



Family & Friend Caregivers on the Front Lines

Provincial survey highlights
for caregivers in British Columbia



Family Caregivers
of British Columbia

— Let us help —



Goal of survey

Family and friend caregivers are on the front lines of COVID-19. The pandemic is highlighting the essential role caregivers are playing to help our healthcare system cope with this emergency. The goal of this survey is to understand how COVID has impacted caregivers no matter where they live in BC, where their care recipient lives or if they are currently receiving publicly subsidized services.

Context

There are roughly 1.1 million family and friend caregivers in British Columbia¹. A family caregiver is a relative or friend who provides care and support to someone living with disease, disability or frailty due to aging. The role of a family caregiver is mutually determined by the people providing care and support and those receiving it.

FCBC's Caregiver Survey was fielded December 1-18, 2020 and 1,029 caregivers responded.

1 General Social Survey on Caregiving 2018 – 25% of the population 15+ is caregiving

Highlights

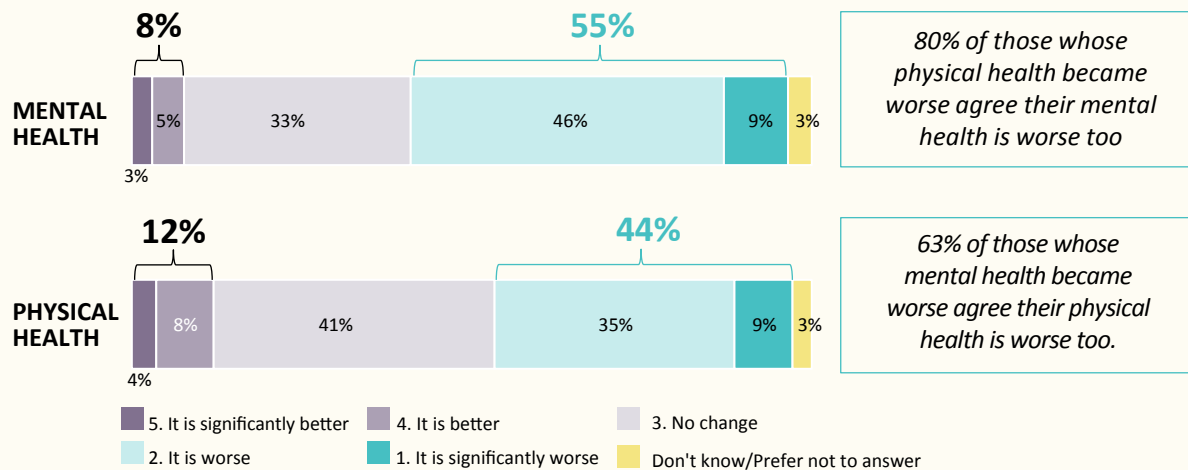
What Was Hard Got Harder

COVID has challenged carefully crafted caregiving routines. It disrupted services and required caregivers to fill gaps and/or seek out and pay for assistance out of their own pockets.

Caregiver wellbeing took a hit

- Over 50% of caregivers reported their mental health had gotten worse
- Over 40% reported their physical health had declined
- Caregiver anxiety levels increased 19% reflected in feelings of concern, nervousness and anguish

Caregivers whose mental health became worse during the pandemic tended to report worse physical health as well.

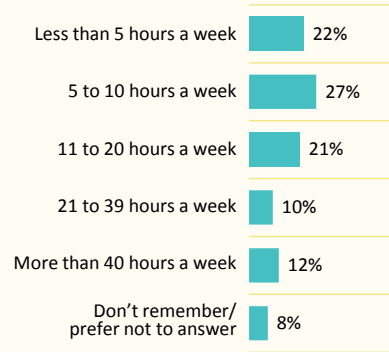




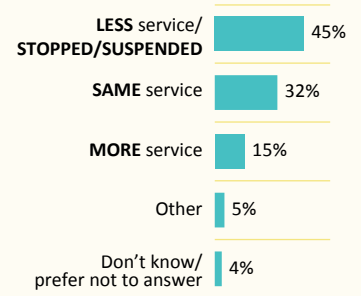
Caregivers increased the amount of care they were providing

- Over 40% of caregivers reported providing more care, 40% exceeding 11 additional hours per week
- Roughly one quarter of caregivers reported their care recipients were receiving publicly subsidized home support services prior to COVID. Of these, 45% experienced reduced, suspended or stopped services during the pandemic.

