

Caregiver Recognition Act
REPORT
For the period, 2013-2015

Manitoba 





Manitoba Health, Healthy Living and Seniors

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A Message from the **Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors**

In June 2011, the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba proclaimed the *Caregiver Recognition Act*, becoming the first province in Canada to have legislation recognizing caregivers. In proclaiming the act, the province made a long-term commitment to increase support and recognition for the valuable contributions of Manitoba caregivers.

In April, 2012, the Caregiver Advisory Committee was established. In June 2013, the Manitoba government released the first *Caregiver Recognition Act* Report. I am pleased to report that since then, the Manitoba government has continued to build a foundation to address issues that are important to caregivers.

We continue to publicly recognize the contributions of Manitoba caregivers through an annual celebration. Caregiver Recognition Day, celebrated on the first Tuesday of April, helps to create public awareness of caregiver needs and supports. At the 2015 event, I was pleased to announce a 10 per cent increase to the Primary Caregivers' Tax Credit.

The need to support caregivers is increasingly important. It is very likely that each one of us will be a caregiver at some point in our life. Caregivers play an essential role in families and as part of the fabric that supports care receivers.

Let us recognize the valuable contributions of caregivers and continue to work together to support the health and well-being of caregivers as part of Manitoba's age-friendly vision. I would also like to use this opportunity to emphasize my appreciation to those that support caregivers.

On behalf of the Manitoba government, I commend all Manitoba caregivers and all of the partners that work with us to advance this important work.

Sincerely,



Honourable Deanne Crothers
Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors

Introduction

In 2011, the *Caregiver Recognition Act* received royal assent. This legislation mandated a progress report every two years on the needs of and supports available to Manitoba caregivers. This is the second *Caregiver Recognition Act* Report tabled by the Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors. It provides an overview for the two-year period, 2013 to 2015.

The Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors tasks the Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat (SHAS) to lead the coordination of activities surrounding the act. The achievements represent a collection of efforts by a variety of stakeholders, ranging from individual caregivers and community organizations to provincial and national government ministries.

Increasing numbers of Manitobans are finding themselves providing support to one or more family members, friends or neighbours. Many people in these relationships do not recognize themselves as primary caregivers. They identify themselves as children, spouses, parents, grandchildren, siblings, friends or neighbours. Regardless, these “informal” caregivers provide a pivotal function that underpins the formal service provision of the health care system.

This report reflects the importance of these valuable caregiving roles. It also highlights work underway to create greater awareness about being a caregiver, as well as the needs of and supports available to caregivers.



Progress Summary

The *Caregiver Recognition Act* legislates the Manitoba government to promote and consider its general principles regarding caregiver supports. To that end, the Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat has continued to lead efforts on behalf of the Province to increase awareness of the issues facing Manitoba caregivers.

The Manitoba government has over 14,000 employees and is leading the way in supporting employed caregivers. SHAS has met with government departments, such as the Civil Service Commission to discuss the impacts of caregiving in the workplace, and to identify ways to create supportive workplaces. An Interdepartmental Working Group was established to enhance communication across government by sharing information about and to explore opportunities to partner on caregiver related initiatives. A Civil Servant Caregiver Information Email Network was created to distribute information on caregiver issues, resources and employee benefits. Furthermore, Civil Servant Caregiver Information Sessions were conducted to educate government employees about services available to older Manitobans and caregivers. The Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat also wrote an educative article for employee caregivers in *Wavelength*, a Manitoba government Service Quality Partners newsletter.

The Manitoba government is also providing leadership in supporting employed caregivers. The Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat contracted Rupert's Land Caregiver Services to develop a resource to educate employed caregivers about supports, and identify collaborative opportunities to implement the tool. Rupert's Land Caregiver Services is a Manitoba-based caregiving organization that supports family caregivers assisting older adults in the community.

The Manitoba government, represented by SHAS, co-chairs the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Working Group on Caregiving with the federal government, represented by the Seniors and Pensions Policy Secretariat, Employment and Social Development Canada. In early 2015, the working group undertook a half day workshop, in partnership with the Human Resources Professionals Association. Approximately 185 participants from across Canada participated, including employers, employees, human resources professionals, students, and organizational stakeholders. The event explored emerging trends and major themes related to caregiving, such as employment arrangements and supportive policies. The working group created two brochures on caregiving - one for employers and one for employees. Ongoing work is underway to prepare materials to assist people in planning for the caregiving role.

