



APRIL 5, 2022

NATIONAL CAREGIVER DAY RECOGNIZING CARING CANADIANS

Balancing Work & Care



“I would also love to see formal caregiving coaching in workplaces to guide people prior to them becoming caregivers.”

—Wendy, caring for her parents

Employee caregivers are labour force participants who also take on an unpaid caring role for someone in need

How can caring affect a person's job?

Taking on a caring role is like having a whole other job in addition to regular employment, family commitments and other interests. Caring is unpredictable and can be hard to fit around a paid job. Many caregivers must stop working, reduce their work hours, change jobs and accept lower income in order to balance their work and care responsibilities.

Caregivers feel they have no choice but to make changes to their work situation because:

- They **can't get the flexibility** they need
- Their caring responsibilities are **not recognized** by their employer
- They **can't get the time** off they need
- They **can't get the replacement care** services they need

How does our aging population affect this issue?

Longer life expectancies and the transition of baby boomers into their senior years mean that more Canadians require assistance and care related to aging, now and into the future.

According to the 2018 Canadian General Social Survey, at some point in their lives, nearly one in four Canadians aged 15 years and older, or **7.8 million Canadians, have provided some type of care to a family member or friend with a long-term health condition, disability or aging needs.** As our population ages, this number will grow and more employees will need to balance work and care.

How has COVID-19 impacted employee caregivers?

The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the importance of supportive workplace policies. Working from home, taking on increased care responsibilities (both child care and elder care) and navigating shifting routines has posed new challenges for employers and their employees.

According to the 2020 Carer Well-Being Index,¹ which detailed ways in which unpaid carers around the globe have been negatively affected by the pandemic. Employee caregivers in Canada experienced the following:

- **15% became a caregiver for the first time** as a result of COVID-19 while still balancing their work responsibilities.
- **79% were concerned that they will get COVID-19** and there won't be anyone to provide care to their care-receiver.
- **72% felt they need to spend more time providing care**
- **34% had difficulty balancing their professional/paid job responsibilities** with their caregiving responsibilities.
- **53% agreed that their employer did not support them** in ways they needed in order to be a caregiver.

Employers dealing with the post-COVID environment are facing retention issues and risk losing skilled employees. Increased employee turnover and a diminished workforce affect both operational productivity and costs.

1. The 2020 [Carer Well-Being Index](#) includes information from over 9,000 unpaid-carers from 12 different countries: United States, Canada, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Australia, Brazil, Taiwan, India and China. The study was conducted September 3–October 27, 2020 using online and phone methodologies. Light weighting was applied in select countries to achieve better national representation. At the 95% confidence level, the full global unpaid carer sample has an estimated margin of error of +/-1.03 percentage points. Of the 9,000 respondents, 755 were from Canada. Of these, 479 were employee caregivers.

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CARERS CANADA is a national coalition working to enhance the quality of life for caregivers through synergistic partnerships and global advocacy that strengthen and honour the voice of caregivers. Carers Canada has led National Caregiver Day Awareness Campaigns (First Tuesday in April), since 2009 and has successfully raised awareness of caregivers, facilitated actions to support caregivers and informed government policy. Carers Canada is a priority program of the Canadian Home Care Association.