



Supporting Family Caregivers in Newfoundland & Labrador

- Fact Sheet -

Caregivers from across Newfoundland and Labrador recommend that three main areas be addressed in order to meet caregiver needs in the province:

Awareness, Recognition & Information

- ❖ Promote increased community awareness about caregiving and caregiver needs, including burnout prevention.
- ❖ Ensure caregivers are recognized as key partners in the formal health and community services system.
- ❖ Respect the limits of caregivers' energy and time. Seek ways to limit the expectation placed on caregivers to advocate for their loved ones or themselves, to access services or information or to bridge the gaps when buildings, services or any other aspects of life are not accessible to people with disabilities.
- ❖ Develop educational opportunities for caregivers to increase skills related to the provision of personal care and including self-care.
- ❖ Create local community-based caregiver organizations where caregivers can seek information and support that is not directly connected to subsidized services.
- ❖ Develop a detailed, user-friendly information package to assist caregivers "navigate the system."
- ❖ Improve communication between service providers and caregivers. Include caregivers and receivers in the development of care plans.
- ❖ Involve caregivers in discussions about initiatives that promote recognition and awareness of issues related to caregiving.
- ❖ Bereavement support is extremely important for caregivers when so much of their time has been devoted to their caregiving responsibilities.

Increased Financial Support & Funding

- ❖ Explore ways to fund family-provided care, examine the potential for provision of a caregiver allowance, consider alternate financial supports such as tax credits and EI benefits, determine pension benefits using a caregiver drop out clause similar to that for child-rearing.
- ❖ Increase funding available for people being cared for at home through subsidization of medications, medical equipment and treatments, home support services and other non-medical services provided at home.
- ❖ Offer the same level of subsidizations for people of all ages.
- ❖ Consult with caregivers about programs and policies that will improve financial supports.

Respite Options

- ❖ Broaden the working definition of respite to include anything that brings the caregiver peace of mind. Recognize that no single service or support will provide relief to all caregivers.
- ❖ Assess caregiver needs separately from the needs of those they care for. Provide services in a way that addresses both sets of needs. Ensure that needs and financial assessments are as respectful and non-intrusive as possible.
- ❖ Reduce wait lists.
- ❖ Increase accessibility to all services and resources.
- ❖ Increase the availability of transportation, especially in rural areas.
- ❖ Attend to issues related to accessibility of buildings to ensure that caregivers and care receivers are able to participate in all aspects of the life of their communities.
- ❖ Explore and support all levels of potential respite, increase the variety of programs available by developing & supporting innovative, cost-effective programs such as friendly visiting by high school students, or low-cost yardwork services.
- ❖ Promote community awareness of the need for informal (neighbours, businesses, etc.) supports for caregivers.
- ❖ Improve standards of care for all services, from personal care homes to nursing homes, to home support agencies. If the quality of these services is improved, caregivers will be more likely to experience peace of mind.
- ❖ Increase the flexibility of programs and services, so they can be accessed on a more efficient, as-needed basis, use may vary day-to-day, or week-to-week.
- ❖ Reduce gaps in programs and services, especially in rural areas, for people such as those dealing with mental health issues, adults with intellectual disabilities, and older adults.
- ❖ Consult with caregivers about their respite needs.
- ❖ Improve conditions for home support workers in order to reduce turnover which often leads to more work for caregivers.

Developed by the **Caregivers Out of Isolation Project**. Project Partners: Alzheimer Society of Newfoundland & Labrador, Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, Canadian Mental Health Association, Canadian Red Cross, Cerebral Palsy Association, CNIB, Independent Living Resource Centre, Mount Pearl Seniors Independence Group, Newfoundland & Labrador Association for Community Living, Newfoundland & Labrador Department of Health & Community Services, Newfoundland & Labrador Women's Institutes, The Salvation Army - Newfoundland East Division, Seniors Resource Centre of Newfoundland & Labrador, Victorian Order of Nurses, and members of Regional Caregiver Networks in St. Anthony, the Humber Valley region, Springdale, Stephenville, Grand Falls – Windsor, Peterview, Twillingate, Clarenville & the Avalon East region. These policy recommendations were developed in consultation with caregivers across Newfoundland and Labrador.

Seniors Resource Centre of Newfoundland & Labrador

280 Torbay Road, Suite W100

St. John's, NL A1A 3W8

or call the Caregiver Line in St. John's 726-2370. toll free at 1-888-571-2273