



2017 National Carers Day: A Milestone for Canadian Carers

MISSISSAUGA, ON - APRIL 4, 2017 - Carers Canada applauds the Prime Minister for recognizing the 8.1 million carers in Canada in celebration of National Carers Day. For the first time, our Prime Minister joins our nation to pay tribute to family members and friends who have been stepping up to provide support and fill the gap in our publicly funded health care system. The Prime Minister's recognition marks a pivotal step in advancing a national agenda to provide the necessary support for individuals who take on an unpaid caring role.

To celebrate National Carers Day, Carers Canada is hosting a Carer Breakfast at Parliament Hill to bring parliamentarians, carers and diverse stakeholders together on a matter that has become relevant to many of us. This year's theme is "Caring at Home" and aims to raise awareness of the invaluable role carers provide to support older adults with frailty, individuals with complex, chronic disabling conditions, and those at end-of-life to stay safely at home. The Carer Breakfast is co-hosted by Deborah Schulte (Member of Parliament for King-Vaughan and Chair, Liberal Senior Caucus) and sponsored by Carers Canada's Signatory Partners: Canadian Home Care Association, CBI Health Group and Saint Elizabeth.

"Without family carers, our professional carers – the nurses, therapists and personal support workers who provide in home client care every day – wouldn't have the partners who ensure once we leave the client's home that the patient will be safe, supported and be able to remain independent in their own home," says Anthony Milonas, COO of CBI Health Group and Signatory Partner of Carers Canada.

Currently, more than two million Canadians can continue to live safely in their homes because of the support of carers. The contributions carers make - to help seniors with frailty to safely live at home, to support individuals with long-term chronic diseases be independent and active members of the community, and to enable loved ones to choose to die at home – are invaluable. It is estimated that carers contribute \$25 billion of unpaid care annually to our health care system and home care programs.

"Today is all about celebrating the power of caregivers and taking bold action to support them," said Shirlee Sharkey, CEO of Saint Elizabeth and Signatory Partner of Carers Canada. *"Caring for family is a big societal issue that will in time touch the lives of virtually all of us."*

The federal government's commitment to carers through the new tax relief program, Employment Insurance caregiving benefit, and targeted investments in home care will enhance the lives of millions of Canadians. "As increasing number of Canadians are choosing to age at home and the demand for care grows, we must build on this momentum and work together to continue recognizing the contributions carers make; helping people identify themselves as carers and enabling them to access the support and information they need," says Nadine Henningsen, President of Carers Canada and Executive Director of the Canadian Home Care Association.

As we commemorate National Carers Day, Carers Canada encourages all Canadians to get involved by:

1. Supporting the Prime Minister's Statement by writing a press release and reinforcing the vital role carers play in enabling millions of Canadians to receive the necessary care in their homes with dignity and quality of life.
2. Recognizing carers and showing your support through social media, remember to add #thxcarers to your tweets.
3. Learning more and raising awareness about Caring at Home by visiting Carers Canada's Awareness page at www.carerscanada.ca

Carers Canada and our partners are pleased that carers and home care are important priorities for our federal, provincial and territorial governments. We look forward to working with the government to continue championing the well-being of carers.

ABOUT THE CARERS CANADA

Carers Canada (formally known as Canadian Caregiver Coalition), established in 2000, is an alliance of diverse partner organizations that work collectively, and autonomously, to identify and respond to the needs of carers in Canada. Carers Canada's mission is to enhance the quality of life for carers through synergistic partnerships and global advocacy that strengthens and honors the voice of carers.