



THE ONTARIO

**caregiver**  
ORGANIZATION

ESSENTIAL CARE  
PARTNER SUPPORT  
HUB

# Caregivers are Essential in **Home and Community Care**



**Four million family caregivers across Ontario provide an estimated 75% of the care in the system. They play a critical role in providing unpaid emotional, physical, or cognitive support to their family member, partner, or friend. Caregivers are essential partners on the care team.**

Evidence demonstrates that in home and community care, the inclusion of caregivers is critical in fostering improved quality of care, client outcomes, and overall health system outcomes. The involvement of caregivers in community-based care is especially critical given the emphasis on decreasing hospital stays and the shift to care in the community (Parmar et al., 2019). In Ontario, 42.1% of caregivers for clients receiving long-stay homecare services are experiencing distress and spend the equivalent of a full-time job providing care (CIHI, 2023).

Homecare providers can play a pivotal role in connecting caregivers to support to prevent burn-out, as well as enable caregiver inclusion to improve client care outcomes.

The Ontario Caregiver Organization's [Essential Care Partner Support Hub](#) helps healthcare settings adopt and implement caregiver inclusive and supportive programs, practices and policies.

Essential care partner programs and practices are a way for healthcare settings to formally **identify** caregivers, **include** them as part of the care team, and link them to **support**. These practices benefit both the caregiver and the care team, making it easier to provide care, and are enabled through policy and procedures in an organization.

**Essential Care Partners** provide physical, psychological and emotional support, as deemed important by the patient. This care can include support in decision making, care coordination and continuity of care. Essential care partners can include family members, close friends or other caregivers and are identified by the patient or substitute decision-maker.



## 3 steps your organization can take to advance caregiver inclusion



**Ask** clients to identify their caregiver(s) and document them as a person of importance in the client file



**Educate** your team about the important role caregivers play in client health outcomes and how to include them as partners in care



**Connect** caregivers to support by offering caregivers resources and tools for their own well-being

## NOT SURE WHERE TO START?

Contact the [Essential Care Partner Support Hub team](#) at [ecpsupporthub@ontariocaregiver.ca](mailto:ecpsupporthub@ontariocaregiver.ca)

### The Ontario Caregiver Organization

180 Dundas Street West, Suite 1425  
Toronto, ON M5G 1Z8, Canada

T 416-362-2273

E [info@ontariocaregiver.ca](mailto:info@ontariocaregiver.ca)

24/7 Helpline 1-833-416-2273

[ontariocaregiver.ca](http://ontariocaregiver.ca)

X: [@caregiverON](https://twitter.com/caregiverON)

Facebook: [@caregiverON](https://www.facebook.com/caregiverON)

Instagram: [@OntarioCaregiver](https://www.instagram.com/OntarioCaregiver)

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