

CARP's New Vision for Caregiver Support -Facts & Recommendations-



Caregivers Need Comprehensive Support

Over 8 million informal, unpaid, caregivers in Canada provide critical support and care to family members or friends with chronic conditions, disabilities, and other health needs, allowing Canadians to recover from illness and age at home. Caregiving is taxing physically, emotionally, mentally, and financially. The economic contribution of informal caregivers is conservatively estimated at \$25-26 billion annually, taking into consideration the number hours of care provided and market wages. Despite the support provided to family or friends and the savings to the health care system, caregivers face a variety of challenges such as lost work and income, physical and mental burdens, inflexible work arrangements, and workforce withdrawal due to caregiving demands.

Caregivers in Canada

- 8 million informal caregivers in Canada, representing 25% of all Canadians
- 2 million informal caregivers provide heavy care (20+ hours/week). Many of these heavy caregivers are more likely to leave the labour force than to reduce their hours in order to provide heavy care.
- 6 million informal caregivers provide care to a senior (75% of all informal caregivers)
- 70% of all care to seniors in the community are provided by informal caregivers
- The majority of caregivers are female (54%), aged 45-64 (44%). This group is of particular concern because they tend to outlive their spouses and suffer higher rates of work drop-out and poverty later in life.

CARP Caregiver Recommendations

CARP is calling on the government to recognize the valuable role informal caregivers play in taking care of older Canadians and allowing Canadians to recover from illness and age at home. CARP is calling for a comprehensive approach to support caregivers and meet their various needs:

1. **Financial Support:** Greater financial support should be provided to all heavy caregivers to relieve the financial burdens of caregiving.
2. **Workplace Protection:** Informal caregivers balancing caregiving and work responsibilities should have better workplace protection.
3. **Respite Care:** Heavy care providers should be given respite care options to mitigate the high risk of their own physical, mental, and emotional health deterioration.
4. **Home Care Funding:** Home care should be funded to assist with home care and caregiver expenses.
5. **Integrated training and support:** Formal training and support should be provided for informal caregivers and can be done via the formal health care system.

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