In furthering the act, a multitude of stakeholders have been consulted over the past two years. A unique roundtable was hosted with various stakeholders, including caregivers, service providers and government departments from the aging, chronic disease and youth fields. Building on feedback obtained through the 2011 Provincial Caregiver Consultation, the roundtable further explored the impact of caregiving on the person providing care. It brought together organizations that support caregivers and identified common issues, solutions and areas for collaboration to enhance supports for caregivers. What was heard has informed the description and analysis of caregivers' needs for this report.

Public education on caregiving issues was provided through a Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors' column in a number of Manitoba publications, including *Seniors Scope*, *Lifestyles 55+*, and the *Indo-Canadian Telegram*. In addition, SHAS provided presentations to caregivers and organizations in the community.

Of note, the Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors announced a 10 per cent increase to the Manitoba Primary Caregiver Tax Credit at the 2015 Caregiver Recognition Day. With this increase, caregivers are eligible to claim \$1,400 for up to three recipients of care, for a maximum annual tax credit of \$4,200, fully refundable to the caregiver, effective in the 2015 tax year.

Caregiver Recognition Day

Caregiver Recognition Day is celebrated annually on the first Tuesday in April. On this day, the Minister reaffirms Manitoba's recognition and support of caregivers and proclaims the following:

- caregivers are important to the well-being of Manitobans and Manitoba communities
- caregivers should be acknowledged as individuals with their own needs within and beyond the caring role
- recognition and awareness of caregivers should be increased
- the valuable social and economic contributions of caregivers to society should be acknowledged
- caregivers should be treated with dignity and respect
- support for caregivers should be timely, responsive, appropriate and accessible

The Manitoba government promotes the celebration of Caregiver Recognition Day throughout the province. SHAS partners with the Manitoba Caregiver Coalition to support organizations and enhance their capacity to recognize caregivers in their own communities. The health and well-being of caregivers is integral to creating age-friendly environments.

Caregiver Advisory Committee

The Caregiver Advisory Committee is an advisory body to the Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors. It provides information about caregivers and caregiver supports, including programs, services, policies and legislation. It also promotes recognition and awareness of caregivers.

The committee reviews the latest research, examines issues, identifies priorities, discusses potential solutions, and provides recommendations to the minister. Members take into consideration the nature of caregiving required, including geographic, income, and cultural factors as they relate to caregiver recognition, information and supports, and the health and well-being of caregivers. The Caregiver Advisory Committee is integral to informing government's work on this front.

The Needs of Caregivers

Since caregiving has only recently been recognized as a priority, promising practices are scarce. However, Manitoba has conducted a thorough examination of caregiving issues through scans of current literature and research, communication with academic and field experts, and consultation with the Caregiver Advisory Committee, caregivers and service providers. Five key themes have emerged:

- Caregivers have differing information requirements at various stages of caregiving. They also have a variety of preferences for how they obtain information. Caregivers may not be aware of existing information and may require assistance to navigate complex systems, eligibility criteria and application processes.
- Family members and friends of primary caregivers also have information needs. They too require education to best support the work of the primary caregiver.
- The caregiver role may be accompanied with rewards as well as struggles and stresses. Competing and intense demands may leave caregivers with little time or resources to pursue activities that contribute to their own health and well-being.
- Caregiving is not a one size fits all journey. Each circumstance requires a unique plan and approach. The caregiving experience may be affected by factors such as the nature of caregiving required, family and care receiver dynamics, geography, income, education, cultural practices and expectations, and employment.
- Employed caregivers may experience a unique set of challenges, as the demands of caregiving compete with the demands of employment. Caregivers who are employed may be compelled to adjust work schedules and arrive late, leave early, miss days, reduce the number of hours worked, not accept promotions, change or even leave employment.

Most Manitobans may become a caregiver at one point or another. Many times they do not recognize they are eligible for support because they ascribe these tasks to their role as spouse, child, parent, etc. Details about care receivers are highlighted in Figure 1. Manitoba and Canadian caregiver statistics are outlined in Figure 2.

Figure 1

Care Receivers

- 28 per cent experienced age-related needs, 11 per cent cancer, nine per cent cardio-vascular disease, seven per cent mental illness, and six per cent Alzheimer's disease and dementia.
- 73 per cent relied on help from family and friends in the form of transportation, 51 per cent required meal preparation / cleaning, and 45 per cent required home maintenance / outdoor work.
- About half of those who received care from family / friends also received care from professionals.
- 25 per cent were ages 75 plus, 13 per cent were 65-74, and 10 per cent were under age 25.
- 56 per cent were female.
- Over 47 per cent were parents or parents-in-law, 16 per cent were friends or neighbours, 13 per cent were grandparents, 10 per cent siblings or extended family members, eight per cent spouses, and five per cent were children.

