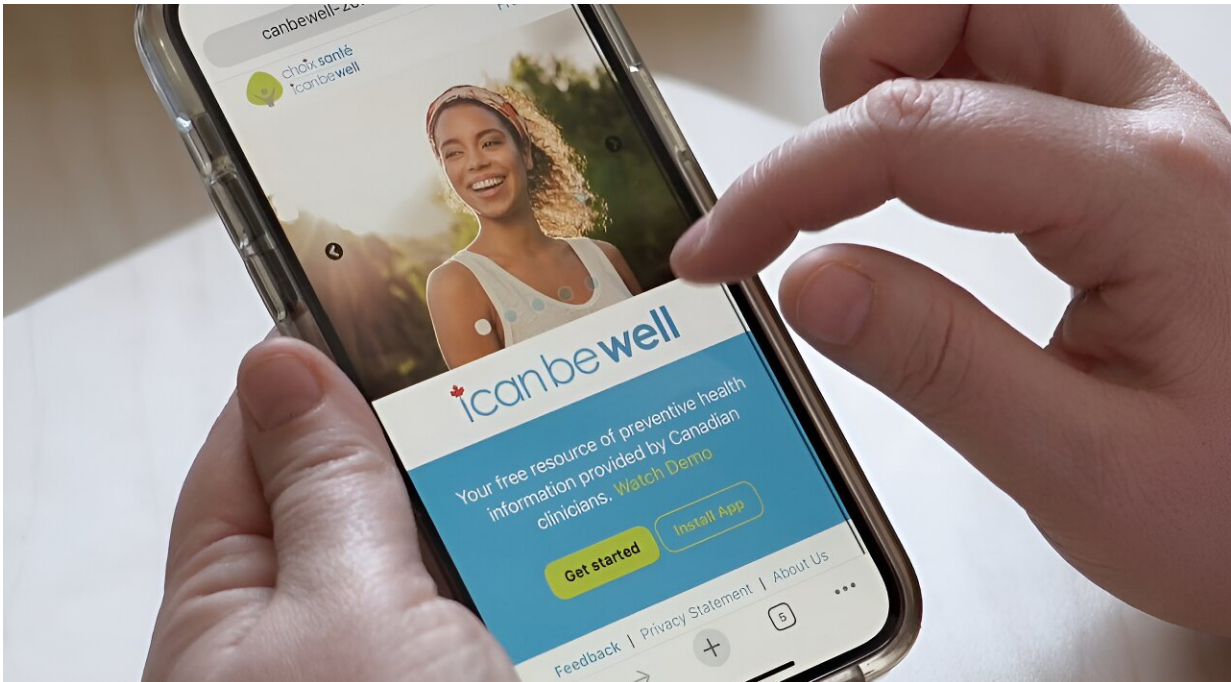# Researcher develops bilingual health care app

February 23 2024, by Paul Logothetis

Credit: University of Ottawa

With hospital emergency departments overwhelmed and Canadians feeling frustrated by a lack of primary care access, a free webapp developed at the University of Ottawa is providing trusted information about preventative health care to empower the public to take control of their own health.

Fifty to 70 percent of diseases are preventable yet finding trusted

information on the web is not always straightforward. Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic accentuated the need for a centralized resource for Canadian preventive health information, particularly with most funding spent on treating health problems rather than preventing them.

Digital Innovation

A [collaborative effort](#) from the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Engineering has led to the development of [icanbewell.ca](#), an innovative digital hub accessible to the public and [health care providers](#).

"We are proposing an 'app to fill a gap,'" says Dr. Cleo Mavriplis, Assistant Professor of Family Medicine at uOttawa and Bruyère Academic Family Health. "Our society is living a health care crisis and digital innovation can provide help. We need a primary care provider for every person in Canada, but until we get there, we need to use as many tools as we can. "

The bilingual webapp, which was launched after six years of development with the aid of family doctors, nurse practitioners and [public health officials](#), provides personalized, curated information from trusted and research-based scientific sources while also being interactive. For example, there are questionnaires to assess your risk of heart disease or diabetes, videos on osteoporosis-prevention exercises and more.

Empowering the public

"The app empowers the public to take charge of their health with real-time information," says Mavriplis, who has been a family physician for four decades. "The public wants to extend the quality and quantity of their life. Getting the best information possible in an interactive way is crucial."

Moving forward, the app will continue to expand to include an Indigenous health portal to maintain health and well-being for those communities across Canada and will look to add further focused resources for groups without access to a [family physician](#) or [nurse practitioner](#).

Provided by University of Ottawa