



# EASTERN ONTARIO CAREGIVER STRATEGY

Created in collaboration between Champlain Community Support Network,  
Champlain Dementia Network, and United Way East Ontario



Champlain  
Dementia Network



United Way  
East Ontario

## A Note About the Pandemic

Even before COVID-19 hit our region, unpaid caregivers faced significant challenges supporting those they care for, and themselves, on a daily basis.

The Canadian Institute for Health Information indicated that one in three caregivers in Canada are distressed, “which can include feelings of anger or depression or the inability to continue with caring activities.” This research also shows that unpaid, distressed caregivers are providing the equivalent care of a full time job: 38 hours per week. And this was before COVID-19 reached our communities.

But now, in the depths of the pandemic, those challenges have been exacerbated, and have added further burden to thousands of caregivers across Canada and the people who rely on them each day.

**While the consultations for the development of this strategy were completed before the pandemic, we know that COVID-19 has increased isolation and burnout while decreasing respite opportunities for caregivers.** We do not yet know the extent of COVID-19’s impact on caregivers, but we do know that the circumstances are not heartening.

Many in-person programs have had to close their doors to reduce the spread of COVID-19, which leaves many caregivers on the hook for more intense, constant care. We know this is not sustainable.



The good news is that partners involved with United Way East Ontario’s COVID-19 Community Response Table, the City of Ottawa’s Human Needs Task Force, regional COVID-19 response tables and all levels of government have been collaborating to address these issues.

Since March, existing programs have adapted to new realities and new programs have stepped in to address the gaps. We know our communities have the strength of nimble and adaptable volunteers, partners, frontline agencies and community developers who are working together to rapidly deliver services in our greatest time of need.

For the Champlain Dementia Network, Champlain Community Support Network and United Way East Ontario, we are committed to adapting to the current environment while addressing the needs of caregivers across our region. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, the Eastern Ontario Caregiver Strategy provides a strong foundation we can build upon to support caregivers and their families now, and over the long term.

The recommendations in this strategy will help those who care for the most vulnerable during and well after the pandemic.

While the pandemic delayed the release of this strategy, we have not wavered in taking care of those who need us most. **This work is critical, and it does not stop.**

Thank you for your support.

# Acknowledgements

United Way East Ontario, the Champlain Dementia Network and Champlain Community Support Network are proud to deliver our region's first coordinated approach to supporting informal caregivers—the family members, friends and neighbours who provide regular care to aging seniors in need of support with daily living.

The Eastern Ontario<sup>1</sup> Caregiver Strategy is built upon feedback from local caregivers.<sup>2</sup> We would like to acknowledge, with sincere appreciation, all the caregivers who took the time to respond to surveys and attend in-person agency focus groups, large community consultations or one-on-one interviews. Your shared personal experiences and perspectives are foundational to this document and its prescribed action plan.

The Eastern Ontario Caregiver Strategy would also not have been possible without the support and contributions of many agency and institutional partners, the names of which are noted below. We are deeply grateful for the contributions they have made, each of which were integral to the creation of this strategy. Moving forward, these same organizations will play a pivotal role in ensuring this strategy becomes an effective plan of action—and so, we thank them in advance for the work that lies ahead.

Together with our partners, we are committed to better understanding and addressing the needs of caregivers in our communities. The Eastern Ontario Caregiver Strategy provides us with a common set of objectives, enabling us to achieve more positive outcomes for our region's informal caregivers and their families.

## With special thanks to:

- Beth Donovan Hospice
- City of Ottawa
- Local Health Integration Network
- Madawaska Valley Hospice Palliative Care
- Marianhill
- Maxville Manor
- National Association of Federal Retirees (Ottawa branch)
- Ottawa Public Health
- Parkinson Canada
- Renfrew County and District Health Unit
- Rural Ottawa South Support Services
- Social Planning Council of Ottawa (Ethno-Cultural Seniors group)
- The Council on Aging of Ottawa
- The Dementia Society of Ottawa and Renfrew County
- The Good Companions
- Western Champlain Health Link
- Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre

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<sup>1</sup> There is no common definition for our regional boundaries. Therefore, within the context of the report, we use the term "Eastern Ontario" and "region" to roughly refer to the area east of Ontario Highway 41, excluding the Kingston–Brockville corridor. That said, the partners appreciate that people live in communities and are not necessarily aware of or restricted by our institutionally defined boundaries. Given their location and need, they frequently travel across township, municipal, health authority and social service delivery boundaries. In order to provide better care and support for caregivers across our region, our aim is to coordinate efforts as seamlessly as possible.

