



January 2025 Newsletter

At the OCC

Upcoming Provincial Election is an Opportunity to Make the Voices of Caregivers Heard

Premier Doug Ford has now called a [provincial election](#), to be held on **Thursday, February 27th**. Elections are important opportunities to raise awareness among decision-makers about the struggles faced by caregivers. It also presents a significant opportunity to advocate for changes to laws, policies and resourcing to make a better Ontario for caregivers.

The Ontario Caregiver Coalition will be actively participating in this election, and will be providing you with information and opportunities to get involved. Please keep an eye out for our special edition newsletters and our emails!

And if you have friends or colleagues who are interested in making change for caregivers, and would like to receive information throughout the election, we would be happy to add them to our mailing list. Please encourage them to reach out to us at ontariocaregivercoalitionocc@gmail.com.

Member Initiatives

2025 Ontario Budget Consultations: OCC Member Submissions

Each year, as part of the process of developing its annual budget, the Ontario Government opens consultations. They ask the public to complete a survey, prepare a formal submission, or participate in public hearings. This is a process in which the OCC participates each year, as well as many of our members.

This year, the submission from the [Alzheimer Society of Ontario](#) focuses on four priorities, aimed at preparing Ontario for the advent of disease-modifying treatments. First, renewing Ontario's Dementia Strategy. Next, creating a central body with responsibility for providing strategic direction for dementia care across Ontario. Their third priority is providing additional funding to the [First Link program](#), which provides direct supports to Ontarians with dementia

and their caregivers. Lastly, providing funding to ensure that all Ontarians living with or at risk of dementia have access to team-based primary and specialist care.

The submission from [AdvantAge Ontario](#) takes as its central theme the importance of building a stronger system for senior care in this province. To meet this goal, AdvantAge identifies three priorities: stabilizing the long-term care system, including by addressing the staffing crisis; supporting the unique role of non-profit providers in the senior care sector; and increasing supports so that seniors can age in the community, in accordance with their wishes.

The submission of the [Ontario Community Support Association](#) outlines the steps needed to address the urgent challenges facing the home and community care sector, including expanding service capacity and improving workforce retention. Among its key recommendations, OCSA calls for a 5% funding increase to expand access to essential services, such as personal support, Meals on Wheels, transportation, and other community-based supports that allow individuals to remain in their homes; and a 3% wage increase for frontline workers, who provide critical care to vulnerable populations, ensuring fair compensation and supporting the sector's ability to retain experienced staff and deliver high-quality care.

[Who Cares: A New Podcast from the Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence About Caregiving in Canada](#)

The Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence has announced a new podcast, [Who Cares](#), highlighting the stories of caregivers across Canada.

Hosted by caregiver Melissa Ngo, each episode explores the unseen realities of providing care in Canada. In the first episode, she shares her own experience, and addresses the anticipated increase in caregiving across Canada. Each of the episodes features a new guest, and gets into how their stories relate to existing caregiver issues.

By sharing these stories, the podcast aims to highlight the tireless work of caregivers and offer its own policy solutions for caregiver support.

Who Cares is an eight-part series, with episodes releasing from January 8 to February 19 of this year. The podcast can be found on all major streaming platforms, including [Spotify](#) and [Apple Podcasts](#).

Opportunities to Participate in Caregiver Focused Research

McMaster University Study on End-Stage Dementia and After Caregiving

If you were a caregiver for a loved one with dementia who has passed away, the McMaster University Aging Swallowing Research Lab is looking for you to share your perspective. The lab is [conducting a survey on the experience of bereaved caregivers whose care recipient was living with dementia](#).

You are eligible to participate if you were an unpaid caregiver for a loved one living with dementia, you provided care for at least two months before your recipient's passing, provided care in the last two years, and were over 18 during that time. Your participation will involve completing a 15 to 20 minute online survey.

Sharing your insights could lead to a better understanding of caregiving responsibilities during end-stage dementia, particularly in managing symptoms like difficulty swallowing. Your participation could provide insight into the emotional, physical, and logistical challenges caregivers face during this time, and how perspectives on caregiving can change after the passing of a loved one.

If you are eligible and interested in participating, [please click the link here to take the survey](#). You may be compensated \$20 for your participation.

Of Interest

Preparing to Care - Report from the Ontario Caregiver Organization on Prospective Caregivers

The Ontario Caregiver Organization (OCO) has released its newest report, [Preparing to Care: Perspectives of Ontarians who expect to be a caregiver in the next 5 years](#).

According to the OCO's [2024 Spotlight Report](#), by 2029, as many as 9 million Ontarians may be in a position where they need to provide care. Their newest report examines what this increase in caregiver demand might look like.

Preparing to Care projects that the number of unpaid caregivers may increase from 4 million to 6.5 million by 2029. Further, it notes that an additional 2.7 million Ontarians facing caregiving demands have already determined they cannot or will not become caregivers.

Those who said they wouldn't take on the role stated they don't feel confident handling the responsibility, whether emotionally, physically, or financially. Others believe that existing healthcare services will be enough to provide the care needed for their loved ones.

While 94% of prospective caregivers indicated that it is important to prepare for caregiving duties, less than half have made any plans at all. Additionally, 61% said that they have not done any financial planning for their prospective role. While caregiving expenses currently average \$640 a month, only 1 in 4 responded that they'd be able to afford up to \$500.

Ontario's healthcare system is expected to face an unprecedented surge in demand over the next five years. This will place growing pressure on unpaid caregivers who, as stated in the report, provide 75% of care in Ontario. The figures presented in the report show the urgent need for accessible and substantial caregiver supports.

If you are a current or prospective caregiver in need of information or help, please visit the [Ontario Caregiver Organization's website](#).

The views expressed by the Ontario Caregiver Coalition, the publishers of this newsletter, are independent and do not reflect those of the Ontario Caregiver Organization.



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