43% of caregivers are providing more care due to COVID with half providing up to an additional 10 hours per week



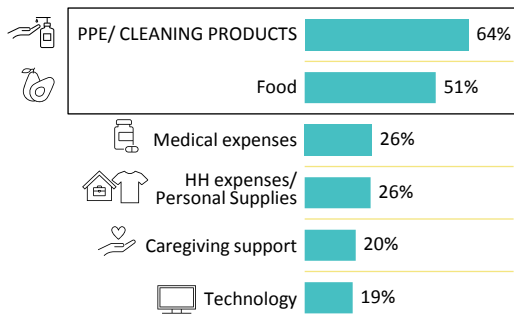
65% of those who received health authority home care services prior to pandemic feel they have changed since then



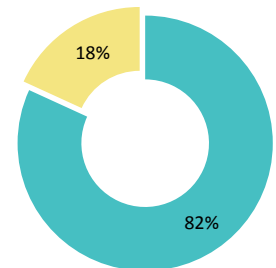
A quarter of caregivers reported experiencing financial hardship

- Caregivers reported spending on PPE/Cleaning products (64%) and Food (51%)
- Almost 50% of caregivers employed private services to assist them, 54% for personal and medical care services.
- Roughly 40% of caregivers reported being employed and of these, ~50% reported COVID had an impact on their employment with ~15% reporting a work disruption.
- Only 3% of caregivers reported receiving the Canada Caregiver Recovery Benefit - a federal program developed to assist employed caregivers with challenges caused by COVID.

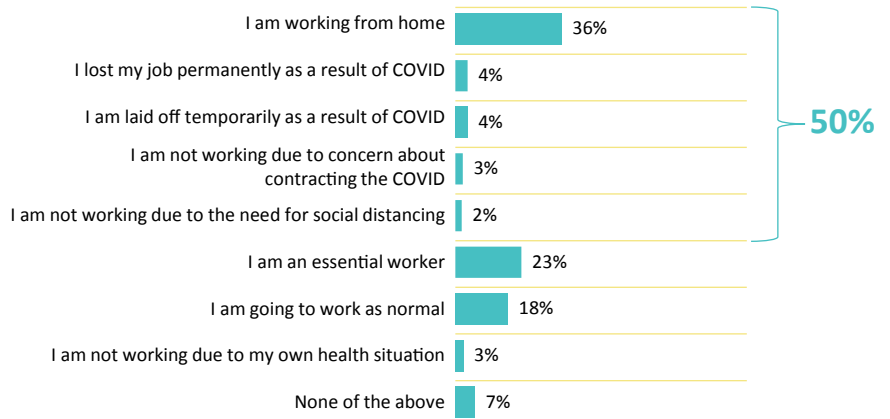
Caregivers' expenses on PPE, cleaning products, and food increased most during the pandemic



82% increased their spending during the pandemic



COVID has affected employment of one-half of working caregivers





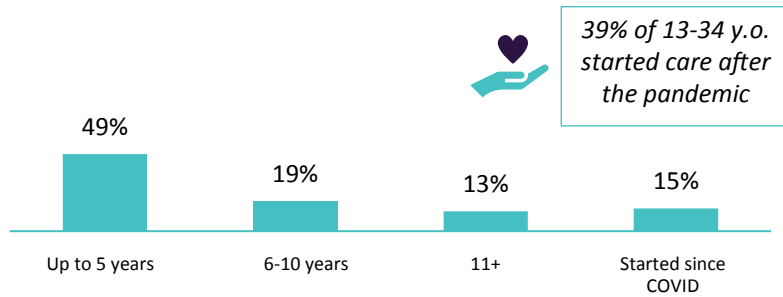
COVID Created NEW Caregivers

15% of caregivers reported becoming caregivers as a result of COVID

These caregivers need additional support and easy access to resources

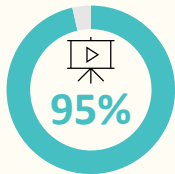
- The largest proportion of these new caregivers were the under 34 age group and more likely to be caring for more than one care recipient
- 16% of caregivers reported not feeling confident or unsure if they could continue in their caregiving role – a majority of these were in the under 34 age group
- 74% of caregivers provide emotional support while 69% feel capable in providing it

One-half of caregivers have up to 5 years of caregiving experience, while two in five young caregivers (13-34) started providing care after CV-19

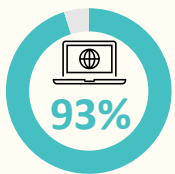


Over eight in ten (85%) caregivers living in British Columbia were providing personal, social, physical and/or psychological support to someone prior to the COVID pandemic.

Webinars/ online videos



Online resources (websites)



All Caregivers Need Support – Now More Than Ever

- Of caregivers reporting they used caregiver support and educational programs, 48% made use of personal support networks, 37% used online resources (websites) and 20% watched webinars
- Not surprisingly, COVID forced the majority of caregivers to online resources – use of online resources and supports rocketed to 90+%
- Two-thirds of caregivers who reported a person in their care passed away were aware of services available to support them in their bereavement

Conclusions and Acknowledgement

This survey helps to shine a spotlight on the need to support caregivers and raises specific areas of concern that warrant further investigation such as financial and mental health needs. FCBC will be undertaking further analysis and reporting in these areas and will use this information to adapt our programs and services. We will also be advancing discussions regarding gaps in government policies and programs.

We recognize and thank the 1,029 caregivers who responded to the survey, our partners who helped reach them, and our Advisory Committee who helped shape the process. We also recognize the Province of British Columbia for its financial contribution to this project, and thank Leger for its partnership in the survey design, distribution and reporting.