For Immediate Release

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The Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the Canadian Frailty Network are filling the gap in COVID-19 research

(Kingston, Ontario) – As we have seen throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, older adults living with frailty have been disproportionately affected with devastating impacts. Though there is ongoing research that addresses COVID-19 in older Canadians, there has been a gap when it comes to funding research for those living with frailty specifically -- those members of Canada's society who are most at risk to COVID-19.

A recent Canadian Frailty Network (CFN) research competition was called to address the key issue of frailty in relation to COVID-19. An overwhelming number of proposals were received – covering a variety of care settings such as acute care hospitals, long-term care and communities, as community dwelling older adults are suffering more deeply now from social isolation.

CFN is pleased to announce that the Canadian Institutes of Health Research - Institute of Aging (CIHR-IA) recognizes the importance of frailty research funding in the fight against COVID-19 and has committed up to $300,000 in funding, enabling a total of up to $800,000 in funding aimed at this important work.

"The CIHR Institute of Aging is pleased to partner with the Canadian Frailty Network and fund research aimed at investigating the interaction between frailty and COVID-19 in older adults," says Dr. Jane Rylett, Scientific Director, CIHR Institute of Aging. "As COVID-19 continues to unfairly impact vulnerable older adults, research will provide the scientific knowledge we need to fight this horrible disease."

In Canada today, one in every four Canadians between the ages of 65-84 years is considered medically frail (1.5 million older adults), and by age 85 that number increases to 50 per cent. As Canada's only research network focused on frailty and vulnerable older adults, CFN's mission is to improve care for older Canadians living with frailty and their family caregivers through research, knowledge translation, training of the next generation of health care providers and health promotion messaging such as the AVOID frailty program.

"As we have witnessed the devastating impacts of COVID-19 among our valued older population, particularly those living with frailty in long term care, we are grateful that the Government of Canada, through CIHR-IA is making frailty research a priority," says John Muscedere, MD, Scientific Director of

Canadian Frailty Network and a Professor of Critical Care Medicine at Queen's University/Kingston Health Sciences Centre.

"Our work is based on creating scientific evidence that can be translated into practices and policies to improve care for older adults living with frailty. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw an opportunity and, in fact, an obligation to address the gap concerning frailty research. We are deeply pleased that the Institute of Aging has offered its support in this vital work. We greatly value our longstanding partnership."

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About the Canadian Frailty Network

Canadian Frailty Network (CFN) is Canada's sole network devoted to improving care for older Canadians living with frailty and supporting their families and caregivers. We do this by increasing frailty recognition and assessment, increasing evidence for decision-making from the bedside to the policy making level, advancing evidence-based changes to care, training the next generation of care professionals and scientists, and engaging with older adults and caregivers. Canadian Frailty Network is funded by the Government of Canada's Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE) program. For more information, please visit www.cfn-nce.ca, or follow us on Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook.

About CIHR-IA

The CIHR Institute of Aging (CIHR-IA) invests in research that promotes an optimal life-long approach to healthy aging and improves the health and wellness of Canada's aging population. By supporting advances in prevention, diagnosis, treatment, care delivery, and social determinants of health, IA seeks to improve the health and quality of life of Canadians in their later years.

For more information, please visit www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/8671.html