



The Ontario Caregiver Coalition (OCC) is the voice of caregivers in Ontario. We advocate for recognition and support for the family, friends, and neighbours whose unpaid care is the hidden backbone of Ontario's health system. Our members include both caregivers from across Ontario and organizations that support them. For more information about the OCC and our work, please see our website at www.ontariocaregivercoalition.ca, or follow us on social media.

May 2026 Newsletter

At the OCC

Call for Board and Committee Members

The OCC has begun our call for Board and Committee Members, ongoing until July 6th, 2026.

Our Board members are unpaid caregivers, organizational members, and caregiver advocates who are passionate about making change. The OCC's Board plays a central role in setting the OCC strategy by ensuring good governance and organizational resilience, while overseeing the work of the various Committees. Board members generally dedicate between 4 and 10 hours per month to the organization, and serve a 2-year, renewable term. It is important to us to have a range of experiences and perspectives on our Board and Committees. Our organizational culture is welcoming, supportive, and flexible. This is a great opportunity to contribute to change, meet like-minded people, and develop your skill sets.

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, by end of day July 6th, 2026. For more information about applying, please visit our [website](#).

We also welcome applications from those who want to join one of our five [Committees](#). Committee work is more flexible in terms of time commitment, with some Committee members dedicating a couple of hours each month, and others giving significantly more. If you are interested in Committee work, please send us an email, and we will set up a time to meet and find the right fit for you. As well, you can learn more about our committees by clicking [here](#).

We rely on our Board and Committee members to work towards our shared vision of an Ontario where caregivers are recognized, valued, and supported. Please consider giving your time to the OCC as a Board or Committee member, or reaching out to friends or colleagues who may be interested in contributing to our work.

OCC General Members Meeting on June 18th, 2026

Our next General Members Meeting will be held on Thursday, June 18th, from 11.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m. As always, we will be welcoming a diverse array of speakers on issues and initiatives related to unpaid caregiving, as well as working together on the OCC's advocacy efforts. A full agenda and meeting materials will be shared early in June.

We are looking forward to another informative discussion, which will include presentations on:

- Our upcoming website refresh from our Communications Coordinator, Samantha Pantos,
- Strengthening the OCC's Work on Access to Meaningful Mental Health Supports from Adriana Shnall, Chair, Mental Health Working Group
- Supporting Caregivers Through Information and Education from Michelle Bertand, Regional Learning Centre

and more. If you have not received your calendar invitation, please reach out to us at ontariocaregivercoalitionocc@gmail.com. We will also send out a reminder email with a Zoom link to join before the meeting.

We hope to see you there!

2026 Member Spotlight Series

Calling all of our Member Organizations! Would you like your organization featured on our website and social media pages?

Beginning in June, the OCC will be promoting our second annual Member Spotlight Series. The Member Spotlight is both a celebration of the tireless work our Organization Members contribute to our cause and a chance for our members and friends to learn more about the important work our Organization Members do outside the OCC.

If you haven't already done so, please confirm your organization's participation with our Membership and Communications Coordinator, Samantha, at our general email address: ontariocaregivercoalitionocc@gmail.com. If you participated with us last year, we would be happy to provide you with your 2025 materials to see if you'd like anything updated or changed.

The OCC's Submission to the Ontario Human Rights Commission on Caregiving

While it is not widely known, caregivers do have some rights under the Ontario Human Rights Code. Protections against discrimination on the basis of family and marital status can apply to caregivers in the workforce, in housing, and in services such as health care and education. Approximately 20 years ago, the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) held a public consultation on human rights and family caregiving, which resulted in a report, *The Cost of Caring*, which made recommendations for changes to law and public policies that affect

caregivers, as well as its Policy and Guidelines on Discrimination because of Family Status, which sets out official guidance on the interpretation of the provisions of the Code that address family caregivers.

The OHRC is now in the process of updating the Policy to reflect the changing context of caregiving in Ontario. The OCC collaborated with a number of our member organizations, including Dr. Alison Williams, the Ontario Association of Social Workers, the Young Caregiver Council of Canada and the Young Caregiver Association, to provide a detailed and comprehensive submission to the OHRC, recommending changes to strengthen its interpretation of the Code to better protect caregivers. We also had the opportunity for an in-person discussion.

