

## Key Messages

The following key messages have been created to help organizations and individuals answer simple questions about 2020 National Caregiver Day's campaign. Please use these messages when you speak to the media, in your newsletters, or on your website to help spread the message and make sure caregivers are adequately accounted and supported, especially during this unsettling time.

### WHO ARE CAREGIVERS?

Caregivers (also known as carers or family caregivers) are family members, friends, neighbours and other significant people who provide unpaid caring role to support someone with a long-term health condition, a physical or mental disability or problems related to aging

### 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 2020, National Caregiver Day falls on April 7<sup>th</sup>

### WHAT IS "EVERY MINUTE COUNTS" ABOUT?

*Every Minute Counts* is bringing caregivers to our collective actions and reinforces the value of caregivers to Canadians. Whether you are lending a helping hand to a caregiver in your life or you are part of an organization that support caregivers, the time you give can make positive impacts to their lives.

### GIVEN CURRENT SITUATION, WHY ARE WE MOVING FORWARD WITH NATIONAL CAREGIVER DAY?

This National Caregiver Day comes at a time when there are much uncertainty and unrest. On top of all they do, our caregivers must now navigate the impact from COVID-19 as they support the vulnerable and most at-risk people in our communities. Now more than ever, we need to keep our caregivers at the forefront of our minds and show our support.

While being mindful that all are focused on crisis management, we are still committed to spreading our message, so caregivers are adequately accounted for in planning and supported.

### HOW CAN INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORT CAREGIVERS?

[See Infographic on how individuals and organizations are giving their time for caregivers]

*Every Minute Counts* promotes awareness and action around the 5 universal needs of caregivers:

- Safeguarding the health and well-being of caregivers
- Minimizing the financial burden placed on caregivers
- Enabling access to user-friendly information and education
- Creating flexible workplace/educational environment that respect caregiving obligations
- Building evidence on caregiving as a foundation for evidence-informed decision making

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\* Formal recognition of caregivers is reinforced throughout the year from coast to coast as we all work together, and autonomously, to strengthen caregivers in Canada. A number of appreciation events are held in Ontario on the first Tuesday of April as the province celebrates Family Caregiver Day. The recognition continues to a crescendo in Alberta, British Columbia and Nova Scotia with Caregiver Awareness Month in May. Quebec brings these tributes to a grand-finale with their National Caregiver Week, which happens during the first week of November.

## WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT WAYS TO BE INVOLVED IN THE CAMPAIGN?

Recognizing that our target audience are health care providers and family/friend caregivers who are taking on the extra pressure from COVID 19, we are creating as much flexibility for anyone to access our materials on-demand through the carerscanada website. We encourage all, where they can, to take part.

1. **Virtual Caregiver Resource Expo: Learn how people are giving time to caregivers and see why every minute counts**

Instead of the original live-streamed scheduled program, all content will now be available as stream-on-demand so people can access them when they want.

2. **Global Caregiver Time Clock: No amount is too small to show you care**

Now more than ever, we need to keep our caregivers at the forefront of our minds and show our support.

Carers Canada is part of a global campaign, Time Counts led by Embracing Carers, to support caregivers around the world. Help us add 100,000 minutes in the global caregiver time clock by sharing the amount of time you give to caregivers because they matter. Starting March 30<sup>th</sup>, pledge your minutes at [carerscanada.ca](http://carerscanada.ca)

3. **We are all in this together: Spread the word**

Help us spread our message - share how you are using your time to support caregivers and help others to get involved. You can do this by sharing on social media, using #CaregiverAware2020 and #NationalCaregiverDay

## WHAT IS THE VALUE OF PLEDGING YOUR TIME?

While the Canadian public eye and political agenda are increasingly focusing on the well-being of family caregivers, there is more to be done. Your pledge will strengthen our work in championing for the well-being of caregivers in Canada by **building the case that caregivers matter from coasts to coast.**

Caregivers take pride in their role, and we, as Canadians, are proud of our caring society. Together, we believe we can achieve our vision of a country that recognizes, respects and supports the integral role of carers in society. **Through the pledge, we aim to show caregivers that they are not alone.**

## WHY SHOULD YOU GIVE YOUR TIME TO SUPPORT CAREGIVERS?

- 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.
- Caregivers already experience an array of negative emotional, social, and health outcomes, particularly if providing substantial care. 28% of caregivers find providing care to be stressful, and 19% indicated that their physical and emotional health suffered as a result of caregiving.
- While most caregivers (64%) spend less than 10 hours a week on caregiving responsibilities, 15% spent 10 to 19 hours, and 21% spent 20 hours or more. In the coming weeks, caregivers under great stress may not be able to access their normal breaks or time off to recharge their batteries.
- Caregivers already perform a variety of tasks that differ in terms of the level of intensity and the degree of emotional and physical demands. On top of this, they now have to navigate the impact from COVID-19 and continue to fill the gap as there is no alternative available.
- While caregivers will try to balance work and care, this may not be impossible for some. Many have taken work leave (26%), reduce their work hours (15%), turn down paid employment (10%) or had to quit their jobs (6%) in order to care for their loved ones. When care and work are unbalanced, the cost to our economy is equivalent to \$1.3 billion in lost of productivity per year.
- Caregivers are a vital part of our health care system (contributing \$25 billion of unpaid care annually) and reduce the social cost associated with institutionalization. Under normal circumstance, caregivers already provide over 80% of the care needed by individuals with chronic conditions. If they become ill themselves, they may not be able to provide care.
- The majority of 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.