<sup>2</sup> All quotes included in this document have been anonymized in order to protect caregivers' privacy and that of their families.

## Message From the Partners

The demographic profile of Ontario is changing rapidly. In 2016, Statistics Canada's Census of Population indicated for the first time that the percentage of people in Ontario over the age of 65 was greater than the percentage of Ontarians under the age of 15.<sup>3</sup> As a province, we are aging fast.

The continuing care needs of Ontario's aging population is placing significant pressure on our province's public healthcare and social services systems. The Conference Board of Canada reports that "spending on continuing care for seniors will increase from \$29.3 billion in 2011 to \$184.2 billion in 2046." Already, we are seeing rising healthcare costs, longer wait times for essential services, and an increase in "hallway medicine"<sup>4</sup> due to bed shortages.

And while many Ontario seniors are living comfortably, many others are faced with a poor quality of life. This is particularly true for elderly female widows over the age of 75, who are most likely to experience higher rates of poverty.<sup>5</sup>

Each of these factors combined means that informal caregivers will play an increasingly fundamental role as our population ages. In 2012, an estimated 3.3 million Ontario residents provided support to a family member, friend or neighbour. Yet, the percentage of long-term informal caregivers who reported being distressed or unable to continue providing care doubled from 15.6% in 2009-10 to 33.3% in 2013-14.<sup>6</sup>

In 2019, United Way released "*A Profile of Vulnerable Seniors in the United Counties of Prescott and Russell, Lanark County, and Renfrew County*". This report analyzed, through a rural lens, the conditions that contribute to a senior's vulnerability. The goal was to better align and focus our collective time and resources on those seniors experiencing the greatest need. This report built upon similar research released in 2017 by United Way, which focused on seniors in Ottawa.

Both reports highlighted the important role informal caregivers<sup>7</sup> play in the lives of seniors.<sup>8</sup> The research acknowledged caregivers' contributions to the continuum of supports required as a person ages, like transportation to appointments, help with personal hygiene, the administration of medical treatments, and more.<sup>9</sup> These reports also recognized the ways in which the obligation to fulfil daily care responsibilities can negatively impact the health and well-being of caregivers—many of whom are seniors themselves.

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<sup>3</sup> Age and sex, and type of dwelling data: Key results from the 2016 Census. [Internet]. Ottawa (ON): Statistics Canada; 2017. Available from [statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/170503/dq170503a-eng.htm?HPA=1](http://statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/170503/dq170503a-eng.htm?HPA=1)

<sup>4</sup> Premier's Council on Improving Healthcare and Ending Hallway Medicine. Hallway Health Care: A System Under Strain – 1st Interim Report from the Premier's Council on Improving Healthcare and Ending Hallway Medicine. (2019). Available from [health.gov.on.ca/en/public/publications/premiers\\_council/docs/premiers\\_council\\_report.pdf](http://health.gov.on.ca/en/public/publications/premiers_council/docs/premiers_council_report.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population

<sup>6</sup> Health Quality Ontario. (2016). Reality of caring: Distress among the caregivers of home care patients. Available from: [hqontario.ca/Blog/pid/100/evl/0/tagid/216?tagname=La-r%C3%A9alit%C3%A9-des-personnes-soignantes](http://hqontario.ca/Blog/pid/100/evl/0/tagid/216?tagname=La-r%C3%A9alit%C3%A9-des-personnes-soignantes)

<sup>7</sup> Within the Eastern Ontario Caregiver Strategy, "caregivers" refers to friends, family members and neighbours who provide regular care to aging seniors requiring supports with daily living. We have elected to use the term "informal", but we acknowledge the qualifier "unpaid" is often applied as well to recognize the complexity of skills required of today's caregivers.

