

Written Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of the 2023 Federal Budget

October 8, 2022

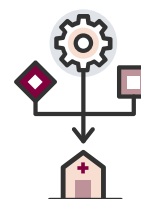
RECOMMENDATIONS

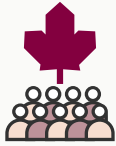
- 1 That the government invest \$12 million over three years in the creation of a national centralized resource for home care employers to access emotional intelligence/resiliency training for frontline and management staff.
- 2 That the government designate \$10 million to support a large-scale research project through Canadian Institutes of Health Research to evaluate the cost-benefit impact of wage parity across all health care settings for regulated and non-regulated staff (short, medium and long-term impact).
- 3 That the government invest \$6 million over 3 years in a national employers for caregivers initiative that supports employers to develop caregiver friendly workplaces, promotes the business benefits of supporting caregivers and recognizing employer champions.

Canadians believe that home, not a hospital or long-term care facility, is the best place to recover from an illness or injury, manage long-term conditions, and live out ones' final days. For many Canadians, this is not possible because the demand for home care services is outpacing available human resources resulting in limited or no access to necessary care and supports.

Human resources are the number 1 challenge for home care provider organizations across the country with an anticipated labour shortage of 18,000 non-regulated and 5,000 regulated providers. The continued and frequent restructuring of our health care system, exacerbated by the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis, has resulted in numerous human resource challenges for Home and Community Care (HCC) employers such as (a) higher staff turnover (b) increased staff burnout (c) constant organization restructuring and change and job re-training (d) limited resources for training and peer supports [CHCA, 2013/Denton et al, 2002]. Pre-COVID turnover rates for home care workers is estimated at 25-40% (double the rate of other healthcare sectors). The CHCA estimates this turnover rate has increased as a result of COVID-19 challenges.

Home care is an array of health and support services provided in the home, retirement communities, group homes and other community settings to people with acute, chronic, palliative or rehabilitative health care needs. Services include assessments, education, therapeutic interventions (e.g., nursing and rehabilitation), personal assistance with daily living activities, help with instrumental activities of daily living and caregiver respite and support. (Canadian Home Care Association)





Health Care Workers in Home Care

148,000 non-regulated providers (personal support workers)

98,900 nurses

19,100 therapists, dieticians, social workers

12,000 case managers

29,400 physicians providing house calls

Of the elements impacting human resources (work, workforce, and workplace) the top three issues contributing to the labour market shortage are retention (worker resiliency), wages and work-life balance. The federal government has a leadership role in creating national programs and resources for home care providers that will address these three challenges.

1 RECOMMENDATION 1 (WORKER RETENTION) – Invest \$15 million over three years in the creation of a national centralized resource for home care employers to access emotional intelligence/ resiliency training for frontline and management staff.

'Employee resilience' is the capacity of employees, supported and facilitated by employers, to positively cope, adapt, and even thrive in response to dynamic and challenging environments [Britt et al, 2016]. Workers can increase resilience by enhancing their emotional intelligence (EI) capabilities and applying these new skills to change the way they think and behave when dealing with uncertain and changing situations. Resilience is associated with greater job satisfaction, work happiness, organizational commitment and employee engagement. [Kuntz et al, 2017]. Raising resilience contributes to improved self-esteem, sense of control over life events, sense of purpose in life and improved employee interpersonal relationships. [McAllister et al, 2009] Appendix A- EI and resiliency in HCC.

A strategic investment in the health care sector; this action will provide home care employers with educational content, training, tools and resources to:

- Increase their employee well-being by equipping them with the capability to deal with high stress and changing work environments
- Build a resilient workforce, specifically workers hit hard by the pandemic (non-regulated and regulated health care providers**)
- Improve workers' job satisfaction and job performance and increase retention of skilled and qualified workers

The pandemic has changed the way we work and live. As a result, many home care workers have been negatively impacted—a large number of women and individuals from equity-deserving groups. Building on the expertise and experience of the Canadian Home Care Association, this national centralized resource will provide practical solutions for home care employers who are grappling with limited availability of skilled workers, high turnover rates and increased burn-out in the workplace.

