Senior Caregivers in Canada

Caregiving is a part of family life, and family caregivers play a crucial role in providing, arranging and sometimes paying for care for their loved ones. While there has been progress over the past decade in recognizing the importance of family caregiving, senior caregivers are often overlooked despite accounting for more than 1 in 8 caregivers in 2012.¹ Senior caregivers make unique and valuable contributions to family caregiving, though they can also have unique needs resulting from their advanced age. It can be a complex caregiving experience, as many provide care while managing their other responsibilities in workplaces and communities across Canada.

### Seniors make significant contributions to caregiving in Canada

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage of Seniors Providing Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2012, nearly 1 million seniors in Canada (966,000) provided care to a family member or friend with a long-term health condition, disability or aging need (12% of all caregivers).²

In 2012, senior caregivers were most likely to spend the longest hours per week providing care, partly due to their higher likelihood of caring for a spouse (spouses typically require greater time commitments for care).³ Nearly one-quarter (23%) of senior caregivers provided 20 or more hours of care per week, approximately twice the rate of carers aged 45 to 54 (13%) and young carers aged 15 to 24 (10%).⁴

In 2017, 14.2% of seniors were in the paid labour market (18.7% of men, 10.4% of women), up from only 6% in 2000.⁵

### Many senior caregivers balance their caregiving with paid work and volunteering

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage of Seniors Working</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2015, 5.9% of seniors worked the full year, full-time, up from 3.4% in 1995.⁶

In 2013, nearly 3 in 10 seniors aged 75 and older (27%) were volunteers.⁷

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Caregiving can have an impact on the well-being of senior carers

Research shows that caregiving can have a positive impact on the well-being of caregivers themselves, providing them with a sense of personal growth and renewed meaning and purpose in life, assurance and greater awareness of the care being provided, and a sense of “giving back” to someone who has cared for them.9

Caregiving can also have a negative impact on the well-being of caregivers. Nearly 3 in 10 people (28%) who provided care in 2012 said that they found it “somewhat or very” stressful, and 1 in 5 (19%) said that their “physical and emotional health suffered” as a result of their caregiving responsibilities.10

Learn more about seniors and family relationships in Canada:

- A Snapshot of Population Aging and Intergenerational Relationships in Canada (statistical resource)
- A Snapshot of Grandparents in Canada (statistical resource)
- Grandparent Health and Family Well-Being (Transition article)

Learn more about family caregiving in Canada:

- A Snapshot of Family Caregiving and Work in Canada (statistical resource)
- Women, Caregiving and Work in Canada (infographic)
- Family Caregiving in Canada: A Fact of Life and a Human Right (Transition article)

In Focus explores diverse topics of relevance to families and family life, each providing a detailed exploration of several key statistics in a practical, single-page format. Each edition highlights select data on a specific subtopic in a concise and convenient format, and is intended for all who study, serve and support families in Canada.