

OHCHR's Multi-Stakeholder Meeting on the Human Rights of Older Persons

SE Health's Submission to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
Prepared on: September 5, 2022

As one of Canada's largest social enterprises with close to 115 years of history, Saint Elizabeth Health Care, also known as SE Health, has been and continue to serve the members of Canadian communities through innovation and a mission to spread hope and happiness. Our care for older persons and their families in the communities, assisted living facilities, and long-term care homes focus on delivering holistic life care with love and purpose and we are proud to be an accredited organization of the UN Open-Ended Working Group on the Human Rights of Older Persons. On an annual basis, we touch the lives of millions of Canadians by making over 7.2 million visits in people's homes across Canada.

As part of SE Health's social impact initiative on the *Future of Aging*, we are implementing anti-ageism efforts to end the stigma that older persons face throughout Canada and around the world. SE Health recognizes the far-reaching effects of ageism on the health of older persons and is committed to combat ageism through advocacy, public engagement, training, and outreach activities. However, our efforts in Canada and globally can only go so far. The creation of a legally binding document recognizing the human rights of older persons - *the UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons* - would bolster the efforts of SE Health and other civil society organizations by providing a tangible, legitimate instrument that would hold governments around the world accountable. Such an instrument would also ensure a cohesive approach to addressing many of the challenges faced by older persons that are rooted in ageist attitudes, practices, and policies. For example, SE Health recognizes the immense need for affordable age-friendly housing – a challenge that our governments have not addressed in the fullest. By co-creating permanent housing solutions with older persons in the community as part

of our social impact work, we have learned first-hand how the lack of attention to basic human rights is affecting the everyday lives of older persons. This was particularly highlighted during the global COVID-19 pandemic. Because of this, we believe that the explicit recognition and ratification of the rights of older persons is needed in generating greater momentum and buy-in from multi-sectoral stakeholders. Hence, the creation of the UN convention is urgently needed to advance the protection of older persons' human rights.

Lastly, SE Health is committed to serving the health and wellness of older persons globally. Our work with our international partners in strengthening their healthcare workforce by co-creating education and knowledge transfer solutions, would benefit from an internationally recognized convention that universally recognizes and protects the human rights of older persons. An official, internationally agreed upon instrument would further protect the needs of older persons globally and create consensus among partnering countries. Therefore, the UN convention on the rights of older persons is urgently needed, with SE Health's fullest support.