

## The McMaster Optimal Aging Portal and the YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford team up to promote healthy aging

**(June 30, 2016) - Hamilton, ON** - The McMaster Optimal Aging Portal and the YMCA of Hamilton/ Burlington/Brantford have partnered to help Canadians stay healthy, active and engaged as they grow older. The partnership marks an important alliance inspired by a shared commitment to ensuring Canadians have access to the highest-quality health information to foster healthy communities.

The partnership is an extension of the LiveWell Community Health Partnership between Hamilton Health Sciences, the YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford and McMaster University. Livewell designs, delivers and evaluates chronic disease self-management programs and has had over 2500 participants to date.

“The YMCA works with members across a wide range of ages with various health concerns. Our partnership with the McMaster Optimal Aging Portal will focus on connecting older adults to resources that will help them independently manage their conditions beyond our on-site programs,” says Genevieve Hladysh, Senior Manager at the YMCA Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford. “We encourage our members to visit the Portal for credible information to help them age well.”

The McMaster Optimal Aging Portal is a website developed by McMaster University to provide public access to evidence-based information about prevalent seniors’ conditions and health concerns. The content is presented in a consumer-friendly format and is based on the latest, systematically reviewed research evidence.

The Portal:

- **Puts the research into context:** Blog Posts include commentary on what the scientific research on a topic actually means and why good science matters.
- **Makes sense of the science:** Experts identify key messages from scientific research that’s relevant and ready to be acted on.
- **Provides information you can trust:** There are many free online health resources out there, but it’s hard to know which are worth a closer look based on evidence. The Portal uses explicit criteria to assess and rate other free online seniors’ health resources – as well as in the development of its own featured content.

“Community partnerships with like-minded organizations are a key component to raising awareness about this critical resource throughout Canada,” says Dr. John Lavis, Director of the McMaster Health Forum and one of the Portal Leads. “We look forward to working with the YMCA’s staff and members to support our aging population.”

Portal resources will be distributed at YMCA events and key articles of interest will be featured in newsletters and member-focused communications materials. The Portal team will also contribute to the YMCA's annual program review leveraging a "research to action" approach in order to help evaluate and identify the top areas of interest related to seniors' health.

"We want to ensure our programs make an impact," says Hladysh. "This partnership will help us do that."

### **About the McMaster Optimal Aging Portal**

[www.mcmasteroptimalaging.org](http://www.mcmasteroptimalaging.org)

The McMaster Optimal Aging Portal is a free and easy to use website that gives you access to high-quality information to help you age well. The Portal aims to be a trusted voice on healthy aging and is a valuable resource for seniors, caregivers and health professionals. The Portal is part of McMaster's Labarge Optimal Aging Initiative, which was funded by a donation from retired businesswoman Suzanne Labarge who is personally committed to improving the health and well-being of older Canadians.

**Sign up** for weekly Healthy Aging email alerts: <http://bit.ly/1QmQLjT>

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### **About the YMCA Hamilton/Hamilton/Brantford**

As a charitable organization, the YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford serves over 190,000 men, women and children living in Hamilton, Burlington, Flamborough, Brantford and Brant County. The YMCA nurtures people's potential and helps build healthy communities through programming that includes: health, fitness and aquatics, child care, day and overnight camping, outdoor education, employment training, newcomer services, academic assistance, community outreach, leadership development and volunteerism.

YMCAHBB.CA