

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

By: Canadian Home Care Association



Canadian
Home Care
Association

Association canadienne
de soins et services
à domicile

Recommendation 1: Invest in workforce optimization in home and community care by:

1. Expanding immigration pathways for home care workers by extending permits under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, accelerating approvals through the Home Care Worker Immigration Pilot Program, and re-opening permanent residency pathways
2. Investing in wage specific and non-wage specific recruitment, retention, and training strategies for domestic home care workers, especially in rural, remote, and underserved regions.

Recommendation 2: Improve access and affordability for home and community care by:

1. Extending federal home and community care funding beyond the 2027–28 commitment. Funding should be indexed to inflation and population aging to support increasing the share of provincial and territorial health spending on home and community care from 5–6% to 10% of total health expenditures, to meet rising demand and improve system efficiency.
2. Amending Schedule V, Part II of the Excise Tax Act to exempt privately purchased personal care provider (e.g., personal support worker, health care aide) services from GST/HST.

Recommendation 3: Improve caregiving in Canada by:

1. Upholding the commitment from Budget 2024 and the 2025 federal election by allocating funding for a national caregiving strategy that includes building a sustainable care provider workforce, specifically in the home and community care sector.
2. Converting the Canada Caregiver Credit into a refundable credit and adjusting the full amount to a minimum of \$1250.

Recommendation 4: Invest in palliative care by:

1. Renewing the commitment to the Framework on Palliative Care in Canada with an investment of \$29.8 million over four years to follow through on the Next Steps it has identified and;
2. Continuing to improve access to high quality, culturally safer, affordable palliative care across the country through bilateral agreements with the provinces and territories in line with the Aging with Dignity agreements

The **Canadian Home Care Association (CHCA)** is a national non-profit membership organization committed to fostering integrated, person-centred care in home and community settings. The CHCA represents a diverse membership of public and private organizations that fund, manage, and deliver services and products, providing a unified voice to advance excellence in home and community care across Canada. Through advocacy, collaboration, and knowledge sharing, the CHCA champions a vision of a seamless, accessible, accountable, and evidence-informed health care system that prioritizes patients and their families while ensuring long-term sustainability.

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Investing in Home and Community Care will Strengthen Canada’s Economy

Home and community care is a critical part of Canada’s health system, providing care in lower-cost settings for individuals with acute, chronic, rehabilitative, and palliative needs.

Home and community care is a cost-containment and capacity solution, reducing pressure on hospitals and long-term care.¹ Demand is rising due to aging and care complexity, while capacity has not kept pace.

81% of older adults want to remain at home, yet only **51%** who needed home care received it all or most of the time.²

Each Alternate Level of Care patient costs **\$730-\$1,200/day**.³ Providing **home care** to a client with complex needs **costs \$103/day**, compared to **\$201/day** for a similar client in a **nursing home**.⁴

Shifting care to home and community settings could free up acute care capacity and generate up to **\$2.3 billion** in annual system savings.⁵

Recommendation 1: Invest in Workforce Optimization

Labour shortages constrain capacity and drive inefficiency. Without sufficient workforce supply, care shifts to higher-cost settings.

Recent policy changes by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, as outlined in the 2026–2028 Immigration Levels Plan, are expected to reduce temporary residents, with a **43%** decrease from 2025–2026.⁶ Within these adjustments, the Temporary Foreign Worker Program is projected to contract, with admissions in 2027 projected to be **39%** lower than 2025.⁷

Home care workers are already experiencing impacts, including non-renewal of work permit extensions and significant delays in permanent residency approvals, resulting in immediate workforce losses and worsening shortages. These impacts are most acute in rural and remote communities, where shortages are more severe, and reliance on migrant workers is higher.

In Ontario alone, a survey of the eight largest home care service provider organizations found that **~9,500 temporary foreign workers (TFWs)**, who collectively support **~14 million home care visits**

¹ KAP Zagrodny et al., “Economic Evidence for Home and Community Care Investment: The Case for Ontario Personal Support Workers’ Wage Parity,” *Healthcare Policy* 19, no. 1 (2023): 23–31, <https://doi.org/10.12927/hcpol.2023.27161>

² National Institute on Ageing, *Perspectives on Growing Older in Canada: The 2025 NIA Ageing in Canada Survey* (Toronto: National Institute on Ageing, 2026), https://niageing.ca/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/January-22-2026_Perspective-on-Growing-Older-in-Canada-The-2025-NIA-Ageing-in-Canada-Survey_Report.pdf

³ Rosalie Wyonch, “Fixing the ALC Patient Problem is a Triple Win for Canadians,” C.D. Howe Institute, May 10, 2024, <https://cdhowe.org/publication/rosalie-wyonch-fixing-alc-patient-problem-triple-win-canadians/>

⁴ Judith G. Seidman, “Community Health Care and Social Services Are Affordable and What Seniors Want,” *Senate of Canada*, February 20, 2023.

