



2026 Project Review and Impact

The **Links2Wellbeing (L2W)** project continues to redefine holistic care for older adults across Ontario by bridging the gap between healthcare providers and Seniors Active Living Centres. L2W provides isolated seniors with access to social, recreational and physical wellness programs through a formal referral.

We continue to engage new centres and expand our reach across Ontario, with 144 Seniors Active Living Centre (SALC) and OACAO member sites having participated in the project. Over the past year, the program received 1,408 referrals, with over half of those individuals successfully becoming active participants at their local centres. This growth was supported by a diverse referral network of 476 distinct healthcare partnerships, including family doctors, hospitals, and emergency medical services.

Transforming Older Adult Health

Our demographics show nearly 37% of participants live with a disability, and over 31% live alone. Many are immigrants to Canada, and/or live on a low income, highlighting the vital

populations referral partners and sites connect with on an ongoing basis. The impact on client quality of life has been significant and measurable. Within the first six months, 53% of participants reported a decrease in loneliness. This emotional improvement is paired with tangible health system benefits, as participants reported fewer appointments with primary care providers and reductions in emergency department visits.

Beyond the numbers, clients share that the program gives them a "reason to get out of bed" and the confidence to maintain their independence.

"My lifestyle is greatly impacted by the SALC. I can drive my own car. I can stay in my own house. I love the socializing. I am able to keep my hobbies and maintain my sense of accomplishment."

"...it can be quite depressing and sad to be at home isolating oneself. Getting out does help me stop feeling sorry for myself."



4100+ Referrals received since 2021



140+ Seniors Active Living Centre sites since 2021

Over 476 health care partners:

- ★ Family Health Teams
- ★ Community Health Centres
- ★ Mental Health Practitioners
- ★ Community Paramedics
- ★ Community Pharmacists
- ★ Hospitals

After 6 mos, L2W participants:

- 53% Reported feeling less lonely
- 74% Were participating in programs up to 4 times per month
- 38% Reported fewer visits to primary care

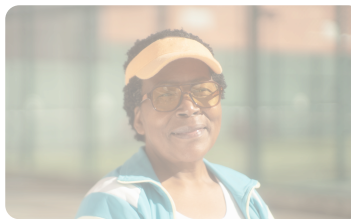


Most participants receive subsidies to remove financial barriers to participation

Meaningful volunteer and student roles



188 volunteers
43 students
15 universities & colleges



Operational Excellence and Innovation

To ensure the long-term sustainability of Links2Wellbeing, we have focused our efforts on reducing administrative burdens and expanding our evidence-based practices. Our key initiatives this year include:

- **Digital Solutions Pilot:** We launched a pilot to provide access to the Ocean eReferral platform for select L2W sites to help our partners more efficiently accept, track, and follow-up on social prescriptions from healthcare providers.
- **Applied Research:** We designed and launched two new research projects: *Community Compass*, which helps us map informal support networks in 3 different population centres; and *Nature-Prescribing Pathways*, which offers select SALCs the opportunity to integrate nature-based wellness programs directly into their referral options.
- **Building Partner Capacity:** We delivered 32 training sessions to our network, covering essential topics such as Motivational Interviewing to help staff and volunteers better support clients who may feel hesitant about joining new programs.
- **Listening to Our Sites:** We conducted 40 individual interviews with staff and volunteers to deeply understand their implementation realities, allowing us to better support their social prescribing related needs for the coming year.

Strategic Policy Success

A major milestone this year was the formal integration of social prescribing into provincial policy. For the first time, the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility (MSAA) has explicitly named social prescribing and the Links2Wellbeing program in its official SALC Program Guidelines. This recognition provides a mandate for centres to use their budgets for health care integration initiatives, positioning SALCs as essential community hubs for preventative health care support. These policy wins provide a strong framework for the long-term sustainability of social prescribing in Ontario.

CONNECT WITH US!

If you are interested in joining the project, referring to a SALC, learning more about social prescribing, or collaborating, please connect through L2W@oacao.org.

