

Visions for Change Policy Challenge Final Report

*What are the leading practices
in providing supports for
working caregivers?*



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Executive Summary

Caregiving is a current workforce issue, but what role can technology play to support working caregivers?

We all do our best to balance our many competing responsibilities. For a growing number of Canadians that includes providing care for a spouse, parent, family member, friend or neighbor in need. Caregivers' contributions to their families, communities, and broader Canadian society are often underestimated and therefore overlooked. For a large proportion of those caregivers, who also maintain paid employment, they are consistently juggling paid work and family care responsibilities.

This policy report aims to bring the needs and goals of those working caregivers to the forefront, and explore the leading practices in providing them with the supports necessary to fulfill their caregiving demands. In order to accomplish this, a human ecological approach was adopted which considers a working caregiver from the perspective of the multiple overlapping environments they find themselves navigating on a day-to-day basis which include: home, community, workplace and government contexts.

By engaging stakeholders from across Canada, participating in international forums on the global state of caregiving and analyzing policy documents, grey literature and current research it was found that although many supports are in place for working caregivers in Canada, they are often difficult to access, complex to navigate and secure, and vary widely across provincial and territorial jurisdictions.

It was discovered while creating this report that there is great potential for technology to play a role in helping support working caregivers. Flexible work arrangements, including those that promote the adoption of assistive technologies, make it possible for working caregivers to balance their paid employment with their growing demands from their care receiver(s). This report provides government policymakers and stakeholders the current context on assistive technologies as viable solutions to supporting caregivers in the workplace.

The policy recommendation section of this report builds the business case to why supporting working caregivers benefits employers, government and more broadly the Canadian economy. It will also highlight actionable items that government decision-makers can adopt to help organizations across Canada move towards assistive technology and caregiver-friendly standards and practices. The hopes of this report are to provide those looking to improving the lives of working caregivers, a firm starting point in which to give back to those who continue to give so much.

Policy Question and Definitions

What are the leading practices in providing supports for working caregivers?



In order to answer this policy question, the following definitions were used throughout this report:

“supports” – refers to a wide array of policies, programs and services which provide timely and effective support that allow working caregivers to better manage and balance their paid work and care responsibilities.

(Adapted from the *Caregiving for Older Adults with Disabilities: Present Costs, Future Challenges IRPP Report* – Dec. 2015)

“working caregivers” – includes family members and other significant people (often identified by the care recipient) who provide care and assistance to individuals living with debilitating physical, mental or cognitive conditions, while also working in paid employment.

(Adapted from the *Caregiver-Friendly Workplace Policies: Innovative Solutions for the Workplace Fact Sheet* – Jun. 2015)

“care receiver(s)” – the person(s) receiving care which include a wide range of different types of people including, a parent, parent-in-law, spouse, life partner, grandparent, sibling, adult child, friend or neighbor.

(Adapted from the *Caregiver-Friendly Workplace Policies: Innovative Solutions for the Workplace Fact Sheet* – Jun. 2015)

“assistive technologies (AT)” – any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially, modified or customized that is used to increase, maintain or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities or chronic conditions related to aging.

(Adapted from the *Access to Assistive Technology in Canada: A Jurisdictional Scan or Programs AGE-WELL Report* – Jun. 2017)

IMPORTANT NOTE: Links to websites and resources for additional information are embedded in the underlined text throughout this report.

Background

Working caregivers lead complex lives

In Canada, approximately 8.1 million Canadians have reported providing care to a family member, friend or neighbor, with that number only anticipated to rise in the coming years due to population aging and other sociodemographic trends.¹ Not only do caregivers have commitments to their loved ones - but also to workplaces, organizations and employers that help provide them with the financial stability to provide much needed care.

Currently, there are 6.1 million working caregivers in Canada, accounting for approximately 35% of the paid labour force, who are maintaining employment alongside caring for a family member or friend with long-term health conditions, physical disabilities or chronic life-limiting illnesses or disabilities.² A majority of these working caregivers also work full-time hours, which further stretches a caregivers' most vital resource, time, even more. It has been estimated that working caregivers in Canada provide 2.4 billion hours of care annually, the equivalent of 1.2 million full time employees.³

2.4 billion hrs

Caregiver-employees in Canada provide 2.4 billion hours of care annually, the equivalent of 1.2 million full time employees.