<sup>8</sup> While it is acknowledged that people living with disabilities often require the care and support of an informal caregiver, this strategy is focused primarily on those providing care to people aged 65 and over. It is highly likely that those providing care to people with disabilities would have similar experiences and needs, yet confirming the similarities and differences is beyond the scope of this work.

<sup>9</sup> Statistics Canada. Portrait of Caregivers Report. (2012). Available from [150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-652-x/89-652-x2013001-eng.htm](http://150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-652-x/89-652-x2013001-eng.htm)

Among a series of recommendations, these reports called for a coordinated, multi-stakeholder strategy to better understand and address the needs of caregivers. This strategy would help inform our overall regional approach to supporting vulnerable seniors in both rural and urban settings.

From here, **The Champlain Dementia Network, Champlain Community Support Network, and United Way East Ontario** saw an opportunity to align around a common objective and partner to create a comprehensive, cross-sectoral roadmap for planning, programs, and action that would better support caregivers and their families living in our communities.

We, in turn, convened a working group, consisting of over 17 community agencies (see Acknowledgements on page 2) to help develop the strategy. We deployed various methods to consult widely with caregivers, seniors, agencies and other key stakeholders to gauge the needs, gaps and solutions to support caregivers.

Our collaboration culminated in the creation of this document, which focuses on four specific themes: **Reworking the System, Education and Training, Promoting Caregiver Health and Wellness and Strengthening Circles of Support and Community for Caregivers**. Each of these themes identifies areas for action and recommendations.

We are acutely aware that delivering on this strategy will require our region to combine and coordinate our distinct capacities for research, advocacy, collaboration, and service delivery. In the interests of remaining accountable—and in order to take the first steps forward—Champlain Dementia Network, Champlain Community Support Network, and United Way East Ontario have each stated their respective commitments to this strategy at the end of this report.

We are proud of the strong partnership we have built; however, we cannot do this work in isolation. We therefore invite our community partners, funders and various levels of government to join us in making a commitment to help shape a future where caregivers are fully supported—a future where they are provided with appropriate education and training, meaningful respite and opportunities to plan for the future.

### **Ontario's caregivers need us now.**

Signed,



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# Eastern Ontario Caregiver Strategy

Created in collaboration between Champlain Community Support Network, Champlain Dementia Network, and United Way East Ontario

## BACKGROUND

Building on the vulnerable seniors reports produced by United Way in 2017-19, the Champlain Dementia Network, Champlain Community Support Network, and United Way East Ontario formed a partnership to develop a regional caregiver strategy. This strategy is designed to provide a cross-sectoral, comprehensive roadmap for planning, programs, and action that will better support caregivers and their families living in our communities.

In summer 2018, the Champlain Dementia Network completed a literature review of best practices and services for caregivers. The results of the literature review were used to help inform trends, issues, gaps, and best practices, as well as develop the Eastern Ontario Caregiver Strategy Framework that includes its key component areas.



In fall 2018, the Champlain Dementia Network, Champlain Community Support Network, and United Way East Ontario brought together working group members to consult on the issues, gaps, and innovations affecting caregivers. Their aim was to develop recommendations for local solutions and action.

Prior to this meeting, agencies in the health and social services sectors were mostly working in isolation. Recognizing the need for a comprehensive, holistic strategy that would address the issues directly affecting caregivers beyond health, the community agreed to join their work to form a collective regional strategy that spans health and social services, to leverage each other's work, and make a difference in the things that matter most to caregivers, their families and the community agencies that work with them.

## SCOPE OF THE STRATEGY

The strategy was scoped to focus on seniors in Eastern Ontario. While it is recognized that caregiving roles have a rich and diverse range, this work is centered on supporting seniors and caregivers to be healthy in their communities with specific focus on older adults as caregivers, as well as caregivers who support older adults.

## PROCESS FOR CONSULTATION

The Eastern Ontario Caregiver Strategy Working Group was created to help inform, guide, and oversee the development of the strategy. Membership was open and included representatives from all three partner organizations, as well as caregivers and advocates from across the region.

