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NEWS RELEASE

## The National Institute on Ageing Launches Pension Centre of Excellence

*New Centre to Drive Innovation in Retirement Income Security*

**TORONTO, Tuesday, February 18** — The National Institute on Ageing (NIA) is proud to announce the official launch of the [Pension Centre of Excellence \(PCE\)](#), a world-class, non-partisan, research-informed and action-oriented platform dedicated to improving the retirement income security of Canadians.

In conjunction with this milestone, the NIA has also declared **National Pension Awareness Week**, which will take place in Canada each year in February to foster greater understanding and engagement with pension-related issues across the country.

### Addressing a Critical Gap in Canada's Retirement Landscape

The NIA Pension Centre of Excellence (PCE) is designed to bring together diverse stakeholders and thought leaders to address the challenges and opportunities facing Canada's retirement income system. By fostering collaboration and leveraging evidence-based research, the PCE aims to generate innovative solutions and drive impactful change to enhance the financial security of Canadians in retirement.

"The Pension Centre of Excellence represents a significant step forward in addressing the critical retirement challenges faced by Canadians. By bringing together diverse stakeholders, we are creating a unified platform to advance policies and practices that will ensure financial security for generations to come," said Dr. Bonnie-Jeanne MacDonald, Co-lead of the Pension Centre of Excellence and Director of Financial Security Research of the NIA.

### A Collaborative Vision

The PCE, co-led by renowned experts Dr. Bonnie-Jeanne MacDonald and NIA Fellow, Barbara Sanders, will convene stakeholders through semi-annual symposia and produce high-quality research publications to inform policy and practice. Through its efforts, the PCE will unite typically disconnected worlds to address pressing issues, including:

- Expanding pension coverage for Canadians without access to workplace pension plans.
- Modernizing pension delivery systems to accommodate emerging trends and workforce dynamics.
- Addressing the unique retirement security challenges faced by vulnerable and underrepresented populations.

"The Pension Centre of Excellence is built on the thought-leadership of its members, supported by a distinguished network of researchers, each bringing unparalleled expertise to the table," said Barbara Sanders, Co-Lead of the Pension Centre of Excellence and NIA Fellow. "This collective strength ensures that the Centre will not only deliver authoritative insights but also drive meaningful progress in addressing the challenges and opportunities within Canada's retirement ecosystem."

### **National Pension Awareness Week**

Launching alongside the PCE, National Pension Awareness Week (February 18-21, 2025) will raise awareness about the importance of retirement planning, the role of pensions in ensuring the financial security of older Canadians and highlight the Centre's collaborative efforts to strengthen Canada's retirement income system.

### **Key Features of the Pension Centre of Excellence**

The PCE will serve as a hub for:

- Semi-annual symposia, uniting stakeholders from various sectors to discuss pressing pension-related themes.
- Rigorous research and publications that provide actionable insights and inform policy and practice.
- A collaborative community of experts, policymakers, and organizations dedicated to improving Canada's retirement income security.

"The launch of the Pension Centre of Excellence is a critical step forward in addressing the growing complexities of Canada's retirement income system," said Alyssa Brierley, Executive Director of the NIA. "At the same time, our declaration of National Pension Awareness Week reflects our commitment to raising awareness and encouraging proactive engagement on pension-related issues among Canadians of all ages."

### **Hear from PCE Members**

"Aon is a proud partner of the PCE as we firmly believe that addressing pension adequacy in Canada is essential to ensure financial security for retirees, reduce poverty among the elderly, and promote a sustainable retirement system. It is crucial for the well-being of future generations and economic stability for our country. We look forward to working with PCE and its members to address some of the challenges facing the Canadian retirement system to create an opportunity for all Canadians to achieve financially secure retirement." said William da Silva, Head of Wealth, Aon Canada.

"Canada Life is incredibly excited to be part of this ground-breaking new initiative. We share in the united vision of strengthening Canada's retirement income system and ensuring the financial security of Canadians from coast to coast. The invaluable insights and efforts provided by the PCE will be a key step toward bringing this vision to light," said Kate Nazar, Vice-President, Group Retirement Services, Canada Life.

“Collaboration across the Canadian financial ecosystem is essential for the financial security of Canadians, at every stage of their lives. The Pension Centre of Excellence will help stakeholders share knowledge and expertise that will lead to a stronger, sustainable pension system, long term. As a group insurer, we look forward to contributing to a group of experts committed to financially empowering Canadians and helping them achieve their retirement goals,” said Marie-France Amyot, Senior Vice-President, Group Benefits and Retirement, Desjardins

“Eckler is delighted to be a member of the NIA’s Pension Centre of Excellence. As leading pension and financial wellness consultants, we believe that Canada’s retirement income system plays a vital role in shaping the social fabric that supports retirement security and financial wellness for millions of Canadians. We look forward to working with the many talented and committed members to advance policies and practices that will ensure a brighter, financially secure future for generations to come,” said Janice Holman, CFA CFP, Principal, Financial Wellness and DC Consulting, Eckler.