1.2 million FTE



Annual care-related productivity losses to employers are enormous:

9.7 million days of absenteeism

256 million fewer hours of paid work

557,698

caregiver-employees left their jobs to provide care

The annual care-related productivity losses to employers including increased days of absenteeism, fewer hours of paid work and the number of working caregivers who had to leave their jobs in order to provide care are measurable and have a real impact on the Canadian economy.⁴ Canadian employers are beginning to recognize and respond to their employee caregivers' complex needs; however, it is often on an individual and case-by-case basis, while still considered a personal matter for employees rather than a broader organizational challenge.

Currently, there is no federal legislation formally recognizing unpaid carers in Canada.¹ There are several federal programs in place that look to help alleviate the financial costs of providing care, however, much of the caregiver support policies are characterized by split jurisdictions among different levels of government.⁴ As a result, caregivers must often navigate complex and variable networks of public support policies and programs to get the help and support that allows them to continue to provide timely and necessary care.

Providing care to loved ones comes at a real cost to the caregivers themselves. The physical and mental health, social and financial costs and negative consequences experienced by caregivers have been well documented.⁵ Caregivers are a strong, resilient and resourceful group who will continue to do everything in their power in order to balance their paid work and care responsibilities for the benefit of themselves and their loved ones.

It is with this view, that this report will further explore the potential for assistive technologies (ATs) in the workplace to provide innovative solutions to help working caregivers balance, manage and integrate their care responsibilities while remaining productive employees. This report will look to shed light on the everyday realities faced by working caregivers and further explore the role that government can play in providing support to those who continue to shoulder the lion share of care provided to Canada's burgeoning aging population.

Research Approach

Working caregivers and their environments

A human ecological approach was adopted to guide the current research. This approach focuses on the multiple overlapping environments in which working caregivers find themselves navigating on a daily basis.⁶ These connected environments include the **home**, **community**, **workplace** and **government** contexts.



Considering working caregivers as active participants within these environments, the current research explored grey literature and policy documents from a variety of provincial, national and international sources to better understand how working caregivers are supported, what gaps exist within the Canadian context and the potential for caregiver-friendly policies that promote the adoption and use of technology to support the caregiver in better balancing their paid work and care responsibilities.

Key Findings

Home

The supports highlighted in this section refer to those that have a direct impact on the care receiver(s) and the at-home lives of working caregivers. Many working caregivers live in the same household or within commuting distance to their loved ones who require on-going care. While all provincial and territorial governments have some form of home care program for aging in place, those listed below have additional provisions that are intended to also support caregivers. Examples of programs and services currently available for older adults and their caregivers to access assistive technologies to improve the quality of life in the home are also listed below.

Type of Support	How does it support working caregivers?
Provincial/Territorial Home Care Programs with Provisions for Supporting Caregivers	<p><u>Special Needs Assistance for Seniors Program (Alberta)</u>: Funding up to four weeks of respite care to an eligible low-income senior who lives with a family caregiver who provides daily care to the senior.</p> <p><u>Individualized Funding for Home Care (Saskatchewan)</u>: Care receiver(s) and their caregivers may be eligible to receive funding based on assessed need to arrange and manage supportive services for home care.</p> <p><u>Paid Family Caregiving Option Program (Newfoundland & Labrador)</u>: Direct individualized funding model under the Provincial Home Support Program that provides subsidies for eligible seniors and adults with disabilities to pay for a family member for approved home support.</p> <p><u>Caregiver Benefit Program (Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness)</u>: Provides \$400 per month to caregivers of low-income care receivers with a high level of disability or impairment.</p> <p><u>Home First (New Brunswick)</u>: Eligible seniors and their caregivers have the opportunity to be provided with financial assistance (up to \$1,500) for minor home repairs that will improve the safety of their home.</p>
Programs and Services that Promote Access to Assistive Technologies	<p><u>Canadian Red Cross – Health Equipment Loan Program (HELP)</u>: Short Term Loan Program helps seniors with mobility issues and their caregivers access medical equipment to live safely at home. Currently operating in B.C., Alberta, New Brunswick, PEI, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador and Yukon.</p> <p><u>March of Dimes Canada – Assistive Mobile Technology Initiative</u>: Special program offered in Calgary and British Columbia that covers the cost of purchasing a smart tablet for local residents with a disability impacting their ability to be communicate, be independent or enjoy other aspects of a full life.</p> <p><u>Ceridian Cares Grants</u>: Offers funding for those in need of financial assistance for ‘Basic Essentials’ which includes assistive devices</p>

including prosthetics, medical equipment, home adjustments for barrier free living, etc.