It was important to ensure that those with lived experience had a voice in the development of the strategy, so a series of online surveys and meetings, in-person focus groups, large community consultations, as well as one-on-one interviews were held from December 2018 to March 2019.

These sessions provided rich and valuable insight into the current experiences of caregivers and highlighted gaps and issues in support found in both rural and urban communities. They also served to generate ideas for meaningful and sustainable change that will improve the quality of life of caregivers and their families.

Participants from across our region were provided the opportunity to share bold ideas, learn from each other, and work together to develop recommendations—big and small—for action. The results of those discussions are reflected in the Eastern Ontario Caregiver Strategy.

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**During consultation,** participants were asked to write down one thing they would like service providers and decision makers to know.

The responses from all participants were gathered and used to create this word cloud.

This cloud is an illustration of what was expressed by the participants. The size of the words depicts their relative frequency of use, meaning larger words were used most often.



# Issues and Gaps Affecting Caregivers in Eastern Ontario

## What We Heard: A Summary

As noted, a series of strategies were deployed between the period of December 2018 and March 2019 to ensure the voices of informal caregivers were clearly heard throughout this process. Using consultation methodology created by the Champlain Dementia Network, we explored six broad themes that pointed to many of the common gaps and barriers informal caregivers experience on a regular basis.

*“When entering the process, it is overwhelming and difficult to navigate, find information, or feel confident that the right decisions are being made.”  
— Cathy, Caregiver from Ottawa*

Overall, caregivers expressed dissatisfaction with our existing system of health care and social services—and **a real need to rework the system**. They identified a lack of coordination between healthcare, social, and community services, which translates to a lack of person-centred care.<sup>10</sup> In the absence of collaborative coordination between the health, community, and social services sectors, caregivers find the eco-system of services and supports currently in place to be confusing, too rigid, and difficult to navigate.

Additionally, our current system appears unable to adequately meet language and cultural inclusivity requirements. It also seems to lack a place-based approach that accounts for the realities of individual communities, particularly more rural communities. Rural caregivers face costs 43.7% higher<sup>11</sup> than their urban counterparts due to transportation expenses and higher costs for prescription medication.

Moreover, when interacting with these services, the focus is often on the individual in need of care and does not extend to the caregiver. This inability to acknowledge caregiver distress has consequences for both the individual being cared for, as well as the caregiver themselves—particularly in times of crisis.

In relation to supporting the health and well-being of caregivers specifically, many participants expressed a need for more public awareness and systemic acknowledgement of the role informal caregivers play and their impact on people’s lives.

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<sup>10</sup> Cancer Care Ontario defines person-centred care as an approach to care that involves partnering with patients and healthcare professionals to: give patients a voice in the design and delivery of the care they receive and to enable patients to be more active in their journey in order to deliver better health outcomes and greater value through a wiser use of resources; and improve the patient experience.

<sup>11</sup> Dumont S, Jacobs P, Turcotte V, Turcotte S, Johnston G. Palliative care costs in Canada: A descriptive comparison of studies of urban and rural patients near end of life. *Palliative Medicine* [Internet]. SAGE Publications; 2015 June 3;29(10):908–17. Available from: [researchgate.net/publication/277781293](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277781293)





*“Caregiving is a 24/7 requirement. It can be rewarding, amazing and a job I will do for my loved ones. It can also be stressful and frustrating, and I may need a break.” — Aditi, Caregiver from Ottawa*

Caregivers need **more education and training** as well as tools and services that **support their health and well-being as caregivers**. This includes meaningful respite, crisis prevention and self-assessment tools, opportunities to plan for their future, and more formalized support groups to offset the stigma of asking for help and the sense of isolation that often accompanies the caregiver experience.

At present, there is a clear lack of evidence applied to the development of programs and services designed to support caregiving. Collectively, we need more research into the caregiver experience. This includes more rigorous program assessments to ensure that any resources expended to support caregivers are in fact meeting their needs.

