

Stats Canada Report Reinforces Urgent Need for Home Care in Canada

MISSISSAUGA, ON, Sept. 11, 2014 /CNW/ - The Statistics Canada report *Canadians with Unmet Home Care Needs*, released on September 9, 2014, highlights the growing disparity between Canadians need for home based services and the available resources. Based on the data collected in the *2012 General Social Survey (GSS) – Caregiving and Care Receiving*, the 461,000 Canadians requiring help or care for a chronic health condition did not receive it. The study showed that individuals with low household incomes, immigrants and family caregivers were most likely to have unmet need.

"This information confirms the challenges that all jurisdictions are facing," stated Jill Robbins, CHCA President, "with limited budgets and resources the only way programs can meet the growing demand is to restrict services and rely upon family and friends to fill the gaps. The situation has long term consequences that include, unnecessary and costly trips to the emergency room, increased hospital admissions and length of stay, premature placement in long-term care facilities and caregiver burn-out."

In a recent study conducted by the Canadian Home Care Association (CHCA), the number one challenge for all home care programs across the country was managing increased demand for services with limited resources. While the aging population is a key driver for the increased need for home care, it is interesting to note the Stats Canada report identifies the baby boomers as the most represented among those who had unmet needs for home.

Family caregivers were identified as a group that were at higher risk of having unmet needs for help or care. Of the persons with unmet needs, 38 percent were providing help or care themselves, and 35 percent of this group were providing 10 or more hours of care per week. "Family caregivers are the invisible backbone of our health care system and provide the majority of home-based care needed by individuals with long-term conditions", stated Nadine Henningsen, Executive Director CHCA and President Canadian Caregiver Coalition (CCC). "As a society, we must recognize, value and protect caregivers from the adverse consequences of providing care."

The issues facing the home care sector are consistent across the country. The ramifications of these challenges impact all Canadians. To address these challenges, the CHCA continues to work with stakeholders and governments to advance four fundamental strategies:

- Increase public funding for home care to ensure the necessary resources are in place to meet the growing demand.
- Recognize the valuable role of family caregivers and provide appropriate services to safeguard their health and well-being.
- Adopt a set of harmonized principles for home care as the foundation for standards and indicators that can be shared across the country.
- Implement technology to support independence, safety and quality care in the home setting.

About the Canadian Home Care Association

The Canadian Home Care Association is a national not-for-profit membership association that advances excellence in home care and continuing care through leadership, awareness, advocacy and knowledge.

SOURCE: Canadian Home Care Association

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