Statistics Canada 2012

Figure 2

Caregiving in Manitoba

- Manitobans (33 per cent) have the second highest level of caregiving in Canada.
- Winnipeg had the seventh highest percentage of individuals providing care compared to other Canadian census metropolitan areas.
- Winnipeg caregivers (and three other Canadian cities) were more likely than those in other census metropolitan areas to provide care to a family member or friend suffering from a chronic health issue or disability as compared to aging problems.
- Forty-four per cent of Manitoba caregivers provided two to nine hours of care; 25 per cent spent one hour or less, and 21 per cent spent 10 hours or more providing care to a family member or friend each week.
- Ninety-two per cent of Manitoba caregivers did not receive financial support from government programs, 91 per cent did not receive federal tax credits, and 90 per cent did not receive financial support from family or friends for providing care to relatives or friends with a long-term illness, disability or aging needs.
- About 15 per cent of Manitoba caregivers had a household income less than \$40,000.

Caregiving in Canada

- Of those Canadians who reported caregiving activities during the preceding twelve months, 57 per cent of caregivers provided care to one person, 27 per cent cared for two and 15 per cent cared for three or more family members or friends.
- Ninety per cent of caregivers provided emotional support, and 97 per cent of caregivers ensured everything was fine by visiting or telephoning.
- Over 25 per cent of caregivers were “sandwiched” between caregiving for parents (in-laws) and raising children under 18, with most being women 35 to 44 years of age.
- While nine in 10 caregivers felt the experience of providing care was rewarding, 51 per cent of caregivers providing care to children and 46 per cent providing care to spouses reported at least five symptoms of psychological distress.
- Among employed family caregivers of a spouse or child, one in four had reduced hours of work due to caregiving responsibilities.

Statistics Canada 2012

Supports for Caregivers

To meet the legislative requirement for a description of caregiver supports available to Manitobans, the Manitoba government has posted the Inventory of Services and Supports for Caregivers in Manitoba online at www.manitoba.ca/shas. This listing includes the following:

- caregiver organizations
- counselling and mental health services
- financial benefits
- hospice and palliative care
- legal information
- respite
- support groups
- well-being and health organizations
- information and referral services, as well as online resources and reading materials

Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat

The Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat (SHAS), on behalf of the Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors', is responsible for meeting the mandates within the *Caregiver Recognition Act*. This includes providing support to the Caregiver Advisory Committee. Additionally, SHAS promotes the health and well-being of older Manitobans through leadership on the Age-Friendly Manitoba Initiative, and works across departments to ensure the contributions and concerns of older Manitobans are reflected through legislation, policy and programs.

SHAS produces two publications, in both English and French that support caregivers:

- A Guide for the Caregiver
- The Manitoba Seniors' Guide

In 2014, both publications were updated to reflect the growing need for caregiver supports. These publications are available in both hard copy and online, and are distributed at presentations, community health fairs and other events for seniors.

Between April 2013 to March 2015, 39,022 English Seniors' Guides, 88 French Seniors' Guides, 5,844 English Caregiver Guides, and 244 French Caregiver Guides were distributed in response to calls on the Seniors Information Line, email and online requests, and requests from walk-in clients. Many more were distributed by other senior-serving organizations.

Seniors, family members, caregivers and professionals can access caregiving information province-wide through the Seniors Information Line:

- phone **204-945-6565** or toll-free at **1-800-665-6565**
- by e-mail at seniors@gov.mb.ca
- or by website at www.manitoba.ca/shas

Between April 2013 and March 2015, the Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat answered 8,212 phone inquiries regarding a variety of issues affecting seniors, including caregiving.

Conclusion

Manitoba continues to be a leader in recognizing and addressing caregiving issues. Much has been accomplished over the past two years. Manitoba has held annual caregiver recognition celebrations, increased the provincial Primary Caregiver Tax Credit, and collaborated with numerous stakeholders to further understand and increase the recognition of the roles and needs of caregivers, as well as available supports.

As the only jurisdiction in Canada to have a legislated recognition act for caregivers, the Manitoba government has demonstrated leadership in moving forward on increasing awareness of, and addressing, caregiver issues. Manitoba continues to advance this work with the advice of the Caregiver Advisory Committee and through the guidance of the Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat. The resulting collaborations are leading to many new ideas and opportunities.

Since its implementation in 2009, caregivers in Manitoba have received close to \$116 million through the Primary Caregiver Tax Credit. The Manitoba government is committed to helping Manitobans safely remain in their own homes, supporting caregivers and fostering strong age-friendly communities.