*“Plan and prepare us for discharge from hospital so services are in place and we are prepared and knowledgeable in our role.”*

*— Mavis, Caregiver from Lanark County*

One of the most challenging aspects of caregiving, which often goes unnoticed, is the toll it can take on a caregiver’s financial well-being. The demands of caregiving, coupled with the inflexibility of our health and social services systems, means that caregivers who are also employed must frequently leave work or work reduced hours in order to fulfill their caregiver responsibilities. This impacts wages earned as well as employability, in some cases.

The financial strain experienced by many caregivers can put into jeopardy the ability to pay for critical expenses, like health and dental insurance, shelter or food. Evidently, there is a financial burden inherent with caregiving that can quickly become too high for many caregivers to manage on their own. Building greater employer awareness of the needs of caregiving employees and mandating the right to workplace accommodations will become increasingly urgent as our population ages and more of our workforce is drawn into caregiving.



“Caregivers can be isolated and sometimes we don’t know how to connect. My deepest concern for my family member who is living with a progressive, neurological condition [is that] I very often neglect my own needs, health, and well-being. Often I feel lost and lonely.”

– *Dominique, Caregiver from Prescott-Russell*

Finally, caregivers want it understood that they are often thrust into a world of medical complexity without the tools or capacity to manage condition-specific health information. Many caregivers experience a systemic lack of support when it comes to understanding the information they are required to know, which can undermine their ability to adequately care for and advocate on behalf of those in their care. This can be disorienting and overwhelming to the caregiver, as well as adding yet another challenging dimension to their many responsibilities. Often, this is a major contributor of caregiver stress and decline in mental health. It is vitally important to **strengthen the circle of support** around caregivers to ensure they have the resources they need, when they need them.

Understanding the informal caregiver experience, as well as the gaps and barriers currently faced by informal caregivers in our communities, is essential to better acknowledging and meeting the needs of this growing cohort. This strategy is dedicated to improving not only the lives of caregivers but also the lives of those who rely on their care and support.

# Recommendations For Focus and Action

| Theme 1: Reworking the System   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>Building a system of care and support that provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarity of the health care and social services systems</li> <li>• Supports in transition and referrals for caregivers and their families</li> <li>• Straightforward navigation and simple access to services and programs</li> </ul> |   |
| ACTION AREA   | RECOMMENDATION  |
| Research and Evaluation   | Conduct a literature review of existing models to increase knowledge and understanding of culturally appropriate holistic approaches to caregiving and wellness.  |
|   | Identify best practices, calculate the return on investments, develop an evaluation framework and seek innovations for housing and integrated community models to support caregivers and their families in urban and rural areas, including intergenerational accommodations. |
|   | Conduct research into the financial implications that informal caregiving has on individuals and families.  |
| Advocacy and Outreach   | Advocate for and promote proactive strategies that improve and protect caregiver wellness over the long term.   |
|   | Further develop and promote financial programs and resources available that support caregivers in their roles and responsibilities, including self-directed service funding models. <sup>12</sup>   |
|   | Advocate for employment protection and tax relief programs to offset some of the costs associated with informal caregiving.   |
|   | Enable a home health human resource strategy, including recruitment, employment security, and competitive compensation for Personal Support Workers (PSW) to fill the talent shortage of PSWs to assist with in-home support to alleviate the pressure points for caregivers. |

<sup>12</sup>Self-Directed Funding Models are programs under which clients or their decision-makers will receive funding to purchase home care or employ care providers

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Partnerships and Collaboration | Actively facilitate and engage in co-design approaches to include caregivers, clients, and service delivery partners in system planning, funding allocation, and program delivery.  |
|                                | Collaborate with employers to deepen their understanding of the role of informal caregivers and their potential needs in the workplace.   |
|                                | Develop senior hub models for service delivery in communities.  |
| Enhance Service Quality        | Enhance system navigation and clear pathways to services and programs, including dedicated supports for diverse and vulnerable populations.   |
|                                | Strengthen transitions, soft referrals, warm handoffs, and clear referral pathways to support services directed at caregivers to promote resilience.  |
| Program and Service Delivery   | Offer flexible, innovative and adaptable services that meet the changing needs of caregivers (such as flexible or shared-space long-term care as a transition from home, start-up or innovation grants for entrepreneurs to bring forward localized solutions, etc.). |

