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## **Sodexo and the University of Ottawa Make Sense of Seniors' Quality of Life**

*New audit tool paired with real-world solutions gathered by researchers helps long-term care communities create “sense-sensitive” environments for seniors with hearing, vision, smell, taste and touch impairments*

London, October 16, 2017 — Sodexo, world leader in quality of life services, and the University of Ottawa Life Research Institute today released the first comprehensive study of how the five senses impact quality of life for those living in long-term care communities. All five senses can diminish as we age, and “How and Why the Five Senses Matter for Quality of Life: A Guide for Long-Term Care Communities” reveals the importance of understanding sensory impairments when creating environments for seniors, whether at-home or in a long-term care community.

Research in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society shows that the rapid growth of the world’s senior population, minimal awareness exists regarding the negative effects sensory impairments have on seniors living in long-term care communities. In fact, 94 percent of people will experience diminishment of at least one of their senses as they age.

With this reality in mind, the Sodexo-uOttawa study presented strategies for creating “sense-sensitive” environments that will facilitate person-centered care for seniors. For example:

- Seniors with low vision may have difficulty distinguishing between similar colors, so long-term care communities might use high-contrast colors to help them see different items and areas.
- Sense of smell can diminish with age and impact the ability to taste. Creating an open kitchen area helps residents better smell food—which can stimulate appetite.
- Hearing impairment can make participating in conversations difficult. Minimizing background noise from heating and cooling systems, equipment and cleaning services to may make it easier for seniors to hear others.

“Good care must begin with empathy,” **said Marc Plumart, Sodexo CEO of Healthcare & Seniors Worldwide.** “This study helps senior-care managers put themselves in the shoes of their residents to understand how they experience the world—which is different for those with diminished senses. By understanding their needs, they can design services and environments to improve quality of life.”

In addition to the guide, the research team developed an audit tool to help long-term care communities assess and improve their level of sense-sensitivity. This tool is a useful, practical way to gauge quality of life through resident perceptions, physical environment, and existing policies and procedures. The audit includes a series of questions targeting residents, family members, clinical, technical and administrative staff.

“Healthcare today is complex, but many answers lie in taking care of people’s needs—and how these are affected by their diminishing senses,” **said H el ene Perrault, Professor and Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences at University of Ottawa.** “This guide and audit tool will give users benchmarks and a strategy to track the impact of sensory loss on quality of life.”

“The guide and audit tool produced by our research collaboration demonstrate clearly the value of genuine engagement between Sodexo and leading researchers.” **said Thomas Jelley, Vice President of the Sodexo Institute for Quality of Life.** “It’s been a privilege to broker and support this partnership with the University of Ottawa.”

To download the study “How and Why the Five Senses Matter for Quality of Life: A Guide for Long-Term Care Communities” visit [www.sodexo.com/fivesenses](http://www.sodexo.com/fivesenses).

### **About Sodexo**

Founded in 1966 in Marseille by Pierre Bellon, Sodexo is the global leader in services that improve Quality of Life, an essential factor in individual and organizational performance. Operating in 80 countries, Sodexo serves 75 million consumers each day through its unique combination of On-site Services, Benefits and Rewards Services and Personal and Home Services. Through its more than 100 services, Sodexo provides clients an integrated offering developed over 50 years of experience: from foodservices, reception, maintenance and cleaning, to facilities and equipment management; from Meal Pass, Gift Pass and Mobility Pass benefits for employees to in-home assistance, child care centers and concierge services. Sodexo’s success and performance are founded on its independence, its sustainable business model and its ability to continuously develop and engage its 425,000 employees throughout the world. Sodexo is included in the CAC 40 and DJSI indices.

### **Key figures (as of August 31, 2016)**

20.2 billion euro consolidated revenue  
425,000 employees  
19th largest employer worldwide  
80 countries  
75 million consumers served daily  
17.1 billion euro in market capitalization (as of July 5, 2017)

### **About The University of Ottawa—A crossroads of cultures and ideas**

The University of Ottawa is home to over 50,000 students, faculty and staff, who live, work and study in both French and English. Our campus is a crossroads of cultures and ideas, where bold minds come together to inspire game-changing ideas. We are one of Canada’s top 10 research universities—our professors and researchers explore new approaches to today’s challenges. One of a handful of Canadian universities ranked among the top 200 in the world, we attract exceptional thinkers and welcome diverse perspectives from across the globe.

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