The OCC Submission is now available on our [website](#).

The OHRC anticipates releasing a revised Policy in late 2026 or early 2027. The OCC will remain in communication with the OHRC and will share the updated Policy with our networks once released.

Member Initiatives

Join the Young Caregivers Association for Young Caregivers Day on May 28th

On May 28, 2026, The Young Caregivers Association (YCA) is celebrating young caregivers across Canada. Through events, social media posts, email blasts and interviews they will continue to bring awareness to those children, teens and young adults who help care for a loved one.

Young caregivers remain the hidden population of the caregiving world, and the YCA will continue to shine a light on those who are often ignored by health care professionals, educators and other professionals.

Events:

Join the YCA for a **FREE** screening of *Like A Mountain: Mindfulness for Young Caregivers* at 7-9 pm EST LIVE at the FOPAC in St. Catharines or VIRTUAL.

Like A Mountain is a 25-minute documentary following Sam, a young caregiver, who embarks on a mindfulness retreat with filmmaker Mike Lang and world-renowned mindfulness expert, Dr. Linda Carlson.

Following the showing, an interactive panel and mindfulness exercise will engage both audiences, live and virtual. Register [here](#).

Those interested in supporting young caregivers can also join the YCA on May 28th as they move through a 24-hour rolling global program, moving through time zones around the world. Celebrate siblings and young caregivers through one or multiple listening and sharing sessions of a *Silent Strength: A Tribute to Siblings and Young Hearts Who Care*. Hour-long sessions run throughout the world all day long! Register [here](#).

For further information, please reach out to Chrissy Sadowski, Strategic Partnerships and Community Engagement Manager at 905-708-4367 or chrissys@youngcaregivers.ca.

Of Interest

Survey For Caregivers From IAM: Pathways to Better Mental Health Outcomes

Institute for Advancements in Mental Health (IAM) is inviting caregivers with lived experience to take part in a new Pathways to Better Mental Health Outcomes survey.

In earlier caregiver surveys, IAM heard clearly that:

- Caregivers experience ongoing emotional strain, often over long periods of time.
- Many caregivers are actively coping, but feel under-supported emotionally and practically.
- There is a strong interest in flexible, personalized support that fits real life, rather than one-size-fits-all approaches.

This new survey builds on that learning and looks more broadly at the full caregiving journey, including early concerns, seeking help, service experiences, daily life, and long-term sustainability.

This survey is not an evaluation of a single program. IAM is interested in understanding:

- What supported you in your caregiving role,
- What made caregiving more difficult,
- What you were trying to accomplish for yourself and your family member, and
- How services, information, and community influences shaped your experience?

The findings will inform future program design and system improvements focused on long-term, practical mental health support.

The survey takes approximately 15 minutes to complete, and all questions are optional. The first 50 people to complete the survey will receive a \$10 digital gift card. If you are interested in completing the survey, you can access it [here](#).

Thank you for helping IAM improve mental-health support for caregivers and families!

Caring in Canada 2026: Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence Releases Report

The Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence, a program of the Azrieli Foundation, has released its Caring in Canada 2026 Survey insights from caregivers and care providers across Canada.

Drawing on responses from more than 2,600 unpaid caregivers and paid care providers across the country, Caring in Canada 2026 finds that caregivers – who underpin Canada’s health system, workforce participation, and economic resilience – are being pushed to their limits.

Key highlights include:

- **Caregiving is adding financial pressures to families:** 49% of caregivers face financial strain, with one in five spending more than \$12,000 annually out of pocket. More than 20% of caregivers report having to stop saving entirely, putting their long-term financial security at risk.
- **Juggling care responsibilities is impacting workforce participation:** 59% of caregivers balance work with care responsibilities, with 36% of working caregivers having their work productivity suffer and facing lost earnings.
- **Caregiving takes a toll on a caregiver’s well-being:** 77% report negative impacts on their well-being, including stress, fatigue and burnout.

The report underscores that caregiving is a social challenge as much as it is an economic one, with direct implications for workforce participation, productivity, and long-term growth.

To read the full report, click [here](#).



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.