⁵ Christopher Simpson, “Code Gridlock: Why Canada Needs a National Seniors Strategy,” *Inside Policy* (Macdonald-Laurier Institute, 2015), <https://macdonaldlaurier.ca/files/pdf/201502FEBRUARYInside%20PolicySIMPSON.pdf>

⁶ Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, “Supplementary Information for the 2026–2028 Immigration Levels Plan,” Government of Canada, accessed April 16, 2026, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/mandate/corporate-initiatives/levels/supplementary-immigration-levels-2026-2028.html>

⁷ Ibid.

annually, are at risk due to expiring work permits. Without policy intervention, services for **~50,000–70,000 patients** will be **disrupted**.

41% of older adults in Canada were **unable to access needed care in 2025**,⁸ which is likely driven by workforce shortages. **National workforce projections** indicate a **shortage of home support workers, caregivers, and related occupations** through 2033.⁹ These shortages are already contributing to increased wait times and reduced access to care.

Domestic recruitment alone can't close the workforce gap. Home support work is persistently undervalued despite being essential to system functioning. As a result, many domestic workers will choose employment in settings that offer higher compensation, greater stability, and lower risk.

80% of **paid care providers**, such as Personal Support Workers or Direct Support Professionals for people with disabilities, have considered **changing careers**, citing low compensation, inadequate staffing, discrimination and lack of safety at work.¹⁰

Addressing the workforce shortage requires a two-fold approach:

- Stabilizing immigration pathways, and
- Investing in domestic recruitment, retention, and training.

Implementation Strategy

1. Stabilize Immigration Pathways

- Extend the work permits of TFWs already working in the home and community care sectors at risk of losing (or have lost) legal ability to work in Canada. (Must be employed for a minimum amount of time (1 year) to be eligible.)
- Accelerate processing under the Home Care Worker Immigration Pilot Program to enable transitions from temporary status to permanent residency and prevent service disruptions caused by expiring permits.
- Renew permanent residency pathways for home care workers, including enhancements to the Home Care Worker Immigration Pilot, to ensure a predictable and continuous workforce supply.

2. Invest in Domestic Recruitment, Retention, and Training

- Invest in wage specific and non-wage specific recruitment, retention, and training strategies for domestic home care workers, especially in rural, remote, and underserved regions.

Recommendation 2: Improve Access and Affordability

While Canada's home care system is partially publicly funded, coverage remains limited across provinces and territories. **Home and community care** accounts for **5–6%** of **provincial and territorial health**

⁸ National Institute on Ageing, *Perspectives on Growing Older in Canada: The 2025 NIA Ageing in Canada Survey* (Toronto: National Institute on Ageing, 2026), https://niageing.ca/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/January-22-2026_Perspective-on-Growing-Older-in-Canada-The-2025-NIA-Ageing-in-Canada-Survey_Report.pdf

⁹ Employment and Social Development Canada, "Occupational Profile," Government of Canada, accessed April 16, 2026, <https://occupations.esdc.gc.ca/sppc-cops/occupationssummarydetail.jsp?tid=225&lang=eng>

¹⁰ Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence, "Caring in Canada," accessed April 16, 2026, <https://canadiancaregiving.org/caring-in-canada/>

spending. Sustained federal investment is needed to support provinces and territories in **increasing this share toward 10%**.

Many Canadians rely on privately purchased services to supplement publicly funded care, including additional hours of support and services outside eligibility thresholds.

Personal Care Provider (PCP) (e.g., personal support worker, health care aide) services cost **\$30-\$45/hour**,¹¹ creating significant out-of-pocket costs for individuals requiring ongoing or complex care.

Cost barriers are widespread, with **23%** of older Canadians reporting affordability as an obstacle to accessing home care and **34%** identifying it as the primary barrier to community-based support.¹²

When home care is unaffordable, individuals are more likely to rely on hospital care or enter long-term care earlier, both more costly.

