

## ACER-CART Recommends McMaster's Optimal Aging Portal



Newspapers and the Internet cover lots of stories about health care for the aging Canadian, but the emphasis is usually on drama (dramatic findings from a new study, dramatic events with no mention of related scientific research), with less emphasis on substance. Readers are left to wonder which information to trust.

At the recent June board meeting, The Canadian Association of Retired Teachers (ACER-CART) unanimously passed a resolution to support McMaster University's Optimal Aging Portal as part of a platform for the development of a National Seniors Strategy. The resolution also encouraged each of ACER-CART's thirteen provincial associations likewise to endorse and become active partners with the McMaster Optimal Aging Portal.

The Portal features high quality scientific evidence about healthy aging -- information that can help Canadians remain healthy, active and engaged as long as possible, and to manage their health conditions. The Portal evaluates health research and resources, telling users whether free health resources on the Internet and in newspaper stories are based on scientific research, are reliable, and are worthy of note. The articles are written in consumer-friendly language.

Users can register for free at [www.mcmasteroptimalaging.org](http://www.mcmasteroptimalaging.org) and gain easy access to search the full content of the Portal. To keep up to-date with new research and receive lists of new content recently added to the Portal, users can opt in to receive Email alerts about how to stay healthy, active and engaged as they grow older. Users can also follow [@Mac\\_AgingNews](#) or the Portal on [Facebook](#) for news and evidence about optimal aging.

"I'm very proud to announce this new partnership," said Suzanne Labarge, Chancellor of McMaster University. "Both McMaster University and the Canadian Association of Retired Teachers have a strong interest in supporting life-long learning and healthy aging."

"As former educators, we have a commitment to public education and supporting trustworthy sources of information," said JoAnn Lauber, President of ACER-CART. "Over the next year, we plan to ensure that the thousands of retired teachers in Canada are made aware of this valuable resource, and that they, in turn, can share this knowledge with their communities."



## Rationale and features

1. There's too much scientific research coming out every day, it's often overhyped and can conflict with existing research, and I can't understand most of it
  - ✓ **Evidence Summaries**  
Key messages from scientific research that's ready to be acted on
2. The Internet is full of free health resources but it's hard to know which are worth a closer look
  - ✓ **Web Resource Ratings**  
Evaluations that tell you whether free health resources on the internet are based on scientific research
3. Scientific research often only partly answers one question among the many I have
  - ✓ **Blog Posts**  
Commentaries on what the scientific research on a topic actually means and why good science matters
4. Newspapers cover lots of stories but the emphasis is usually on drama (dramatic findings from a new study, dramatic events with no mention of related scientific research), not substance
  - ✓ **@Mac\_AgingNews Twitter feed**  
Service that is 'hitting the headlines' with tweets about NEWS and related EVIDENCE from the McMaster Optimal Aging Portal

The Portal draws content from three best-in-class one-stop shops: McMaster PLUS ('my health' system'), Health Evidence ('our health' system), and Health Systems Evidence ('our system')

To keep up to-date with new research and receive lists of new content recently added to the Portal, users can opt in to receive **Email alerts**.

## Partnership between the Canadian Association of Retired Teachers and McMaster Optimal Aging Portal

### How can ACER-CART member associations get involved?

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- ❑ Encourage your members to visit the McMaster Optimal Aging Portal where they can find high quality scientific evidence about healthy aging, written in consumer friendly language. The Portal is free to use. To keep up to-date with new research and receive lists of new content recently added to the Portal, users can opt in to receive Email alerts.
  - Consider including this statement on your website, in your newsletters, or in emails to your members: *“CART has partnered with McMaster Optimal Aging Portal to bring you information about healthy aging that you can trust. Visit [www.mcmasteroptimalaging.org](http://www.mcmasteroptimalaging.org)”*
  - Use the **attached** logo with a direct link from your website to the Portal
  - Distribute information about the Portal (such as the **attached** info sheet) at your conferences and events, or include in your mailings
- ❑ Follow [@Mac\\_AgingNews](https://twitter.com/Mac_AgingNews) on Twitter, and encourage your members to follow as well, for:
  - A service that brings you the best available research evidence from the McMaster Optimal Aging Portal in response to newspaper stories about health and aging
  - Announcements and upcoming events
- ❑ Inform your members about free public talks where they can hear experts in the field summarize the evidence on important topics about optimal aging
  - Four times per year the Portal team organizes free public talks that are available through livestreaming across the country. These are announced several weeks in advance and you can to point your members to the live web stream <http://www.anowevent.com/mcmasterhealthforum> and encourage them to participate in the questions and answers component by submitting their questions on Twitter
  - Recordings from previous talks are available for anyone to view, any time, via the ‘events’ section of the portal: <http://www.mcmasteroptimalaging.org/events>
- ❑ Organize an educational session for your members (in person or via webinars) to help them make evidence-informed decisions about their health
  - Watch two pre-recorded informative webinars
    - Healthy Aging: Learn how to use the McMaster Optimal Aging Portal* - View [recording](#)
    - Knowing What’s Best: Discover How the Portal Does Your Homework* - View [recording](#)
  - Organize workshops or webinars specific for your members. The Portal team can provide materials and conduct remote demonstrations online.
- ❑ Talk to local media about the partnership between CART and the McMaster Optimal Aging Portal

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#### If you need to contact someone at the McMaster Optimal Aging Portal:

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