## Theme 2: Education and Training

Continuous learning and outreach to support better practices and empower caregivers through:

- Education and supports to caregivers and families that will increase knowledge, reduce stress, and provide concrete skills
- Ongoing professional development for healthcare professionals across a continuum of care
- Outreach and public engagement on key issues impacting caregiving in the community to increase awareness and reduce stigma
- Public awareness activities to help businesses and employers understand caregiver needs and experiences

| ACTION AREA             | RECOMMENDATION  |
|-------------------------|---|
| Research and Evaluation | Identify best and leading practices on the dissemination of information for caregiver and family wellbeing training, education, and service models. |

|                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <p>Advocacy and Outreach</p>          | <p>Implement public education and awareness campaigns targeted to caregivers and families to increase general awareness, reduce stigma around asking for supports, provide information about system and service navigation, and celebrate the role of the caregiver.</p>   |
|                                       | <p>Conduct an advocacy and awareness campaign to help the healthcare system, including primary physicians, include informal caregivers as active parts of the care “team” in order to recognize and refer caregivers to appropriate supports in times of distress.</p>   |
| <p>Partnerships and Collaboration</p> | <p>Leverage existing and create multi-sectoral resources, education support, and training opportunities for caregivers and families on the role of caregiving. This includes providing concrete and practical skill development, and consistent condition-specific health information available in a variety of languages and mediums.</p> |
| <p>Enhance Service Quality</p>        | <p>Develop service and program standards and better practice guidelines for caregiver services and programs where none currently exist.</p>  |
|                                       | <p>Enable and promote diversity and inclusion training for service delivery partners to ensure that all caregivers are welcomed and supported in inclusive and culturally-informed environments (Francophones, LGBTQ2, immigrants, persons with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, etc.).</p>   |
| <p>Program and Service Delivery</p>   | <p>Enable and promote peer support and coaching models that focus on conditions and/or local communities.</p>  |
|                                       | <p>Develop intergenerational and sustainable education and learning opportunities that promote relationship building and informal supports—as well as future employment prospects—and can address ageism and stigma.</p>   |

### Theme 3: Promoting Caregiver Health and Wellness

Enabling caregivers to be resilient and engaged through:

- Addressing barriers to service to ensure equitable access and availability
- Meaningful opportunities for socialization, connectivity, and respite
- Acknowledging and supporting the role of the caregiver

| ACTION AREA                    | RECOMMENDATION  |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Research and Evaluation        | Investigate and identify health promotion and wellness supports and services.   |
| Advocacy and Outreach          | Advocate for increased funding and greater availability of health promotion and prevention services, programs, and supports for caregivers and family members, regardless of age.   |
|                                | Champion affordable and appropriate housing models that support healthy and active community living.  |
| Partnerships and Collaboration | Enable common caregiver assessments and tools across agencies and professionals that account for caregiver distress, support resilience, and promote service pathways.  |
|                                | Strengthen and actively seek social recreation and physical activity collaborations and partnerships that integrate healthcare, health promotion, and social engagement for a holistic approach to services and care.   |
| Enhance Service Quality        | Empower caregivers to be an active part of the care team.   |
|                                | Embed caregiver wellness and check-ins as part of regular practice across professions and disciplines.  |
|                                | Enable and make caregiver support groups and activities more readily available in a variety of models to diverse groups of people and ages.   |
| Program and Service Delivery   | Increase access and service availability to a variety of respite services, including overnight and quick response respite/unplanned services that can accommodate the immediate needs of caregivers as well as support longer term planning to reduce risk and stressors. |
|                                | Expand bereavement supports and the transition from caregiving.   |

## Theme 4: Strengthening Circles of Support and Community for Caregivers

Enabling and strengthening informal and formal supports to:

