



The Ontario Caregiver Coalition is the voice of Ontario’s caregivers. We advocate for recognition and support for the family, friends, and neighbours whose unpaid care is the hidden backbone of Ontario’s health system.

June 2024 Newsletter

Building a Better Ontario for Caregivers: OCC Caregiver Survey Leads Work Towards Policy Change

“Listen to what families need before you put programs in place. I feel many government programs/funding have already been decided on before they consult with parents/or other caregivers.”

-Respondent to the 2024 OCC Caregiver Survey

As this Survey respondent points out, too often, the voices of unpaid caregivers have not been heard in developing and designing the policies and programs that affect them, and those that they care for. Caregivers are experts in the systems that they navigate. They know what their loved ones need, and what programs and policies will support caregivers themselves to continue in their vital role. However, caregivers continue to struggle through poorly designed systems, trying to piece together supports and fill the gaps. Caregivers know they are essential – but often feel as if they are invisible in the systems that they are sustaining.

The OCC’s 2024 Caregiver Survey was launched to begin to fill this gap. Thanks to the hard work, skills and commitment of our Board, Committees, Members and friends, we received a strong response, providing many insights into what caregivers need, and the solutions that would make a real difference for them.

Over the next year, the OCC will be sharing six Policy Briefs: our *Building a Better Ontario for Caregivers* series. The first Brief will set the stage, identifying the needs and priorities of unpaid caregivers, the barriers they face in accessing supports, and the impact of the failure to provide support. The following five Briefs will each tackle an area of policy reform, highlighting concrete recommendations for change.

We are excited to share with you the [first in our Policy Series](#). Please share it widely! We look forward to providing you with the next Brief in early fall.

OCC Partners with Fondation Emergence to Support Training on Supporting LGBTQ+ Caregivers

Fondation Emergence, a Quebec-based non-profit that supports awareness, education and inclusion for LGBTQ+ individuals, will be touring Ontario this fall to provide education for care providers and other professionals on how best to support chosen families as caregivers.

A chosen family refers to a group of people who intentionally chose to love and support each other, regardless of marriage or blood. The chosen families of LGBTQ+ individuals face many barriers and challenges when providing care. Building on their [comprehensive report](#) on the experiences of chosen families as caregivers, Fondation Emergence has developed tools and training to enable professionals to provide better supports to these individuals. The Chosen Family program initially toured Quebec virtually from 2020 to 2021.

The Ontario Touring Project is offering in-person training sessions in multiple regions of Ontario, including:

- Ottawa and Eastern Ontario the week of September 23, 2024,
- The Greater Toronto Area the week of October 21, 2024, and
- In Sudbury and North Bay the week of October 28, 2024.

We encourage any interested OCC member to attend these events to consider attending these events, and to spread the word.

The OCC is partnering with Fondation Emergence to support this important work with connections and communications. As well, Fondation Emergence will be offering this training directly to OCC members in December 2024.

To find out more about Fondation Emergence and the Chosen Family Tour, please contact our [OCC email](#).

June General Members Meeting Recap: Survey Results and Expert Talks

Our latest General Members Meeting was held on June 20, 2024, covering talks on the impact of health on retirement planning, the future of dementia care in Canada, the first policy presentation on the results of our 2024 Caregiver Survey, and updates on the latest OCC initiatives, including our Caregiver Day campaign and Member Spotlight.

We were excited to give members a sneak peek at the contents of the first of our six Policy Briefs, based on the 2024 Caregiver Survey, as well as a look ahead at the contents of the following Briefs. We look forward to engaging our members in the development of future Briefs.

Dr. Meera Paleja of the Ontario Securities Commission gave a talk on the health and financial vulnerability of retirees and Canadians over 50, drawing on their [comprehensive research](#) on the financial expectations and experiences of retirees and pre-retirees. The presentation was highly relevant to the OCC's work on understanding and addressing caregiver financial distress.

Dr. Joshua Armstrong of the Alzheimer Society of Canada spoke the groundbreaking [Landmark Study](#) on the future of dementia care in Canada. His talk focused on the anticipated rise of dementia cases across Canada, the risk factors that increase the occurrence of dementia, and the importance of delaying the onset by reducing those risk factors.

As the OCC continues to increase its online presence, our Caregiver Day campaign created internal infrastructure that will help us continue to elevate our social media profile. Our member spotlight campaign has boosted our online engagement, relying on the infrastructure we built.

OCC members will receive copies of the presentations as part of the formal meeting notes.

[OCC Annual General Meeting: Join Us September 19, 2024](#)

Our upcoming Annual General Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 19, from 11.00 a.m.– 1.00 p.m. *via* Zoom.

At our AGM, our new Board members will be nominated, the Chair will give her annual report on the development of the OCC, and our committees will share their plans for the next year.

While our General Members Meetings are focused on informative talks and guest speakers, our Annual General Meetings offer our membership the opportunity to peek behind the curtain of the OCC, and let your voice be heard on the development and plans of our coalition. These meetings are more formal, and we encourage all our members to attend and help to build our movement for change. We hope to see you there.

[Last Call for Applications for OCC Board Membership](#)

The deadline for applications for Board membership is end of day, June 28th, 2024. If you are interested in joining the Board, please send your resume and letter of interest to ontariocaregivercoalitionocc@gmail.com, attention of the Nominating Committee. As our recruitment window for new Board members closes, we will begin holding interviews in July. We appreciate all applications, and look forward to welcoming our Board nominees in September.

The OCC Newsletter will resume in September 2024. We look forward to reconnecting with you then, and wish you a wonderful summer.



If you have items that you would like to see included in future issues of this newsletter, please let us know. Sharing the accomplishments and activities of our members is part of our mandate. If you have received this newsletter in error, or no longer wish to receive it, please reply to this email to let us know, and we will remove you from our mailing list.