CARING FOR CAREGIVERS: BRIDGING THE CARE GAP

Canadian Research Network for Care in the Community Symposium

Janice Keefe, PhD
Professor, Department of Family Studies and Gerontology
Lena Isabel Jodrey Chair in Gerontology and
Director, Nova Scotia Centre on Aging
Mount Saint Vincent University

April 14, 2016
Family/friend Caregivers: Need support to provide care
Profiles of Caregivers

- **Eight million Canadians** aged 15+ provide unpaid care to family members
- **35% of employed Canadians** in 2012, up from 27% in 2009
- Proportion of caregivers men similar to women
- Women provide **more hours** of care per week
- 44% are “**sandwiched**” between caregiving and childrearing

Number of seniors requiring care is projected **to double** by 2031
WHERE CAN I GO FOR SUPPORT?

System of supports for family/friend caregivers is limited and inconsistent; their role as caregiver, ambiguous.

Federal Support

Compassionate Care Benefit
Tax relief
CCB broadening scope
Tax credits are still non-refundable
Provincial responses and add-ons

Unpaid Leave for family caregiving

• Saskatchewan: up to 12 weeks per year for any serious illnesses that require caregiving, ++ 4-week top-up when the employee is in receipt of CCB

• Ontario Family Caregiver Leave (Employment Standard Act).
  – unpaid, job-protected leave up to 8 wks per year per family member.
  – Broader criteria than EI program (serious medical condition as opposed to impending death)

• Quebec also provides up to 12 wks; however, for someone with a palliative care situation.

• All other provinces, with the exception of Alberta, provide up to 8 weeks’ unpaid leave as part of provincial-based compassionate care leave legislated programs.

• UNTIL 2016.......
RECENT CHANGES TO COMPASSIONATE CARE BENEFIT

Effective January 3, 2016, caregivers eligible for up to 26 weeks of CCB (up from six weeks)

Period in which benefits can be taken is expanded to 52 weeks

Benefits can be shared between family members

Government plans to invest $27 million to extend duration of benefits
PROVINCIAL RESPONSES

- Manitoba and Nova Scotia only two provinces planning to integrate 2016 changes.
- Nova Scotia’s CCB extended to 28 weeks.
- Manitoba integrating changes June 1st.
- Federal Government attempting to make it easier for federally regulated workers to have more flexible work conditions, amending the Canada Labour Code.
Additional Direct Financial Support for Caregivers at the Provincial Level

- Manitoba Caregiver Act
- Quebec refundable tax credit for caregivers
- NS Caregiver Benefit
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manitoba</th>
<th>Nova Scotia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caregiver Recognition Act</td>
<td>Caregiver Supports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Caregiver Recognition Day</td>
<td>• $$ to Carers NS to deliver education, navigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advisory Committee on Guidelines for future policies</td>
<td>• Caregiver Benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Primary Caregiver Tax Credit</td>
<td>• Caregiver Tax Credit (non-refundable)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other continuing care services: respite</td>
<td>• Other continuing care services eg Respite</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other Policy Domains to Support Family/friend Caregivers

- **Direct Financial Support:**
  - Caregiver Benefit / Allowance
  - Pension Schemes
  - Reduced penalty for dropout
  - State pays pension credits
- **Taxation System**
  - Inclusion of care expenses
  - Expansion of tax credits
- **Social Security**
  - State pays employment/ sickness insurance
- **Health/Continuing Care**
  - Respite care / Home care
  - Recognize caregivers as a client
  - Assess caregiver needs
- **Employment/Labour**
  - Leave policy – EI
  - Labour standards policy
- **Health Human Resources**
  - Improve working conditions
  - Training and standards
  - Focus on recruitment and retention

Recognize that any policy occurs in a particular context:

- Home and continuing care services
- Other income security and labour standards important
Employed Caregivers

- Most caregivers aged 19 to 70 are employed.
- Most of these work full time (69% women, 72% men).
- Twice as many women as men work part time (18% women, 7% men).
- Employed women caregivers spend significantly more time providing care than men: on average, 9.5 hr/week for women and 6.9 hr/week for men.

Figure 3. Proportion of employed caregivers ages 19-70 reporting care-related employment consequences, Canada, 2012

Source: Fast, Lero, DeMarco et al. (2014).
Taxonomy of the financial costs of caregiving for employers

Employers’ economic costs

Direct costs
- Turnover
- Absenteeism
- Additional benefit costs

Indirect costs
- Lost productivity
- Impact on coworkers and supervisors
- Impact on clients and customers

Discretionary costs
- Workplace programs and support for employees

Source: Keating, Lero, Fast et al. (2013).
CANADIAN EMPLOYERS FOR CAREGIVERS PLAN

WHEN WORK AND CARE COLLIDE

• Canadian Employers for Caregivers Panel
• Summer-Fall 2014, consultation with over 100 Canadian employers
• Report released in January 2015 highlights:
  – best practices;
  – practical suggestions on how to become a more caregiver-friendly workplace; and
  – toolbox of valuable information and resources for employers and employees
They know caregiving is happening, but do not necessarily appreciate the magnitude or duration

They do not have formal caregiver policies

They want to “do the right thing”, but are uncertain of the cost

Best practices offered by employers:

- Be flexible in your approach
- Be creative and learn from others
- Leverage technology
- Remove barriers
- Enter into discussion with your employees (two-way communication)
CREATIVE SOLUTIONS ABOUND

• Work where you must (e.g. a location closer to the care need)

• Work when you're needed (e.g. annualized hours)

• Learn what's available (e.g. Employee Family Assistance Program)

• Pick what you need (e.g. "virtual wallet" of benefits)

• Go home (e.g. work from country of origin)

TECHNOLOGY IS A GREAT ENabler FOR SOME WORKPLACES
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

1. Assess the need – engage your employees

2. Consider the benefits to your organization and your employees (increased engagement, reduced costs)

3. Explore the resources (such as the resource toolbox included in the report)

4. Lead by providing a tone from the top and manage by empowering HR and training managers

5. Be flexible in the approach
• Keeping Family/friend Caregiving on the Agenda

Mobilizing Action – Integrating Action Plan

Propose 8 Strategic directions including:
By 2016
• PT identify family caregivers as key elements in Senior Strategy
• Caregiver support educational programs within 10 patient disease
By 2017
• Ontario Caregiver recognition day – first Tuesday in April
• Health care providers have access to resources to support caregivers
• One provincial body examining hub and spoke approach
• Tax incentives for employers

• Keeping Family/friend Caregiving on the Agenda

- Launch of DemandAPlan.ca in 2015
- Support for unpaid caregivers

- One of four pillars in Ryerson’s Institute on Aging National Senior Strategy is Support for Caregivers
Family/friend Caregivers:
Need support to provide care
Don't ask

But yes, I could use some help
Contact Information:
• E-mail: Janice.Keefe@msvu.ca
• Telephone: 902-457-6466
• Website: www.msvu.ca/nsca