Community

This section will highlight the broad range of programs and services that look to support working caregivers within their communities. The chart below highlights provincial/territorial care organizations that advocate and provide support to caregivers. Second, respite care programs available throughout provincial/territorial jurisdictions are described. Next, community-based programs that offer services such as adult-day programs to alleviate the responsibilities of care for the caregiver. Lastly, online supports that look to foster a sense of collaboration and community among caregivers across Canada are shared.

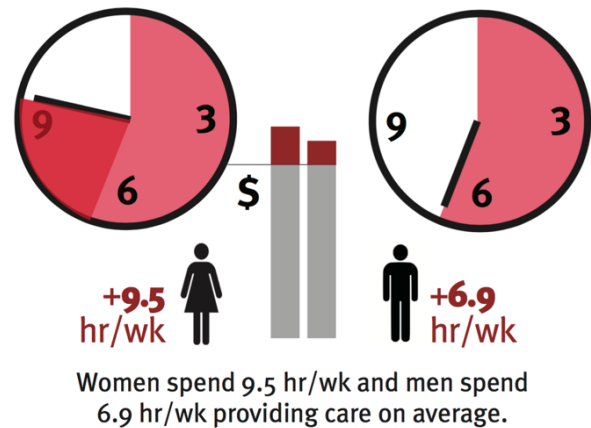
Community Support	How does it support working caregivers?
<p>Provincial/Territorial Care Organizations</p>	<p>Provincial care organizations including: <u>Family Caregivers of British Columbia</u>; <u>Caregivers Alberta</u>; <u>Ontario Caregiver Organization</u>; <u>Caregivers of Nova Scotia</u>; offers caregiver supports in the form of educational programs, support lines, and useful links and resources for caregivers within their communities.</p>
<p>Provincial/Territorial Respite Care Programs and Services</p>	<p><u>British Columbia</u>: Caregiver respite/relief services may be provided at home through home support services and in community through adult day services, residential care facilities on a short-term basis, hospice or other settings.</p> <p><u>Alberta</u>: Funding up to four weeks of respite care to an eligible low-income senior who lives with a family caregiver who provides daily care to the senior through the Special Needs Assistance for Seniors Program.</p> <p><u>Saskatchewan</u>: Respite care and adult day programs are offered by the Saskatchewan Health Authority who also determine eligibility criteria for those who require care.</p> <p><u>Manitoba</u>: Provincial in-home relief/respite care in the home where a direct service worker may be arranged to provide short periods of in-home relief for caregivers. Respite care may be arranged for longer periods of relief in alternate care settings (personal care home) at a fee.</p> <p><u>Ontario</u>: Caregivers for someone with a health condition, disability or care needs associate with aging can apply for respite care delivered at home, during a short stay at a long-term care home or at an adult day program.</p>

