

# CARING FOR CAREGIVERS IN THE WORKPLACE

The Canadian Compassionate Company (CCC) designation is a program the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association (CHPCA) developed to recognize organizations with formal human resource policies that accommodate employees who need time off work to care for a loved one



**COMPASSION**

belongs in our workplace culture

On average, 260,000 Canadians die each year. As many as five caregivers may be contributing to their end-of-life care. Many of them are unpaid caregivers who are struggling to balance their commitments at work with the demands of caring for their families, the patient and themselves.

The numbers are staggering. In 2018, about one in four Canadians aged 15 and older (7.8 million people) were providing care to a family member or friend with a long-term health condition, a physical or mental disability or problems related to aging, according to Statistics Canada.

Of these, almost half reported that they were caring for a parent or in-law. Due to the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the most vulnerable populations, it would not be surprising to see an increase in self-reported caregivers today.

The movement to grow compassion

within an organization’s workplace culture is gaining momentum and employers have an important role. Unsupported employees are more likely to be absent, use more sick days, be less productive and even quit their job if the workplace culture no longer “fits.”

The right fit extends to attracting new talent. Candidates will investigate a company’s brand and reputation. The value a company brings and what it offers (beyond compensation) are often critical to choosing which job offer to accept.

**What can companies do?**

The Canadian Compassionate Company (CCC) designation is a program that the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association (CHPCA) developed to recognize organizations with formal human resource policies that accommodate employees who need time off work to care for a loved one.

Most of us have experienced the death or dying of someone close to us — it’s inevitable. We remember — or we are

experiencing now — its effect on our ability to focus and function.

By becoming a designated Canadian Compassionate Company, an organization is taking a stand as a leader at managing the most important asset it has — its people. Doing so elevates an organization’s commitment to humanize the relationship between employer and employee.

When a loved one is dying or near death, HR policies that inform and assist employees during this difficult time can help reduce their emotional stress, mental strain and financial pressures.

The government of Canada’s Compassionate Care Benefit (CCB) involves employment insurance (EI) benefits paid to people who need time away from work temporarily (up to a maximum of 26 weeks) to care for a family member who is gravely ill or dying.

**Criteria for a CCC designation**

Your organization will qualify for the CCC designation if your HR policies meet at least three out of five of the following criteria:

1. Your HR policies include a CCB endorsing the job-protected family medical EI benefit, currently at 26 weeks.
2. Your employees’ jobs are protected while on CCB leave.
3. CCB leave could provide employees with income top-up of benefits over and above the job-protected family medical EI benefits leave offered through the provinces and the federal EI program.
4. You have a caregiver accommodation policy allowing for support and flexibility within economic reason.
5. You will promote Advance Care Planning (ACP) using resources at [www.advancecareplanning.ca](http://www.advancecareplanning.ca) or create your own resources.

Private or public sector employers of any size, with a head office or principal place of business in Canada, may apply by filling out a simple online form at [www.chpca.ca](http://www.chpca.ca).

An approved CCC designation must be reviewed every three years. A CCC designation enables an employer to use the CCC logo for recruiting, marketing and communication purposes.

Your organization can follow the four steps recommended by the Carer-Inclusive and Accommodating Organizations Standard developed by the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) to advance your culture toward greater compassion for caregivers in the workplace. You will also receive resources that employees can access, such as how to cope with grief in the workplace, how to support a grieving colleague and how to create an Advance Care Plan.

Becoming a Canadian Compassionate Company is another way you and your organization can express your genuine care and desire to support caregivers in the workplace. As the national voice for hospice palliative care, the CHPCA is here to amplify your efforts when your employees need compassion the most. [CHRR](http://CHRR)

*For more details about the CCC program, please visit: [www.chpca.ca/campaigns/cc](http://www.chpca.ca/campaigns/cc). As the national voice for hospice palliative care, the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association (CHPCA) is empowering the private and public sectors to provide better support to employees who are unpaid caregivers for their loved ones. Organizations with formal human resource policies can now apply to become a designated Canadian Compassionate Company, which includes access to a designation logo and a toolkit of resources.*

# ADVANCE CARE PLANNING: A KEY STEP IN LIFE PLANNING

**LIFE** can be a complicated journey full of both ups — graduations, new jobs, marriage, births, trips, retirement — and downs — financial setbacks, job losses, illnesses and deaths. To cope with both the good and the bad, most people do some form of planning for themselves and their families. They plan for tomorrow so they can live for today.

As the Life Planning Model illustrates, planning for tomorrow involves financial, estate and health-care planning.

Compassionate companies can help employees with all aspects of life planning. And many already do. They provide access to life insurance and pensions so employees can plan for their financial future. Some offer information and education about financial planning and management, as well as will and estate planning.

Employers can also help employees plan for their future health care. In fact, to be eligible to be a Canadian Compassionate Company, employers should promote Advance Care Planning.