- Respond to the culturally diverse needs of our communities
- Strengthen a sense of neighbourhood and inclusive communities
- Engage individual volunteers and groups to develop localized solutions

| ACTION AREA                    | RECOMMENDATION  |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Research and Evaluation        | Investigate the value of informal supports and best practices to support and facilitate relationships to support the work required.   |
| Advocacy and Outreach          | Develop education and awareness campaigns targeted to employers on the roles and responsibilities of caregivers and engage them in dialogue about creating supportive, flexible work environments.                  |
| Partnerships and Collaboration | Strengthen and enable community groups and local informal supports, and leverage volunteer and community assets to better support caregivers.   |
| Enhance Service Quality        | Enhance cultural safety and competent care and services and enable services in languages of choice.   |
|                                | Leverage client-directed information sharing, platforms, and electronic files to provide integrated care across partners and empower caregivers in their roles.   |
| Program and Service Delivery   | Implement targeted programs and services for caregivers to support social inclusion and vulnerable communities, and actively engage isolated caregivers—especially those from culturally and gender diverse groups. |
|                                | Leverage, facilitate, and enable neighbourhood-based and informal systems of support to flourish.   |

## Our Commitment—and a Call to Action

The development of this strategy stemmed from a shared desire among United Way East Ontario, the Champlain Dementia Network, and the Champlain Community Support Network to understand and address the needs of our region's growing number of informal caregivers. Working together, along with many other partners and stakeholders, we have developed a clear road map for change.

Collectively, we possess the skills, knowledge and networks to help tackle many of the most pressing issues facing caregivers in our communities. We are dedicated to delivering on the recommendations included in this strategy, and have outlined our respective commitments as follows:

### CHAMPLAIN DEMENTIA NETWORK AND CHAMPLAIN COMMUNITY SUPPORT NETWORK

- We will continue to apply and expand upon the programs and supports caregivers need, such as increasing the availability of respite options and help with service navigation.
- Together, we will engage public health and community health centers to promote caregiver health and wellness initiatives, while also supporting the creation of public awareness campaigns.

### UNITED WAY EAST ONTARIO

- We will continue our efforts to connect and convene stakeholders, advance research, and invest in programs that support caregivers' wellbeing.
- In addition, we will mobilize resources where they are needed most and will have the greatest impact for caregivers and their families.

Working in partnership, we will seek to increase overall awareness of caregiver needs—helping government partners to shape more informed and effective public policy that is truly reflective of the caregiver experience. This includes advocating and building support for better employment security and economic relief.

We will also combine our efforts to publicly promote the services and supports available to caregivers, while also ensuring continuity in the information provided at every stage in the continuum of care.

Many factors will impact our ability to deliver on this strategy, including geographical boundaries, individual organizational mandates, funding models, levels of understanding and public support. This strategy also comes during a pivotal but challenging time. In 2019, government funding is under tremendous strain, while philanthropic funding continues to undergo massive transformation.

To be successful, we are calling on all regional delivery partners, health care institutions, funders, policymakers and employers to help improve the lives of caregivers and their families across our region. With a clear strategy guiding our work, and the commitment of our community backing our efforts, we can provide the people who spend their lives caring for others the care that they, too, deserve.

**JOIN US.**



## About the Partners



### CHAMPLAIN COMMUNITY SUPPORT NETWORK (CCSN)

is a bilingual network of non-profit agencies in the Champlain area working together to enable seniors and adults living with disabilities to live healthily at home and in communities.

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**THE CHAMPLAIN DEMENTIA NETWORK** provides leadership and support to the implementation of our regional dementia strategy. The Network represents organizations who provide dementia and dementia-related services across our region, together with caregivers, and works to ensure that there is a system of support that is tailored and targeted to the changing needs of persons with dementia and their families. [champlaindementianetwork.ca](http://champlaindementianetwork.ca)

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**UNITED WAY EAST ONTARIO** works with communities in Prescott-Russell, Ottawa, Lanark and Renfrew Counties, by investing resources where they are needed most and will have the greatest impact. Through research, evaluation and partnerships with community experts, we identify the root causes of the biggest social challenges facing our communities and help find solutions that change tens of thousands of lives for the better. 100% of donations to United Way are put to work in the communities where they are raised to help those most in need. [unitedwayeo.ca](http://unitedwayeo.ca)