	<p><u>Quebec</u>: Respite and psychosocial services for caregivers provided through Local Community Service Centres (CLSCs) or Health and Social Service Centres (CSSSs).</p> <p><u>Newfoundland & Labrador</u>: Respite care provided at-home or as a planned short-term stay in a facility such as a Personal Care Home administered by local Regional Health Authorities.</p> <p><u>New Brunswick</u>: Long-Term Care Services Program provides respite for caregivers in the form of day activity centres and home support services.</p> <p><u>Nova Scotia</u>: Department of Health and Wellness offers facility-based respite care that helps caregivers by providing access to respite beds in long-term care facilities across the province.</p> <p><u>Prince Edward Island</u>: Provincial Home Care and Palliative Care programs offers in-home respite and adult day program services for caregivers.</p> <p><u>Yukon</u>: Respite care services are available at all Yukon Continuing Care residential care facilities for periods of up to four weeks.</p> <p><u>Northwest Territories</u>: Home and Community Care Services (Home Care) provides in-home respite for caregivers.</p> <p><u>Nunavut</u>: Home and Community Care (HCC) program offers at-home respite care for Nunavummiut caregivers.</p>
<p>Community-Based Programs</p>	<p><u>First Link program</u> connects caregivers and their families to local Alzheimer Society programs and other community services; goal is to help caregivers and their families make more informed choices so they can live better with dementia.</p> <p><u>VON Adult Day Program (Ontario & Nova Scotia)</u>: Staff and volunteers coordinate programming for seniors and adults living with a disability, Alzheimer’s Disease, dementia or cognitive impairment.</p> <p><u>Saint Luke’s Homes Adult Day Program and Respite Program (Newfoundland & Labrador)</u>: aim to provide seniors with opportunity to interact with peers and engage in meaningful activities while giving caregivers a much-needed break from their caregiving role and attend to their personal needs.</p> <p><u>York Care Centre Adult Day Program (New Brunswick)</u>: Provides care and support to people with dementia and other diseases in a non-institutionalized living arrangement while providing relief to families and caregivers.</p>

<p>Online Community Supports</p>	<p><u>Huddol</u>: Canada's first bilingual collaborative network for caregivers looks to connect them with health professionals and other caregivers on similar journeys across Canada.</p> <p><u>eLizz 5 LifeStages of Caregiving Employee Program</u>: a proactive wellness program with personalized resources and coaching for family caregiver employees – all in one digital platform</p> <p><u>RespiteServices.com</u> provides respite care information and facilitates access for communities within Ontario and Nova Scotia.</p>
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 **Workplace**

The supports discussed in this section refer to those that contribute the greatest to working caregivers' ability to balance their paid work and unpaid care responsibilities. A majority of working caregivers are employed full-time, while women spend on average an additional 9.5 hours/week and men an additional 6.9 hours/week providing care.⁷ While the Canada Labour Code ensures federally regulated employees have the job protection they need while they are receiving caregiver benefits and the right to request flexible work arrangements, provincial and territorial governments have put in place their own employee standards and legislation that look to recognize and support working caregivers.



The chart below illustrates the variance in provisions and supports offered to employees while providing care to a loved one across a sample of provincial/territorial jurisdictions.

Provincial/Territorial Employee Standards & Legislation	How does it support working caregivers?
<u>British Columbia Employment Standards Act</u>	Compassionate Care Leave (up to 8 weeks unpaid); Family Responsibility Leave (up to 5 days unpaid); Bereavement Leave (up to 3 days unpaid).
<u>Alberta's Employment Standards Code</u>	Compassionate Care Leave eligible employees who leave work to become a caregiver for a gravely ill family member are entitled to up to 27 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave of absence.
<u>Saskatchewan Employment Act</u>	Provides various job-protected employment leaves to employees who are caregivers including Compassionate Care Leave (up to 28 weeks unpaid) and Bereavement Leave (up to 5 days unpaid).

<u>Manitoba Employment Standard Code</u>	Compassionate Care Leave (up to 8 weeks unpaid); Family Leave (up to 3 days unpaid); Bereavement (up to 3 days unpaid).
<u>Ontario Employment Standards Act</u>	Offers unpaid, job-protected leave for the following: Family Caregiver Leave (up to 8 weeks), Family Medical Leave (up to 8 weeks), Critically ill Childcare Leave (up to 37 weeks) and Personal Emergency Leave (up to 10 days).
<u>Québec Labour Standards</u>	Job-protected leaves for family obligations related to: death or funeral (up to 5 days, first day with pay), state of health (up to 10 days unpaid), and serious illness (up to 12 weeks unpaid).