## Why is Advance Care Planning important?

Advance Care Planning is a lifelong process of thinking about what matters to you — your values, goals and preferences — and the type of care you would like to receive throughout your adult life. It is also about talking to the people who matter most to you and your health-care providers about your wishes and appointing someone — a substitute decision-maker — who will speak for you if you cannot speak for yourself.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a harsh reminder for Canadians that life can change at any moment — people

can become severely ill and be unable to speak for themselves. During that time, critical decisions may have to be made about their care. Advance Care Planning can take some of the stress out of those moments:

- People who plan ahead for their health care experience less distress and anxiety when faced with a health crisis and are more satisfied with the care they receive. They have a greater sense of independence and control over their health.
- Family members are also calmer and more confident that they are making decisions that reflect the person's wishes.
- Health-care professionals are also more confident that they are providing the kind of care that reflects the person's values.

## Five steps of Advance Care Planning

**Think:** What's important to you? What do you want the people caring for you to know about your values and beliefs and the kind of care you want?

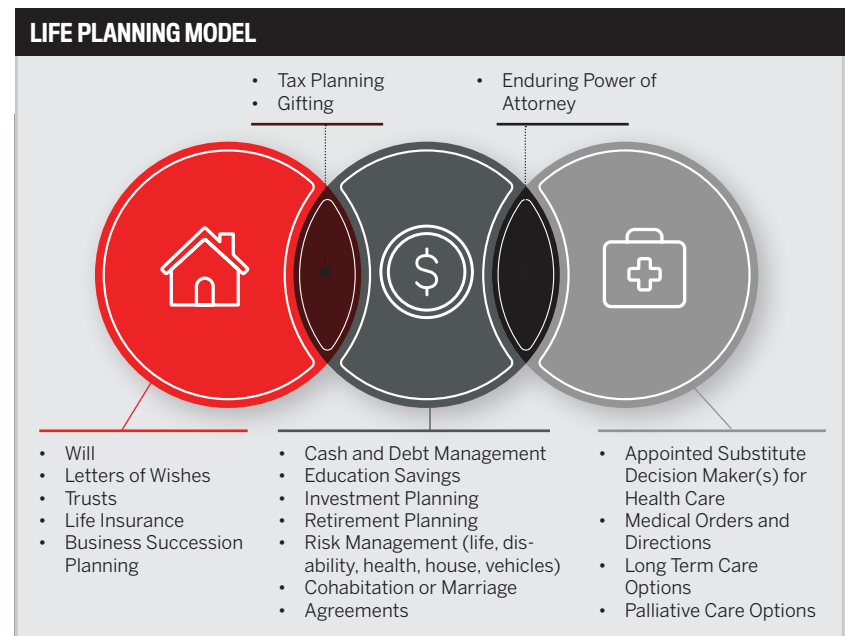
**Learn:** Ask questions about your health and care. What are the benefits and risks of different ways to manage your health?

**Decide:** If you are ever in a situation where you can't make your own health-care decisions, who would you like to have make them for you? Choose a substitute decision-maker who will understand your wishes and make the decisions that you would.

**Talk:** Tell the people who matter most to you and your health-care providers what is important to you and the kind of care you want.

**Record:** Record your wishes and share them with the people who matter most to you, your substitute decision-maker and your health-care providers.

Advance Care Planning isn't a one-




time event. People's wishes may change over time. For example, when people are in their 30s, the kind of care they want and the benefits and risks of treatments may be very different than when they are in their 80s. That's why people should revisit their Advance Care Planning — just the way they would review their will or financial plan if their finances or family situation changed.

Many families report that having Advance Care Planning conversations improves communication and reduces conflict. It helps family, friends and health-care professionals work together to provide the care the person wants.

## What can employers do to promote Advance Care Planning?

More than 90 per cent of Canadians believe that it's important to discuss their advance care planning with family and friends. Yet, only 17 per cent of Canadians — fewer than one in five — have advance care plans and more than 50 per cent have not done any Advance Care Planning, according to a 2019 survey of nearly 3,000 Canadians by Nanos Research.

Employers can help close the gap between the number of Canadians who think Advance Care Planning is a good idea and the number who have plans. Companies can help start the conversation by:

- talking to employees about the importance of Advance Care Planning — for themselves and for the people who matter most to them
- reinforcing that Advance Care Planning — like financial planning and estate planning — is an important part of life planning
- providing access to Advance Care Planning resources
- inviting an expert to talk to staff about Advance Care Planning
- hosting an Advance Care Planning seminar, lunch and learn or workshop 

Learn more at [advancecareplanning.ca](http://advancecareplanning.ca). *Becoming a Canadian Compassionate Company is a step toward engaged, productive employees who know they are working for a company that truly cares for them and their family through the challenges that can face any of us at any time.*