

Is Canada a Caring Society? New Report Reveals Progress and Gaps in Supporting Family Carers

July 26, 2017 (Immediate release) – Over 8 million carers (also referred to as family caregivers) impact the lives of Canadians every day. They provide care and support to loved ones, family members and friends; and contribute over \$25 billion in unpaid care every year. [Advancing Collective Priorities: A Canadian Carer Strategy](#), developed through a partnership between Carers Canada, the Canadian Home Care Association (CHCA) and the Canadian Cancer Action Network (CCAN), showcases the policies and practices that are in place to recognize and support these important individuals.

As our population ages and the number of individuals diagnosed with cancer and other chronic conditions increases, nearly every Canadian will take on a caring role for someone they love. For many, this additional responsibility will mean juggling work expectations, personal needs and their caring duties; often at the cost of their emotional, physical and financial well-being.

“Over the past five years, we have seen an increase in awareness and recognition of carers, the creation of financial programs for carers, and focus on developing supportive workplaces,” said Nadine Henningsen, CEO of the CHCA and President of Carers Canada. “We have made progress in supporting carers, however there is still much more to be done.”

Building a caring society that supports family carers requires the active involvement of governments, public and private corporations and individuals. In 2017, a significant milestone was achieved when the Prime Minister gave a public statement acknowledging the role, value and importance of carers. This statement was reinforced through targeted funding for financial programs in the 2017 federal budget. At a provincial and territorial level, home care programs are being expanded to include necessary support and respite for caregivers. Services for carers are part of provincial cancer support programs, including patient navigation assistance, counselling, support groups and resource centres.

“Through this report, we aim to further identify opportunities for broader pan-Canadian collaboration and build on each other’s efforts to achieve measurable outcomes and values for patients, caregivers and our society as a whole,” stated Marjorie Morrison, CEO of CCAN.

“The partners identified both pockets of excellence and gaps in supporting carers,” stated Anthony Milonas, COO of CBI Health Group, a Signatory Partner of Carers Canada. “Recognizing and helping individuals plan for when they become a carer, increasing access to financial assistance and carer support programs, and building an employer community that values carers are a few of the advancements that still need to be done.”

If Canada is to be a caring society, we must all work together to support family carers. The momentum is building and our goal of “a Canada that recognizes, respects, and values the integral role of carers in society” is in sight. The partners look forward to working with governments and stakeholders across the country to make this happen.

– 30 –

About Canadian Cancer Action Network

A national incorporated membership organization dedicated to ensuring patient interests remain a key priority on the national cancer agenda. CCAN was created in order to ensure that the patient and caregiver perspective is and remains firmly embedded in work across the cancer control continuum. <http://www.ccanceraction.ca/>

About Canadian Home Care Association

The Canadian Home Care Association (CHCA), incorporated in 1990, is a national not-for-profit membership association representing home care stakeholders from governments, health authorities, and providers. The CHCA advances excellence in home care and continuing care through leadership, awareness, advocacy and knowledge. <http://www.cdnhomecare.ca/>

About 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. <http://www.carerscanada.ca/>

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