When Work and Caregiving Collide: How Employers Can Support Their Employees Who Are Caregivers” (2015) Report from the Employer Panel for Caregivers provided a ‘Resource Toolbox’⁸ of current best practices that Canadian employers have implemented to better support their working caregivers including:

Resource Toolbox of Current Best Practices in Support of Working Caregivers
a) Paid and Unpaid Leave Practices
Emergency caregiving leave; combination of leave; personal/family leave; sick leave; vacation time; bank of leave; bereavement’ compassionate care benefits; leave to arrange care; leave with income-averaging; leave without pay; family caregiver leave
b) Flexible Workplace Arrangements
Annualized hours; compressed work weeks/banking of hours; flexible work locations; flex-time schedule/flexible hours/breaks; job sharing; no set schedule; part-time/reduced hours; phased retirement; shift work
c) Technology Solutions
Telework/telecommuting; tools/devices (hardware); tools/devices (software)
d) Other Programs and Services
Employee and family assistance program (EAPs); emergency elder care; on-site seminars/lunch & learns; online networks/applications; suite of benefits/cafeteria-style plans



Government

The policies, programs and legislation outlined in this section speak to recognizing caregivers’ irreplaceable contributions to not only their families, but also their value to Canadian society. The Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors have recently adopted an awareness campaign centered around ‘Caregiver Readiness’ and have provided resources and information including how working caregivers can better balance work and family responsibilities.

Although there is no federal legislation formally recognizing family caregivers in Canada, Manitoba passed the Caregiver Recognition Act (2011) as a long-term commitment to increase support and recognition for caregivers within the province.⁹

Government Support	How does it support working caregivers?
<p>Federal Programs</p>	<p>Canada Caregiver Credit (CCC): is a non-refundable tax credit for those who support a spouse or common-law partner, or a dependent with a physical or mental impairment. You may also claim the CCC for one or more of the following individuals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your or your spouse’s or common-law partner’s child or grandchild • your or your spouse’s or common-law partner’s parent, grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, niece, or nephew (if resident in Canada at any time in the year) <p>Other Tax Credits for Caregivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Medical Expenses Tax Credit</u> • <u>Disability Amount Tax Credit Transfer</u> <p>Employment Insurance (EI) Caregiving Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Compassionate Care Benefit:</u> provides up to 26 weeks of income support to eligible caregivers when a family member has a serious medical condition and a significant risk of death within a 26-week period (at end of life). • <u>Family Caregiver Benefit:</u> provides up to 15 weeks of benefits to provide care or support to a critically ill or injured adult; or up to 35 weeks for a critically ill child.
<p>Provincial/Territorial Tax Credits</p>	<p><u>Manitoba’s Primary Caregiver Tax Credit:</u> provides a refundable credit of up to \$1,400/year to people who act as a primary caregiver for spouses, relatives, neighbors or friends who live at home in Manitoba.</p> <p><u>Quebec’s Tax Credit for Respite of Caregivers:</u> caregivers may claim a refundable tax credit for the expenses incurred to obtain specialized respite services for the care and supervision with a person with a significant disability.</p> <p>A comprehensive and up-to-date list of provincial and territorial tax credits for caregivers can be found on the <u>Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) website</u>.</p>
<p>Direct Compensation</p>	<p>The <u>Caregiver Recognition Benefit</u> provides a non-taxable \$1,000 monthly benefit payable directly to caregivers for ill and injured veterans.</p> <p>The <u>Caregiver Benefit Program</u> (Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness) provides \$400 per month to caregivers of low income care receivers with a high level of disability or impairment.</p>
<p>Canadian Pension Provisions</p>	<p><u>Canadian Pension Plan (CPP)</u> offers protection against periods where individuals have low or zero earnings, including providing care to family members.</p>

