



NATIONAL CAREGIVER DAY
RECOGNIZING CARING CANADIANS

APRIL 5, 2022

Balancing Work & Care



As many as 6 million people combine work with some level of unpaid care. Employee caregivers make up 35% of the total Canadian workforce, representing 1 in every 3 employees. Most caregivers (60%) are juggling work and care responsibilities. Taking on a caring role is like having a whole other job in addition to regular employment, other family commitments and hobbies or 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.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shined a light on the importance of supportive workplace policies. Working from home, taking on increased care responsibilities (both childcare and elder care) and navigating shifting routines has posed new challenges for employers and their employees. During 2020–2021, employee caregivers faced several challenges unique to the COVID-19 pandemic.

CAREGIVERS are individuals (family members, neighbours, friends and other significant people) who take on a caring role to support someone with a diminishing physical ability, a debilitating cognitive condition or a chronic life-limiting illness.

EMPLOYEE CAREGIVERS are labour force participants who also take on an unpaid caring role for someone in need.

NATIONAL CAREGIVER DAY (NCD)

1st Tuesday in April - unanimously adopted by the Members of Parliament of Canada to recognize the importance of the “invisible” unpaid work. Known as National Caregiver Day, this day marks the beginning of our formal recognition of caregivers and their contributions. Formal recognition of caregivers is reinforced throughout the year with special dates consisting of:

- April 5, 2022 – National Caregiver Day across Canada / Family Caregiver Day in Ontario
- May 2022 - Alberta, British Columbia and Nova Scotia Caregiver Awareness Month
- 1st week in November 2022 – Quebec National Caregiver Week

The 2022 National Caregiver Day campaign is a Canadian-wide event that will:

- Create a better understanding of working caregivers’ experiences and challenges
- Recognize Canadian employers who are supporting their staff to balance work and care
- Offer ideas on how to create caregiver-friendly workplaces and support employee well-being
- Raise awareness of the vital role of caregivers in Canadian society

KEY MESSAGES

Caregivers at Work – General Awareness

Unsupported working caregivers are more likely to leave the workforce. Employee caregivers are vulnerable to increased absenteeism and presenteeism, delayed career advancement, and turnover. The pressures of caregiving and juggling other responsibilities impact the caregiver's work performance as employee caregivers are at higher risk of mental and/or physical health issues, decreased morale and social isolation.

- 6.1 million caregivers are juggling work and caregiving
- 35% of Canadian workforce participants are employee caregivers
- 19% of employee caregivers experience physical and emotional health challenges
- ½ of caregivers in Canada are between 45-65 years.... Peak earning years
- On average, in one year there will be 2.2 million hours of work lost per week due to caregiving – the equivalent to 157,000 lost full-time employees

Impact on Employee Caregivers – COVID-19 & Mental Health

The COVID-19 pandemic increased the demand for caregivers in Canada and has resulted in added strain to their role. Caregivers in Canada have taken on greater responsibilities in providing and managing health care for their loved ones contributing to unprecedented burnout for caregivers across the country. The impact has had a compounded effect on employee caregivers.

- 41% of caregivers report increased housekeeping and/or assistance with personal care responsibilities due to the pandemic
- 29% of caregivers in Canada say the biggest challenge they have faced as a caregiver during the pandemic is the inability to take a break (compared to an average of 23% in 12 other countries)
- 70% of employee caregivers feel that COVID-19 worsened their mental health
- 23% of caregivers have reduced or cut back their paid working hours to provide care
- 16% of employees resigned during the pandemic due to caregiving responsibilities
- 49% of employed caregivers in Canada are concerned they will lose their job because of the time commitment needed as a caregiver

Caregiver Friendly Workplaces – Evidence to Action

The best employers recognize the humanity of their employees and, in so doing, realize several benefits: reduced turnover, increased productivity, decreased presenteeism and enhanced employee health, satisfaction, and wellbeing. An unsupportive work culture can cost employers between approx. \$3,045-\$8,674/carer- employee/year.

- Caregiver friendly workplaces adopt practices consistent with the CSA Group standard: B701-17 – Carer-inclusive and accommodating organizations
- 70% of employee caregivers in Canada did not receive support from their employers, the lowest amount of support among all 12 countries in the Carer Well-Being Index
- 57% of employees felt their paid responsibilities were negatively affected by caregiving obligations during the pandemic.

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This campaign is led by Carers Canada in partnership with McMaster, McMaster University, Gender Health and Caregiver Friendly Workplaces.

MCMASTER UNIVERSITY, GENDER HEALTH AND CAREGIVER FRIENDLY WORKPLACES goal is to improve, promote and sustain health for employee – caregivers by providing the evidence needed by employers, labour organizations and society to enact meaningful change in the workplace

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](#).