“HomeEquity Bank is proud to be a member of the National Institute on Ageing’s Canadian Pension Centre of Excellence. As the only Bank to exclusively serve Canadians 55+, we understand the critical role pensions can play in providing financial security for older Canadians. We’re committed to working collaboratively to strengthen Canada’s retirement income system,” said Yvonne Ziomecki-Fisher, Chief Customer, Brand and Advice Officer at HomeEquity Bank.

“As Alberta’s largest Pension Plan, the Local Authorities Pension Plan (LAPP) is proud to support and congratulate the National Institute on Ageing (NIA) for creating Canada’s first ever Pension Centre of Excellence (PCE). For over 60 years we have supported many Albertans on their retirement journey through a workplace pension. Now in 2025 it is clear there is a growing need nationally to assist all Canadians as they learn, prepare and plan for a secure retirement income. We are proud to be a member of PCE and work alongside NIA and others on this extremely important initiative,” said Troy Mann, President and CEO, LAPP Corporation.

“The launch of the Pension Centre of Excellence marks a pivotal moment for advancing retirement security in Canada. With a rapidly evolving workforce and shifting demographics, it is crucial to develop innovative, evidence-based policies that ensure financial stability for all Canadians. Mintz is excited to collaborate with this distinguished group of experts to drive meaningful solutions that will strengthen our pension system for generations to come,” said Mitch Frazer, Managing Partner, Toronto Office, Mintz.

“We’re pleased to be part of the Pension Centre of Excellence and contribute to this important initiative. Bringing together diverse expertise and perspectives is key to strengthening Canada’s retirement security, and we look forward to the meaningful discussions and insights that will come from this collaboration,” said CEO, Doug Moodie, Nova Scotia Pension Services Corporation.

“Collaboration between researchers and practitioners is crucial to improving the retirement financial security and broader well-being of Canadians. OMERS is looking forward to working with the National Institute on Ageing through its new Pension Centre of Excellence to bridge the gap between theory and practice, ensuring that research is impactful and leads to better outcomes for pension plan members and society as a whole,” said, Gareth Gibbins, Vice President, Pension Policy, Learning, and Research, OMERS.

"The National Institute of Ageing's new Pension Centre of Excellence is a transformative step towards securing the financial well-being of Canadians. By bringing together stakeholders, conducting research, advancing policy solutions, and developing innovative tools, the PCE's efforts will empower older adults to make informed decisions and confidently prepare for a more secure and fulfilling retirement," said Tricia Brown, Director, Governance and Executive Secretary, Plannera Pensions & Benefits.

"PSPP is proud to join other founding partners across Canada in support of NIA's Pension Centre of Excellence. As one of Alberta's leading pension plans, we are committed to providing a future our members can count on. Thanks to the PCE, we can collaborate with like-minded organizations in efforts destined to make a difference in people's lives come retirement," said Kathleen Rivest, Chief Pension Officer, PSPP.

"By bringing together industry leaders, policymakers, and researchers, we're not just discussing the future of pensions – we're actively shaping it. Sun Life looks forward to being a part of this new initiative and helping our clients and all Canadians reach their retirement goals," said JM Lavoie, Vice President, Strategy & Market Development, Group Retirement Services, Sun Life.

"We are honoured to be a founding member of the NIA's Pension Centre of Excellence (PCE). This partnership exemplifies T. Rowe Price's dedication to improving retirement outcomes for Canadians. We look forward to collaborating with other thought leaders and helping to shape a future that allows for more Canadians to retire with confidence," said Lauren Bloom, Head of Canada, T. Rowe Price.

"Unifor is pleased to be part of the Pension Centre of Excellence (PCE). We expect the PCE will play a leading role in advancing improvements to Canada's retirement income system, and Unifor looks forward to contributing to this important effort," said Unifor National President Lana Payne.

"As stewards of retirement income for more than 41,000 Canadians in the university sector, University Pension Plan (UPP) is thrilled to be a founding member of the Pension Centre of Excellence (PCE). Through collaboration with industry leaders and top researchers, PCE strengthens our ability to navigate a rapidly evolving landscape and enhance the resilience of retirement solutions for both current and future plan members," said Barbara Zvan, President and CEO, University Pension Plan.

## About The National Institute on Ageing

The National Institute on Ageing (NIA) improves the lives of older adults and the systems that support them by convening stakeholders, conducting research, advancing policy solutions and practice innovations, sharing information and shifting attitudes. Our vision is a Canada where older adults feel valued, included, supported, and better prepared to age with confidence.

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