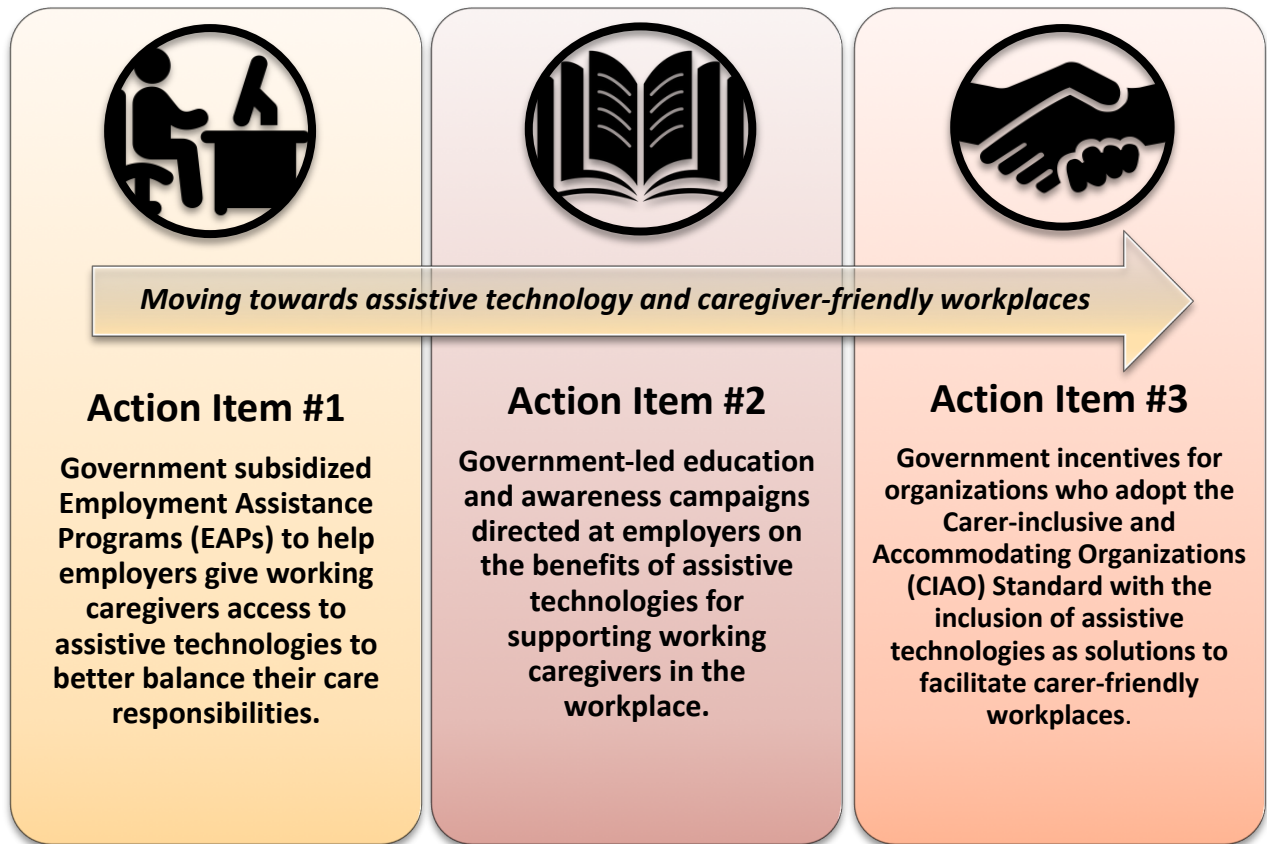
Policy Recommendations

While a working caregiver's life encompasses many environments, there lies great potential for technology to be integrated at the workplace level. In a recent report from Carers UK (2018), they argue that technology alone cannot provide adequate care, but has the potential to be part of wider systems to enhance or supplement existing care arrangements.¹⁰

If employers are able to support their working caregivers, by helping them access and use assistive technologies (AT) in the workplace, all stakeholders have the potential to benefit. Working caregivers will feel they are better able to balance their competing paid work and care responsibilities.¹¹ Workplaces will lower their chances of experiencing the direct costs of absenteeism, lost productivity, loss of skills and extra recruitment and training costs from employee turnover when their working caregivers can no longer manage their paid work and care responsibilities.⁴

The unpaid care provided by caregivers was also shown to reduce reliance on publicly supported paid care, saving the Canadian governments an estimated \$2,951 per male caregiver age 45 or older and \$2,075 per female caregiver age 45 and older.¹² With the high rate of employment among this demographic of caregivers, their continued participation in paid work is vital to the sustainability of the Canadian labour market and to government revenues in the form of income tax paid on employment earnings.^{13,14}

Government policymakers can play a pivotal role in making technology and caregiver-friendly workplaces a reality. Outlined below are a set of actionable items directed at government decision-makers that look to first, get assistive technologies in the hands of working caregivers, second, educate employers on the benefits of assistive technologies for supporting their caregiver-employees, and lastly, promote a shift in workplace culture across Canada that will openly embrace flexibility for working caregivers and sustainable solutions to work-care conflict that technology can provide.



