

Caregivers in Canada need more support

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It's time to strengthen support for the 28% of people who provide care for an ageing family member, friend or neighbour in Canada, argues an editorial in *CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal)*.

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"Our ability to support informal caregiving remains one of Canada's most pressing health care and societal issues," says Dr. Nathan Stall, associate editor, CMAJ.

The pool of caregivers in Canada is shrinking as the ageing population increases, while the need for caregiving will increase.

Caregiving has become increasingly demanding and stressful as many untrained people provide medical and nursing care, help with daily living and navigate the complexities of the health and long-term care system. Many caregivers are stressed, which negatively affects their mental and [physical health](#) and can lead to increased risk of death.

More than one-third (35%) of the population is both working and providing caregiver support, with more women juggling both roles.

As well, caregivers often provide [financial support](#) to their loved ones and may miss out on full-time employment, raises and other monetary benefits. We must support these people by protecting caregivers from financial and retirement insecurity.

While financial [support](#) exists, mainly through tax breaks, it is difficult to access and varies by province.

"Addressing this pressing [health care](#) and societal issue is undoubtedly complex, but innovative, effective and potentially scalable programs and policies already exist in pockets across the country. It's time Canada cared more about its caregivers," he concludes.

More information: *Canadian Medical Association Journal* (2019).

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