Removing GST/HST from privately purchased PCP services would improve affordability for Canadians purchasing home care support services. This should be paired with sustained federal investment to increase home care spending to **10%** of total provincial and territorial health expenditures, improving access to publicly funded care and reducing pressure on acute and long-term care systems.

Implementation Strategy

- Extend federal home care funding beyond the 2027–28 commitment, increasing provincial/territorial health spending from 5–6% to 10% of total health expenditures to meet rising demand
- Amend Schedule V, Part II of the Excise Tax Act to exempt privately purchased PCP services from GST/HST.

Recommendation 3: Improve Caregiving in Canada

Unpaid caregivers are a critical component of Canada’s home and community care system, providing essential support that enables individuals to remain at home and reduce reliance on higher-cost institutional care.

1 in 4 caregivers report poor or fair mental health, and half experience financial stress.¹³ On average, caregivers provide **over 30 hours of unpaid care per week**.¹⁴ As a result, many adjust their employment, including reducing hours, missing work, or leaving the labour force—reducing productivity and economic growth. In 2018, caregivers provided an estimated **5.7 billion hours of care annually**—equivalent to **2.8 million full-time workers** and valued at **~\$97.1 billion in replacement cost**.¹⁵ This underscores the

¹¹ComForCare, “How Much Does In-Home Care Cost in Canada?,” accessed April 16, 2026, <https://www.comforcare.ca/blog/how-much-does-in-home-care-cost-in-canada/>

¹²National Institute on Ageing, *Perspectives on Growing Older in Canada: The 2025 NIA Ageing in Canada Survey* (Toronto: National Institute on Ageing, 2026), https://niageing.ca/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/January-22-2026_Perspective-on-Growing-Older-in-Canada-The-2025-NIA-Ageing-in-Canada-Survey_Report.pdf

¹³Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence, “Caring in Canada,” accessed April 16, 2026, <https://canadiancaregiving.org/caring-in-canada/>

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Janet Fast and Jacquie Eales, “Family Day Imagery Neglects Family Caregivers’ Care Work; It Needs to Be Valued,” *The Conversation*, February 20, 2022, <https://theconversation.com/family-day-imagery-neglects-family-caregivers-care-work-it-needs-to-be-valued-175801>

health system's reliance on unpaid labour and its broader economic consequences for Canada.

This reliance is unsustainable. A sustainable system depends on both: caregivers providing essential day-to-day support, and a strong home and community care workforce delivering essential services and support.

In line with commitments in Budget 2024 and the 2025 federal election, the federal government should allocate funding for a National Caregiving Strategy that includes **building a sustainable care provider workforce**,¹⁶ **specifically in home and community care.** This will support caregivers and care providers, enable aging at home, improve care continuity, and reduce pressure on hospitals and long-term care.

The federal government should convert the Canada Caregiver Credit into a **refundable credit** and adjust the full amount to a **minimum of \$1,250**.¹⁷ This change would benefit caregivers supporting loved ones at home, many of whom do not have sufficient tax liability to benefit from the current non-refundable structure and continue to face financial strain.

Implementation Strategy

- Allocate funding for a National Caregiving Strategy that integrates caregiver supports with **targeted investment in the home and community care workforce.**
- Convert the Canada Caregiver Credit into a refundable credit and adjust the full amount to a minimum of \$1250.

Recommendation 4: Invest in Palliative Care

The Canadian Home Care Association is a member of the Palliative Care Coalition of Canada and supports the recommendations outlined in their 2026 pre-budget submission. Home-based palliative care should be a priority in the next steps and investments.

Implementation Strategy

- Renew the commitment to the Framework on Palliative Care in Canada with an investment of **\$29.8 million** over four years to follow through on the Next Steps it has identified and;
- Continue to improve access to high quality, culturally safer, affordable palliative care across the country through bilateral agreements with the provinces and territories in line with the Aging with Dignity agreements

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¹⁶ Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence. *National Caregiving Strategy*. Accessed April 16, 2026, <https://canadiancaregiving.org/national-caregiving-strategy/>

¹⁷ Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence, *CCCE Budget Submission* (August 2025), <https://canadiancaregiving.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/CCCE-Budget-Submission-Aug-2025.pdf>