

Project 12: Canada's Compassionate Companies Evolution and Sustainability

Collaborative Partnership with Canadian Hospice & Palliative Care Association (CHPCA)

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CONTEXT

On average in one year in Canada:

- 44% of carers miss work due to caring.
- 1.6 million carers take a leave from work due to caring.
- 600,00 reduce hours due to caring.
- 390,000 will leave the workforce to provide care.

This means:

- 2.2 million hours of work are lost per week due to care.

This is the equivalent to:

- 157,000 full time employees lost per year.
- \$1.3 billion worth in lost workdays from caring (1; 2; 3).

Canadian Hospice and Palliative Care (CHPCA) Canadian Compassionate Care (CCC) Program

- The CHPCA and its Champion's Council award the designation of CCC if a company meets at least three out of the five criteria listed below:
 1. Company has an HR policy that endorses the Compassionate Care Benefit (CCB).
 2. Employees' jobs are protected while accessing CCB.
 3. Compassionate Care leave could provide employees with income top ups above provincial and federal EI programs.
 4. Company has a caregiver accommodation policy that allows for support and flexibility within economic reason.
 5. Company promotes Advance Care Planning (ACP) using resources and tools.

Why is this research important?

In Canada, between 2002 and 2018, the number of people providing care increased from 2 million to 8.1 million. Approximately 6.1 million of these individuals are juggling work and care, and over half are women. Even still, approximately 50% are between the ages of 45-65, which is often considered peak earning years. These trends are expected to increase due to the growing number of dependent seniors (1; 2; 3; 4; 5).

Although these issues are not new, the landscape of care is drastically changing. Uncertain social and economic conditions, smaller diversified family systems and changing employment opportunities and expectations are creating challenges for care. At the same time, strained health systems, aging populations and rising chronic diseases are shifting care from institutions to homes. For carers, this means juggling work & care responsibilities at the cost of emotional, physical and financial wellbeing (3;4; 5).

The Canadian Hospice and Palliative Care Association's Canadian Compassionate Company (CCC) Program provides a potential solution to this challenge. By recognizing companies with formal care policies, CCC's can increase carer friendly organizations in Canada.

Research Objectives

This research aims to:

1. Explore employer motivations to become a CCC.
2. Investigate the benefits of being a CCC.
3. Understand employer challenges associated with the CCC program.
4. Identify opportunities to expand the CCC

How was this study done?

- Semi-structured zoom interviews with 4 CCC employers were conducted between February and April 2021 (sample size = 18).
- All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed.
- A deductive and inductive coding process was used to explore research themes (6).
- NVivo 12 was used to code and analyze results.
- Thematic analysis was used to examine salient results (6).

What did the researchers find?

1. Addressing the **first research objective**, we found:
 - The organizations were motivated to become a CCC since the designation helped affirm their organizational approach to care, facilitated a sense of responsibility to support employees and helped to build relationships within their organization and the broader community.
2. Addressing the **second research objective**, we found:
 - CCC organizations experienced a range of intrinsic benefits associated with the CCC designation.
 - The CCC designation is beneficial for providing meaning, comfort and peace of mind among carer-employees.
 - The CCC designation helps to demonstrate employer care, which can improve employee organizational pride and translate into increase engagement and retention in the workplace.
3. Addressing the **third research objective**, we found:
 - CCC organizations face challenges related to limited support, inconsistency communication and knowledge sharing between the CCC organizations.
 - These challenges hinder program and policy development in a unified approach.
 - CCC organizations are challenged by limited funding and resource shortages for care program development and expansion, that are now made worse due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

4. Addressing the **fourth research objective**, we found:
 - CCC employers indicated that the CCC program provides an excellent example of a workplace accommodation program that can generate benefits for both employees and employers. As workplaces transition out of COVID-19 realities, CCC employers indicated more care programs like the CCC program are needed.

Key Messages

Care Friendly Employers

- The CCC program can promote workplace unification, enhance employee retention and improve employee engagement.
- Employers need assistance overcoming financial and knowledge barriers to ensure the CCC program can reach its full potential.

Carer-Employees

- Carer-employees experience diverse and changing needs, especially during the pandemic.
- The CCC program can improve opportunities for carer-employee wellbeing.

CCC Program

- The CCC program can increase the recognition of carers, provide job comfort and safety, and enhance workplace wellbeing.
- CCC program provides companies with the capacity to enhance employee engagement, improve financial growth and promote an infrastructure for care.
- Employers need support in the creation and distribution of care strategies to improve wellbeing.

Opportunities to Support Carer-Employees and Employers

- Enhance company knowledge of the CCC program across Canada.
- Download and apply the Carer-Inclusive and Accommodating Organizations Standard and Quick Start Implementation Guide in the workplace.
- Active government role in the incorporation of care in policy and program development

References

1. General Social Survey (2002). *Cycle 16*.
2. General Social Survey (2013). *Social Identity*.
3. Statistics Canada (2018). *Caregivers in Canada*.
4. Ireson, R., Sethi, B., & Williams, A. (2018). Availability of caregiver-friendly workplace policies (CFWP s): An international scoping review. *Health & social care in the community*, 26(1), e1-e14.
5. Employer Panel for Caregivers. (2015). When work caregiving collide: How employers can support their employees who are caregivers. *Employment and Social Development Canada*.
6. Potter, W. J. (1996). *An analysis of thinking and research about qualitative methods*. Psychology Press.

Helpful Resources

- Check out the Gender, Health and Caregiver Friendly Workplace site (<https://ghw.mcmaster.ca/tools-and-curriculum/>) for access to resources including:
 - Guidelines for managers communicating with carer-employees
 - Resources for carers
 - Checklist for carer-employees
 - Checklist for collective agreements and organizational policies
 - Fostering a carer friendly workplace guide
- CHPCA: <https://www.chpca.ca/>
- Local Health Integration Networks Ontario: <http://www.lhins.on.ca/>
- Carers Canada: <https://www.carerscanada.ca/>
- Canadian Homecare Association: <https://cdnhomecare.ca/>
- Canadian Virtual Hospice: https://www.virtualhospice.ca/en_US/Main+Site+Navigation/Home.aspx



Want to learn more? Please visit the Gender, Health, and Caregiver Friendly Workplaces site here: <https://ghw.mcmaster.ca/>

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