

## Not supporting worker-carers impacts your organization

The increasing demand for more complex health services and the decreasing health care workforce are major challenges impacting all health and home care providers. Employees who are balancing work and care are especially vulnerable to external pressures and anxieties, many of which are impacting the workplace.

- Physical and emotion strain impacts extended health benefit and Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) usage. These services offered by employers to provide a safety net for employees.
- Employers spent \$200M a week on prescription drugs—over \$10B annually in 2014 (10)—and this is anticipated to grow.
- According to the Canadian Mental Health Commission of Canada, over 70% of disability claim costs are related to mental health concerns.<sup>(11)</sup>

(1) Statistics Canada, (2012) <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-402-x/2012000/chap/seniors-aines/seniors-aines-eng.htm>  
 (2) Statistic Canada, Portraits of Caregivers (2012) <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-652-x/89-652-x2013001-eng.htm#a9>  
 (3) Canadian Home Care Association; Home Support Workers: Human Resource Strategies to Meet Chronic Care Needs of Canadians: Final Report 2011  
 (4) Statistic Canada, Portraits of Caregivers (2012) <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-652-x/89-652-x2013001-eng.htm#a9>  
 (5) Ward Griffin, C., Keefe, J., Martin-Matthews, A., Kerr, M. & Brown, J. B. (2010). Health professionals caring for elderly relatives: Promoting the health of double duty caregivers. Paper presented at 20th IUPHE World Conference on Health Promotion, Geneva, July 2010.  
 (6) The Change Foundation, Spotlight on Ontario's Caregivers Report (2018)  
 (7) Ward Griffin, C. Supporting Doubly-duty Caregivers; A policy brief <https://www.uwo.ca/nursing/cwg/docs/PolicyBriefFinal.pdf>  
 (8) Statistics Canada, Portrait of Caregivers (2012) <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-652-x/89-652-x2013001-eng.htm#a13>  
 (9) Statistic Canada, Portraits of Caregivers (2012) <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-652-x/89-652-x2013001-eng.htm#a9ibid>  
 (10) Canadian Institute for Health Information, Drug Expenditure in Canada, 1985-2014  
 (11) Mental Health Commission of Canada: Making the Case for Investing in Mental Health in Canada (2010)



Employees who cannot balance the responsibilities of work with caring duties are more likely to leave work, resulting in a loss of skilled employees and increased employee turnover. In the health and home care sector, there is an immediate need to support these valuable employees and avoid costly resource-draining situations.



## HEALTH CARE IS CHANGING—IS YOUR ORGANIZATION READY?

The health care workforce is aging, and an increasing number are balancing paid work and unpaid care – looking after their elderly loved ones, family and friends. Known as “worker-carers” these individuals are predominately female and between the ages of 45 and 65.<sup>(2)</sup> They are the nurses, therapists and personal support workers employed in by health and home care organizations.<sup>(3)</sup>

## Balancing work and care is affecting employees

*Physical and mental health concerns, missing work and reducing work hours, and leaving the workforce are real challenges facing worker-carers. Employees who take on double-duty caregiving are even more likely to experience these negative impacts.<sup>(7)</sup>*

- According to Stats Canada, 19% of caregivers indicate their physical and emotional health suffer when they juggle work and care.<sup>(8)</sup> A recent CHCA employer survey reinforced this negative impact, with 68% of employers stating that physical challenges in their employees were prevalent, and 77% stating that they noticed emotional challenges.
- Balancing work and care results in a host of negative impacts on employees that have additional impacts on health care organizations, including<sup>(9)</sup>:
  - Arriving late, taking time off in the daytime or leaving early (40%)
  - Taking a leave of absence from their job (26%)
  - Reducing their work hours (15%)
  - Turning down job opportunities (10%)
  - Leaving the workforce all together (6%)

*“The entire work world is stressed today. The entire health care field is stressed because of so many changes. We have to do our best to try to take care of each other. Supporting our staff is the socially responsible change we want to see as a new standard for all employers in Canada.”*

CONNIE CLERICI, President/CEO  
Closing the Gap HEALTHCARE GROUP

## Employers are not recognizing worker-carers

Health and home care employers estimate that 19–25% of their employees are balancing work and unpaid care. This is significantly below the national average of 35% of the Canadian workforce.<sup>(4)</sup>

- Health care workers who provide both paid care and unpaid care are known as “double-duty caregivers”. These individuals account for over 40% of nurses who are 35 years and older.<sup>(5)</sup>
- Worker-carers often do not self-identify, and silently juggle their work and family care responsibilities.<sup>(6)</sup>

**Create a human resource strategy that addresses the unique risk-profile of your employees.**

Learn more about the **Carer-Inclusive and Accommodating Organizations (B701-17) workplace standard and Helping Worker-Carers in your Organization (B701HB-18) implementation guide.**

Both resources are complimentary for a time-limited period.