



**NATIONAL CAREGIVER DAY**  
RECOGNIZING CARING CANADIANS

*Partners in hope, support and comfort*



## KEY MESSAGES

### What is National Caregiver Day?

The first Tuesday of April has been unanimously adopted by the Members of Parliament of Canada to recognize the importance of the “invisible” unpaid work. Interchangeably known as National Caregiver Day, this day marks the beginning\* of our formal recognition of caregivers and the valuable contribution they make to care recipients, our communities and our economy. In 2023, National Caregiver Day falls on April 4th.

### Who are caregivers?

A caregiver (also referred to as carer or family caregiver) is a family member, friend or neighbour who takes on an unpaid caring role for someone who needs help due to a physical or cognitive condition, an injury or a chronic life-limiting illness.

### What is the “Partners in hope, support and comfort” campaign about?

Caregivers experience many emotions when caring for somebody who has been diagnosed with a life-limiting illness. Dealing with the unknown, new situations and new people often feels like an emotional roller coaster - from receiving a diagnosis; engaging in serious illness conversations; navigating the health system during active treatment; providing palliative and supportive care; and dealing with grief. Our campaign is raising awareness of the essential role caregivers have in caring for someone with a life-limited illness and the skills and knowledge health and social care providing bring when providing a palliative approach to care.

### How can I support the campaign?

- Share your voices through your social media (#NationalCaregiverDay) and newsletters
- Follow us on twitter [@CarersCanada](#) and visit the [Campaign Site](#)
- Participate in our feature webinars on April 4:
  - Panel Discussion 1: [Valuing the Voice of Caregivers and Patients](#) (10:00am – 11:00am ET)
  - Panel Discussion 2: [Grief from the First Step](#) (12:00 - 1:00pm ET)
  - Panel Discussion 3: [Conversations throughout the Journey](#) (1:30 - 2:30pm ET)

### Why do caregivers matter?

- There are approximately 8 million of caregivers in Canada – that is 1 in 4 Canadians. They need to be able to maintain their health and well-being, alongside caring. (Stats Canada GSS 2018)
- Caregivers play significant roles in the care of individuals diagnosed with a life-limiting illness and in the context of palliative and end-of-life care. They typically are involved in critical medical decisions (making decisions as a substitute decision maker), provide vital assistance with activities of daily living, renewing prescription medication; administering medications, reporting new symptoms or side effects, requesting symptom relief.
- Most caregivers are between the age of 45-64, may have long term conditions or disabilities themselves that increase their vulnerability. Unmet caregiving support needs are associated with lower life satisfaction, more daily stress and worse self-reported mental health. (Stats Canada GSS 2018)
- In 2022, caregivers spent a median of 8 hours per week providing care or support to adults with long-term conditions or disabilities, with women providing 10 hours of care compared with 6 hours for men. (Stats Canada GSS 2022)

- Despite the possible rewards of being a caregiver, there is a negative impact on a person's physical and mental health. Over half (56%) of all caregivers reported feeling tired because of their caregiving responsibilities, while 44% felt worried or anxious during the past 12 months. Women were more likely than men to report negative impacts from caregiving, such as feeling tired, worried or anxious. (Stats Canada GSS 2022)
- Caregivers already provide over 80% of the care needed by individuals with chronic conditions
- The work of family caregivers supports the social connections, dignity and well-being of those they care for. The annual economic value of family care work is \$97.1 billion (U of A, 2022)
- Caregivers' contributions to the Care Economy represent 4.2% of the Gross Domestic Product and 32.2% of the national expenditures on health care (U of A, 2022)

## How can health care providers support caregivers?

- Start and continue ongoing advance care planning discussions with patients and caregivers
- Be accessible and provide information and guidance to caregivers
- Respect and incorporate care wishes (advance care planning) into ongoing care delivery
- Recognize who would benefit from a palliative approach to care and advocate for services
- Help caregivers understand and participate in shared decision- making
- Give caregivers the knowledge to recognize and respond to unplanned situations (e.g. palliative care emergencies / pain and symptom management)
- Support caregivers to cope with loss and grief

## What skills do health and social care providers need?

The Canadian Interdisciplinary Palliative Care Competency Framework (the Framework) includes a listing of competencies and skills for nurses, generalist physicians, social workers, personal support workers, and volunteers.

These skill are described for both the "generalist provider" ( health care provider whose practice includes people with life-limiting conditions and their families or caregivers, but not as the primary focus of their practice) and the "specialist provider" (a health care provider whose practice is focused on palliative care and consultation for people and families or caregivers affected by life-limiting conditions, especially those with complex needs).

The Canadian Home Care Association is working with home and community care providers to advance the adoption of the Framework and build skills to support all caregivers caring for someone diagnosed with a life-limiting illness – more information visit [eiCOMPASS](#).

Visit our website for campaign updates