2 RECOMMENDATION 2 (WAGE PARITY) – Allocate \$10 million to support a large-scale research project through Canadian Institutes of Health Research to evaluate the cost-benefit impact of wage parity across all health care settings for regulated and non-regulated staff (short, medium and long-term impact).

There are two characteristics of today’s home care workers that are particularly significant in defining the shortage of home care workers – 1) the gender and 2) average age of current workers. Since female workers dominate the sector, the supply of potential workers is less than it would be if there were a tradition of both men and women working in the sector in fairly equal proportions.

The home care sector is a major source of employment in across Canada , in particular for women. The majority of the home care labor force are women 27 to 65 years of age (mean 50 years). Women account for 90% of the regulated workers (e.g. nurses), with 20% racialized women. For non-regulated workers, 90% are women and 30% are racialized. Not only is the gender pay gap large in the home care sector, low pay is also prevalent and working conditions very demanding. This reflects the undervaluation of the sector and explains the growing difficulties home care employers face in filling the rising demand for regulated and non-regulated workers. This is unfair and unsustainable. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown how vital the sector and its workers are in supporting vulnerable populations and helping seniors age in place.

Wages and benefits continue to be a challenge for employers and employees in the home care sector. A large consideration is travel. On average, home care workers spent five to six hours a week in travel time. Providing compensation for travel time must be included in the analysis of wage parity and would improve working conditions in the home care sector for regulated and non-regulated workers. Low wages and the lack of benefits are among the top reasons workers give for leaving the home care sector.

3 RECOMMENDATION 3 (WORK-LIFE BALANCE) – Invest \$6 million over 3 years in a national employers for caregivers initiative that supports employers to develop caregiver friendly workplaces, promotes the business benefits of supporting caregivers and recognizing employer champions.

Over 6 million Canadians are balancing work and unpaid caregiving responsibilities, accounting for 35% of the workforce (Stats Canada, 2013). Many workers in the home care sector take on the responsibilities to provide paid care during their working hours and unpaid care to loved ones when they are not working, resulting in continued stress with little or no relief. These individuals are often referred to as “double-duty” caregivers. If not supported, these individuals face difficult, life-altering choices, such as reducing their work hours, turning down job opportunities, taking a leave of absence or leaving the labour market.

The increasing care needs of our aging population, coupled with the unprecedented impact of COVID-19, have heightened awareness of “double-duty” caregivers and the need for inclusive and accommodating workplaces. The future workplace must recognize that work and caregiving are a part of life, and employers will be compelled to adapt and accommodate the unique needs of employees who are juggling both work and caregiving responsibilities.

The federal government has taken a leadership role in recognizing and supporting caregivers. Participation in National Caregiver Day events and funding employment insurance benefits specifically for caregivers are two key steps to address this human resource challenge. Two federally funded research agencies, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) supported the creation of a national standard for carer-inclusive and accommodating organizations, led by McMaster University in partnership with the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Group. The Canadian standard was launched in 2018 and has experienced a steady increase in interest and use by employers across the country.

Our challenge for “double-duty” caregivers is to normalize and integrate caregiver friendly workplace policies across all organizations. The federal government can continue its leadership in this vital area by taking action to ensure sustainable approaches through various actions such as supporting employers to develop caregiver friendly workplaces, promoting the business benefits of supporting caregivers and influencing employment policy and practice. These key activities can be coordinated through national employers for caregivers initiatives that work with employers in the health care sector to build a supportive and inclusive workplace for all staff who are, or will become, double-duty caregivers.

CANADIAN HOME CARE ASSOCIATION (CHCA)

CHCA is dedicated to ensuring the availability of accessible, responsive home care to enable people to safely stay in their homes with dignity, independence and quality of life. Our vision is an integrated health and social care system that provides seamless patient- and family-centred care that is accessible, accountable, evidence-informed and sustainable. Through our diverse membership base, the CHCA represents public and private organizations that fund, manage and provide services and products in the home and community. Recognizing the vital role of family caregivers in home and community care, the CHCA created Carers Canada, a priority program of the association, to build awareness and recognition of the role of caregivers and the challenges they face.

www.cdnhomecare.ca

