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SCHIZOPHRENIA SOCIETY OF CANADA
SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE DE LA SCHIZOPHRÉNIE
UNE SOURCE D'ESPOIR, DE SOUTIEN ET D'ENTRAIDE.

Celebrating National Family Caregiver Day

Winnipeg, Manitoba – April 7, 2015 - The Schizophrenia Society of Canada and our members are proud to raise our voices in recognition of the millions of Canadians - family, friends and neighbours - who take on a caring role to support someone with a diminishing physical ability, a debilitating cognitive condition or a chronic life-limiting illness.

In partnership with the Canadian Caregiver Coalition (CCC), we are undertaking a special recognition of the 6.1 million family caregivers who must balance their personal commitments, caregiving duties and work responsibilities. On April 7, we are joining diverse stakeholders and caregivers across the country to learn and share the challenges and solutions to better support family caregivers through series of podcasts and live tweet chats hosted by the CCC. “It is a day to reflect on our successes as organizations who are committed to supporting employee caregivers and work together enhance the supports they so desperately need”, stated Chris Summerville, CEO of the Schizophrenia Society of Canada.

Family caregivers are the invisible back bone of our health care system and provide over 80 percent of the care needed by individuals with long-term conditions. Today, 35% of the Canadian workforce are family caregivers. Fifty percent of employee caregivers are between the ages of 45 to 65, in their peak earning years with valuable skills and experience. They provide between 16 to 28 hours of care per month over the course of 3 years. It is estimated that family caregivers contribute \$25–30 billion dollars of unpaid care every year. As the time and physical demands experience as a caregiver are often equivalent to working two full-time jobs, family caregivers can experience negative effect on their financial, emotional and personal well-being. These negative consequences of not supporting family caregivers will not only be felt by the family caregivers and patients, but also to the Canadian employers and our economy. Developing strategies to support your employee caregivers is a smart business strategy that will pay off in increased retention of skilled employees and decreased recruitment and training costs.

It is time for bold actions, clear policies and all-inclusive legislation to support employee caregivers who are faced with a *difficult situation in which they must achieve several different things at the same time – caring and work*. Their dedication and commitment to providing care offsets substantial public costs, often at the expense of personal health and financial wellbeing. The Schizophrenia Society of Canada and our partner, the Canadian Caregiver Coalition, strongly encourages all Canadians to take a moment on April 7 to say recognize and say thank-you to a family caregiver who makes a difference in your lives.

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