connect the resident with a loved one, play music, turn on a TV program or movie, and more. With donor support, Baycrest will make features like these more widely available on our campus and in the community for seniors who would benefit.

Screening App: Baycrest developed a screening app with a series of questions about symptoms and possible exposures that staff must answer before entering the building. The app saves time for the screening team and our 1,700-plus staff and reduces the likelihood of lineups when arriving for a shift.

“Our vision at Baycrest is a world where every older adult enjoys a life of purpose, inspiration and fulfilment. Key to achieving this is our unrelenting drive to be at the forefront of solutions that contribute to adding life to people’s years as much as we add years to people’s lives.”

- *Dr. William Reichman,*
President & CEO, Baycrest



THANK YOU!

Your generosity has a profound impact on the lives of older adults. Together, we will continue to innovate, expand and enhance virtual care to complement the many in-person programs that improve life for people served by Baycrest.



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