Action Item #1: How do we get assistive technologies (AT) in the hands of working caregivers?

Government subsidized Employment Assistance Programs (EAPs) to help employers give working caregivers access to assistive technologies to better balance their care responsibilities.

There is an opportunity for governments to work with employers from all sectors and make the strategic investment in subsidizing companies to help create EAPs in their organizations that look to equip working caregivers with assistive technologies that allow them to fulfill their care responsibilities while at the workplace.

Employment Assistance Programs (EAPs) and other work-life initiatives have been cited as strategies employers have used to retain experienced, highly skilled employees and to reduce the costs associated with turnover.⁴ Employees have also claimed that these accommodations foster greater loyalty towards their companies and have acknowledged them among the contributing factors why they stayed in light of demanding family care responsibilities.⁸

Currently, employers within Federal Public Service have the ability to set up EAPs for their organizations through Employee Assistance Services (EAS), the largest national EAP provider to Canada's federal public service. The Federal Public Service EAP includes a 24-Hour crisis and referral center, counselling services, quality assurance, advisory services and a dedicated management team. However, EAS is not available for employers including provincial, territorial and municipal governments, private businesses and not-for profit organizations outside of Federal Public Service. This policy recommendation would look to fill this gap and allow employers across sectors the opportunity to provide their working caregivers with useful and timely assistive technologies to help them better balance their paid work and family care.

Many organizations already provide their employees access to technology depending on their roles and responsibilities that also allow them to work outside of the workplace (including laptops with remote access, smart phones, tablets and teleconference tools, etc.).⁸ Government support of workplaces implementing their own assistive technology for working caregivers EAPs would help get the growing market of assistive technologies in the hands of working caregivers while remaining productive at work.¹⁵

Action Item #2: How do we get employers to buy-in to the idea of technology and caregiver-friendly workplaces?

Government-led education and awareness campaigns directed at employers on the benefits of assistive technologies for supporting working caregivers in the workplace. The Government of Canada's 'Resources for Seniors' website currently contains useful information on how employers can promote age-friendly workplaces, and how employees can better balance work and caregiving responsibilities. However, there is a gap in providing resources that introduce employers and working caregivers to emerging assistive technologies that can positively impact the workplace. Employers need increased awareness and information about assistive technologies that they can use to support their working caregivers.

In order to fill this gap, this policy recommendation would be to have government organizations, including Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), partner with AGE-WELL researchers, developers and workplace organizations who have piloted assistive technologies (AT) to revise the 'Resources for Seniors' website so that it includes information about accessible and affordable AT devices for caregivers.

Additional efforts in raising awareness could build off the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors' campaign centered around 'Caregiver Readiness', but also for 'Workplace Readiness' in supporting working caregivers. Targeting employers in these efforts would help change attitudes and perspectives on the needs of their working

caregivers and offer tangible solutions in the form of assistive technologies to help them balance their care responsibilities while at work.^{4,7}

Provincial and territorial ministries could also look to engage employers by hosting webinars, lunch-and-learn seminars and deliver programs that focus on how to better meet the needs of working caregivers by exploring the opportunities that assistive technologies have to offer.⁸ Not only will these efforts raise the profile of AT in the workplace, but also show organizations across the country how vital retaining their working caregivers are for their bottom-lines and Canada's economy as a whole.¹²

Action Item #3: How do we foster technology and caregiver-friendly workplaces across Canada?

Government incentives for organizations who adopt the Carer-inclusive and Accommodating Organizations (CIAO) Standard with the inclusion of assistive technologies as solutions to facilitate caregiver-friendly workplaces.

