

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A Canadian First: CIUSSS West-Central Montreal Launches World Health Organization Program Focused on Healthy Aging

Montreal, April 20, 2026 – Too often, early signs of health decline in older adults, such as changes in mobility, memory, nutrition, or mental health, go unnoticed until they result in a fall, hospitalization, or loss of independence. A new initiative being launched by CIUSSS West-Central Montreal, in collaboration with key academic partners, aims to change that.

Through its Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Health of Seniors, Schouela CEDurable, CIUSSS West-Central Montreal is launching the **Integrated Care for Older People (ICOPE)** program developed by the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, becoming the **first organization in Canada** to implement this internationally recognized approach to healthy aging.

Led and coordinated by **Schouela CEDurable**, in collaboration with the **Division of Geriatric Medicine at McGill University** and the **RUISSS McGill network**, the ICOPE program enables care teams to identify early signs of decline and respond sooner through coordinated, person-centred care.

“Too often, the system intervenes only once a crisis occurs,” said **Dr. Gustavo Duque**, Scientific Director of Schouela CEDurable. *“ICOPE allows us to focus on prevention, early action, and collaboration, with the goal of helping older adults maintain autonomy and quality of life for as long as possible.”*

A global framework, implemented locally

Already implemented in more than 40 countries worldwide, the WHO's ICOPE program focuses on **five key areas essential to everyday functioning**: sensory ability, cognition, mobility, vitality, including nutrition, and psychological health.

By encouraging care teams to share information and work more closely together, including primary care, geriatrics, home support services, academic partners, and community organizations, the approach aims to reduce gaps in care and ensure early signs of decline are addressed sooner.

International expertise supporting a Canadian milestone

The launch of the ICOPE program at CIUSSS West-Central Montreal is supported by the involvement of **Dr. Matteo Cesari**, Scientist in Geriatrics and Gerontology at the World Health Organization. Dr. Cesari played a central role in the program's design and global rollout and is internationally recognized for his leadership in healthy aging, frailty, and integrated models of care, lending international credibility to CIUSSS West-Central Montreal's adoption of ICOPE and its commitment to translating global best practices into meaningful benefits for older adults.

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Available for interviews

- **Dr. Gustavo Duque**, Scientific Director, Schouela CEDurable
- **Dr. Elise Levinoff**, Chief of the Division of Geriatric Medicine, Jewish General Hospital

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