

97.2 Support For The Family Caregiver

Whereas, federal, provincial and municipal budgetary restraints are putting pressure on both public and private institutional care for the elderly and/or disabled in need of daily care; and
Whereas, many elderly and/or disabled people in need of daily care are being looked after at home by family members; and
Whereas, this represents a significant contribution to the welfare of Canadian communities, which might otherwise have to provide care with public funding; and
Whereas, many of these family caregivers are not able to accumulate pension benefits or to make RRSP contributions because they are absent from the paid work force for extended periods of time due to the daily demands of their caregiving role; and
Whereas, some communities offer support services such as training for the caregiver in the use of equipment, some home care services, and a limited number of respite beds but often are unable to provide adequate relief for the caregiver, as for example day programs for the elderly or disabled, in home sitter services or institutional short term beds; and
Whereas, if no respite is provided from the physical and emotional demands on the family caregiver who is providing 24 hour care there may very well be burn out and a family crisis which may lead to inappropriate and expensive institutionalization for the elderly or disabled family member; and
Whereas, government family policy should support the family caregiver who is providing a service which if it had to be provided by the state would be a great deal more expensive; therefore, be it

Resolved, that the National Council of Women urge the Government of Canada to develop and institute a system which ensures a minimum standard of financial security for the family caregiver, the system to include:

1. Extending eligibility for the seven year exemption under CPP regulations, at present applicable to child rearing, to include persons performing unpaid care for elderly or disabled family members; and
2. Providing refundable tax credits for caregivers; and be it further

Resolved, that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Provincial and Local Councils of Women to urge their respective provincial governments to:

1. Take a lead in ensuring, through provincially funded programs, that adequate respite care is available to provide relief for the family caregiver both on a regular basis in emergencies; and
2. Where funding is available for attendant care, allowing the recipient to direct funds to the caregiver of choice, who might be a family member; and
3. Publicize the availability of and the mode of access to these programs.