

## Family Caregiver Day: Key Messages

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Use these key messages when discussing Family Caregiver Day with caregivers, clients, reporters or decision-makers in your community.

### What is Family Caregiver Day?

- The Ontario Caregiver Coalition (OCC) is celebrating Ontario's third annual Family Caregiver Day on April 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- It is estimated that there are currently 3.3 million Ontario's- 29% of the provincial population—who are unpaid family caregivers. Family caregivers continue to provide support to family, friends and neighbours facing illness, disability, or challenges associated with aging.
- Family Caregiver Day is a chance to recognize, celebrate and bring awareness to the value of caregivers to Ontario's families, health care system, and economy.

### Who are Ontario's unpaid family caregivers?

Unpaid family caregivers range in age, location and economic background and span three generations:

- **Young caregivers:** Over 500,000 family caregivers in Ontario who are between 15 and 24 years old. There are many caregivers who are even younger.
- **'Sandwich' generation caregivers:** Provide care for both their aging parents and their own children. Unpaid family caregivers make up 2.5 million of the overall workforce and contribute to the province's tax base.
- **Elderly caregivers:** Nearly 375,000 caregivers in Ontario are 65 years or older.

### How can the provincial government support caregivers?

The Ontario Caregiver Coalition is asking the provincial government for increased financial supports and increasing flexible respite options:

**Financial Supports:** The OCC continues to strongly recommend that the Ontario government move forward quickly with the adoption of a financial benefit for caregivers that will allow them to remain in a caregiving role:

- ❖ **Caregiver tax credit** should be made refundable to assist the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.
- ❖ A **caregiver allowance** (that is means tested) would ease the distress experienced by caregivers as a result of fearing for their income and job security and would enhance their capacity to continue caregiving.
- ❖ **Investments in businesses** to allow them to retain their staff and backfill positions would ease financial pressures on employers.

**Flexible Respite Options:** For many, caregiving is a 24/7 role with little respite and no ability to "call in sick". Investment in respite services would ease the burden on caregivers and reduce burnout. In turn, this would enable them to remain at work as less of their time would be spent on caregiving duties.

- ❖ Increasing home care services and improving the flexibility of respite options in the community.

### How can the public participate in Family Caregiver Day?

- **Everyone is invited to sign our digital thank-you card** to Ontario's caregivers by visiting: <http://www.ontariocaregivercoalition.ca/thank-a-caregiver.html>
- Share messages of support using the hashtag **#thxcaregivers**
- Share the OCC's content on your social media platforms