Emerging from Dr. Allison Williams and her team at the Institute for Research on Aging at McMaster University, and in partnership with the Canadian Standards Association (CSA), the Carer-inclusive and Accommodating Organizations (CIAO) Standard was developed. The standard provides organizations across sectors and industries with practical solutions, information and case studies to help employers better understand and support their employees with family care responsibilities.¹⁶

While the standard highlights flexible work arrangements, employee assistance plans, paid and unpaid leave as some useful accommodations for working caregivers, organizations looking to employ such practices should also include assistive technologies as solutions to facilitate caregiver-friendly workplaces.

Governments can play a key role in getting organizations across the country to adopt these best practices by providing incentives such as tax benefits for those implementing a caregiver-friendly workplace standard. Provincial, territorial and federal governments could also develop a dedicated caregiver assistance fund for employers to implement and maintain their own set of standards. These dedicated funds could potentially provide money or loans to working caregivers looking to use assistive technology to care for their loved one while maintaining their paid employment.

Governments should also take an active role in recognizing those leading organizations who have adopted assistive technology and caregiver-friendly workplace standards and practices. The Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA) recognizes Canadian employers who support their employees who have taken on the role of caring for a seriously ill loved one with a Canadian Compassionate Companies (CCC) designation. Governments at all levels

can recognize those organizations who go to great lengths to promote the use of innovative assistive technologies and integrative practices to support their working caregivers. It has been found that top employer lists were used as important benchmarks by organizations to remain attractive destinations for potential employees, and to retain favour among their current employees.⁸

Conclusion

The lives of working caregivers encompass many different environments, each with its unique challenges and obstacles that make balancing paid employment and family care responsibilities challenging. Working caregivers are a resilient and resourceful group, however, rely on the supports offered at the home, community, workplace and government levels. Multi-stakeholder collaboration is needed in order to push the



caregiving agenda in the country forward. There is much work to be done at all sectors to ensure that working caregivers are properly recognized for their contributions to their families and to Canadian society. The supports and policy recommendations highlighted in this report should offer a starting point for those interested in helping improve the lives of those that continue to give so much of themselves to others.

Additional Resources

- *Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC): A Guide to Balancing Work and Caregiving Obligations (2014)*
Available at: <https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/eng/content/guide-balancing-work-and-caregiving-obligations>
- *Carers Canada: Advancing Collective Priorities A Canadian Carer Strategy (2017)*
Available at: <https://www.carerscanada.ca/priorities/#advancing-collective-priorities>
- *Employment and Social Development Canada: When Work and Caregiving Collide: How Employers Can Support their Employees Who Are Caregivers Report from the Employer Panel for Caregivers (2015)*
Available at: <http://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.700220/publication.html>
- *Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors Forum: Balancing Work and Caregiving Responsibilities (2016)*
Available at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/seniors/forum/tips-caregivers.html>
- *Human Resources and Skills Development Canada: Age-friendly Workplaces: Promoting Older Worker Participation (2012)*
Available at: <http://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.696642/publication.html>
- *International Alliance of Care Organizations (IACO): Global State of Care Report (2018)*
Available at: <https://internationalcarers.org/global-state-of-care/>
- *National Institute on Ageing (NIA): Why Canada Needs to Better Care for Its Working Caregivers (2018)*
Available at: <https://www.ryerson.ca/nia/commentary/caring-for-working-caregivers/>
- *Research on Aging Policies and Practice (RAPP): Assessing the Needs of Employed Caregivers and Employers (2015)*
Available at: <https://rapp.ualberta.ca/publications/reports/>
- *Vanier Institute of the Family: Family Caregiving in Canada: A Fact of Life and a Human Right (2017)*
Available at: <https://vanierinstitute.ca/family-caregiving-in-canada/>

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⁴ Fast, J. (2015). Caregiving for older adults with disabilities: Present costs, future challenges. Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy. Available at: <http://irpp.org/research-studies/study-no58/>

⁵ Turcotte, M. (2013). "Insights on Canadian Society, Family Caregiving: What Are the Consequences?" Cat. no. 75-006-X. Ottawa: Statistics Canada. Accessed November 12, 2015. Available at: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-006-x/2013001/article/11858-eng.pdf>

⁶ Keating, N., & Phillips, J. (2008). A critical human ecology perspective on rural ageing. In N. Keating (Ed.). Rural ageing: A good place to grow old? (pp. 1-10). Bristol, UK: Policy Press.

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