



Note: CU Anschutz Medical Campus logos and photos can be found [here](#)

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University of Colorado Wins National Award for Study on Social Standing Among Assisted Living Residents

Aurora, CO (September 10, 2021) — A published study by researchers at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus has been selected by Mather Institute as a Silver Award recipient of the 2021 **Innovative Research on Aging Awards**. As an internationally recognized resource for research and information about wellness, aging, and trends in senior living, Mather Institute invited submissions by researchers from universities and organizations around the world for this year's awards which cover a variety of categories from Aging in Place to Technological Advancements for Older Adults, and beyond. [Evan Plys, PhD](#) (Psychiatry) and [Rachel Johnson, PhD, LCSW](#) (Nursing) from the CU Anschutz were honored in the award category of Health and Well-Being of Senior Living Residents based on a 2020 study that scrutinized the impact of social hierarchies on assisted living community residents.

“The Innovative Research on Aging Award honors the CU researchers for exploring how the social experience of assisted living residents can be improved by understanding and eliminating damaging social structures such as bullying and isolation,” said Cate O’Brien, PhD, VP and Director, Mather Institute. “These awards honor applied research with practical implications for the senior living industry. We hope these award-winning studies will spark ideas in senior living organizations across the country and around the world.”

The [study](#) found that greater staff-resident relationships, and other interpersonal factors like extraversion and prosocial behaviors most strongly predicted perceived social standing in assisted living, highlighting the high value of social factors in this setting. A full complimentary report on the Innovative Research on Aging Award recipients, *Revealing Research 2021*, is available for download at matherinstitute.com.

The Award came with a cash prize, which the researchers have donated to the social and recreational programs department at [Senior Housing Options](#), a Denver-based charitable organization that provides assisted living and affordable housing apartments to low- and moderate-income older adults with physical and mental challenges. “I feel lucky to do this work... I mean who else can say that they get to learn from their elders *and* share a laugh during a highly-competitive trivia game as part of their research,” said Plys. “But there is still a lot of work to be done to improve the quality, accessibility, and affordability of residential long-term care, that’s the ultimate mission.” Drs. Plys and Johnson, and the University of Colorado, remain

committed to helping improve the long-term care industry encompassing residents, families, and staff alike.

About the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

The University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus is a world-class medical destination at the forefront of transformative science, medicine, education, and patient care. The campus encompasses the University of Colorado health professional schools, more than 60 centers and institutes, and two nationally ranked independent hospitals that treat more than two million adult and pediatric patients each year. Innovative, interconnected and highly collaborative, together we deliver life-changing treatments, patient care, professional training, and conduct world-renowned research. For more information, visit www.cuanschutz.edu.

About Mather

Founded in 1941, Mather is a nondenominational not-for-profit organization based in Evanston, Illinois, that creates Ways to Age Well.SM Mather Institute is its research area of service, and serves as an award-winning resource for research and information about wellness, aging, trends in senior living, and successful aging service innovations. To learn more, find your way to mather.com.

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