



# *Creating Synergy*

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HEALTH COALITION OF ALBERTA

## **2013 Fall Forum**

***Improving Health Outcomes :  
Finding Options for Better  
Access to Care***

***Health Policy Advocacy &  
Action Plan Development***

# Overview & Purpose

**Examine and discuss processes, strategies and tools that will better enable Creating Synergy to engage in health policy advocacy strategies that will improve access to care.**

- Advocacy strategy process
- Action plan development

# Policy Change

Policy development is the most effective way to affect system change.

Policy adoption/change requires that we demonstrate a:

1. Need for the policy i.e. potential impact on overall public health
2. Support for the policy i.e. stakeholder collaboration and community engagement, polls etc...

Change does not happen without sufficient public pressure and stakeholder and community support.

# Policy Change Strategies

**Comprehensive,  
systematic &  
interconnected  
strategies**



# Policy Change Strategies

**Comprehensive,  
systematic &  
interconnected  
strategies:**

- Research & Analysis
- Capacity Building
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Government Relations



# Policy Change Strategies

**Comprehensive,  
systematic &  
interconnected  
strategies:**

- Grassroots Mobilization
- Communications & Media Advocacy
- Evaluation & Monitoring





# Policy Change Successes

A screenshot of a website page with a yellow header. The main heading reads "VOTE FOR family caregiver job protection." Below the heading is a photograph of two hands clasped together. At the top of the page, there are social media icons for Facebook and Twitter, and a "75" anniversary logo. A navigation bar at the bottom includes links for "Home", "Why Vote For Health", "2012 Provincial Election", "Election news", "Take action", "Top", "Feed Back", and "Contact us".

## Caregiver job protection issue

### Caregiver support

Family caregivers must have easy and timely access to supports, programs and services they need when providing care for an ill or dying loved one at home. In particular, family caregivers require job protection when taking leave from work when caring for an ill or dying loved one.

Increasingly, many Canadians are taking on the duty of providing care for an ill or dying loved-one at great cost to themselves personally, financially and in terms of their own health and well-being. One in four Canadians has cared for a loved one with a serious illness in the last 12 months. This often results in lost income, as well as the increased financial burden of unforeseen expenses such as, transportation, medical equipment and supplies, pharmaceuticals, and more.

A family caregiver loses approximately 23% of their workable hours to provide care and support and 91% of households suffer a loss of income or a rise in expenses as a direct result of caring for a loved one with cancer or another serious illness. The economic contribution of family caregivers has been estimated to be over \$29 billion for 2009.

Fighting cancer is a terrible burden for any family to bear. They should not have to worry about job protection and income security as well. Job security for family caregivers who take time off work to care for an ill or dying loved one is not included in current employment code legislation.

#### Our Recommendations

The Canadian Cancer Society and our stakeholders recommend that the Alberta government amend the Alberta Employment Standards Code to protect the job security of Albertans taking leave to care for an ill or dying loved one.

[LEARN MORE...](#)

## IMPORTANT FACTS

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**A family caregiver loses approximately 23% of their workable hours to provide care and support.**

The economic contribution of family caregivers has been estimated to be over \$29 billion for 2009.

## OUR PARTNERS

Working together with our partners to increase support to family caregivers is one of the Canadian Cancer Society's major priorities being achieved through our cancer.

Thank you to our partners who have collaborated with the Canadian Cancer Society to increase support for family caregivers in Alberta.



2012 Bill 203

First Session, 28th Legislature, 61 Elizabeth II

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

## BILL 203

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS  
(COMPASSIONATE CARE LEAVE)  
AMENDMENT ACT, 2012

MR. JENEROUX

First Reading .....

Second Reading .....

Committee of the Whole .....

Third Reading .....

Royal Assent .....



MEDIA RELEASE  
May 14, 2013

### Partners applaud new bill protecting family caregivers in Alberta

EDMONTON – The Alberta Caregivers Association and the Canadian Cancer Society, Alberta/NWT Division, are pleased to see the passing of a bill that will provide job-protected leave to family caregivers who take time off work to care for a dying family member.

Bill 203, the *Employment Standards (Compassionate Care Leave) Amendment Act*, revises Alberta's *Employment Standards Code* to include compassionate care leave, providing job security for Albertans who find themselves caring for a terminal family member. Prior to the passing of this bill, Alberta was the only jurisdiction in Canada without compassionate care leave in its employment standards code.

"We are delighted that Alberta now provides job security for family caregivers," says Anna Mann, Alberta Caregivers Association spokesperson. "This bill will help reduce the challenges faced by so many family members in this province who are dealing with the responsibility of caring for a dying loved one."

Currently, the federal government provides access to benefits through the Employment Insurance program. Compassionate care benefits are available to individuals who need time off work to care for a family member who's facing a significant risk of death within 26 weeks. Individuals who qualify can access the benefits for up to eight weeks within a 26-week period.

Bill 203 now protects the job of Albertans who qualify for the federal Compassionate Care Benefit program. Albertans who do not access or qualify for the federal benefit can still use the leave but it would be unpaid. Under Bill 203, a family caregiver can use compassionate care leave totalling eight weeks within a six and half month period.

"Needing to care for a loved one who is ill and dying is traumatic enough without the added burden of worrying about keeping your job," says Angeline Webb, spokesperson for the Canadian Cancer Society, Alberta/NWT Division. "Family caregivers in Alberta will no longer have to choose between their jobs and being there to look after a dying family member."

Family caregivers are the backbone of Canada's healthcare system, providing unpaid care estimated at more than \$25 billion in 2009. They often become financially, physically and emotionally overwhelmed, and the vast majority of caregivers are employed while, at the same time, providing care. Caregivers lose approximately 23 per cent of their workable hours and



# Draft Action Plan

- Research and Analysis
  - Policy position development: solves the problem, is achievable & based in evidence
- Capacity Building
  - Resources & tools development
  - Knowledge exchange & training



# Draft Action Plan

- Stakeholder Engagement
  - Increased partnerships & participation
- Government Relations
  - Government engagement of stakeholders
  - Engaging and educating key MLAs & key department officials

# Draft Action Plan

- **Grassroots Mobilization**
  - Engaging the public in action
  - E-advocacy
- **Communications & Media Advocacy**
  - Earned media strategy
- **Evaluation & Monitoring**
  - Evaluation framework & environmental scanning

# Next Steps

- Develop and finalize policy positions
- Build capacity of stakeholders
- Sub-committee participation
- Strategy implementation

# Thank you

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