

A photograph of two elderly women, one with dark hair and one with white hair and glasses, both smiling warmly. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent purple filter. The text is centered over the lower half of the image.

How to Include and Support Caregivers in Northern Ontario – An Introduction to the Ontario Caregiver Organization for OHTs in the North

Land Acknowledgement

The OCO carries out its work while acknowledging the Indigenous Peoples of all the lands that we are on today. *This land is home to many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and acknowledging reminds us that our great standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous people.*



Overview for Today

1

Who is the Ontario Caregiver Organization

2

The significant role of caregivers and their needs in Northern Ontario

3

Ways your OHT can include and support caregivers

4

Examples, resources & tools to advance caregiver inclusion

5

OCO Programs and Services for Caregivers



OUR PURPOSE

The Ontario Caregiver Organization (OCO) exists to improve the lives of Ontario caregivers; ordinary people who provide physical and emotional support to a family member, partner, friend or neighbour

Caregiving in Northern Ontario

Impacts of Living in Northern Ontario

- Vast geography and sparse population
 - Aging Population
- Resources
 - Limited access to services
 - Financial implications
 - Hazardous driving conditions

Caregiving Experience

- most likely to be 55+ & caring for more than one person
- most likely to be in an intense caregiving situation
- less likely to be in contact with health care professionals and services - **& don't feel that they are seen as important**



Caregivers are at risk of becoming patients themselves



Caregivers experience **higher rates** of loneliness¹, stress and **depression**²



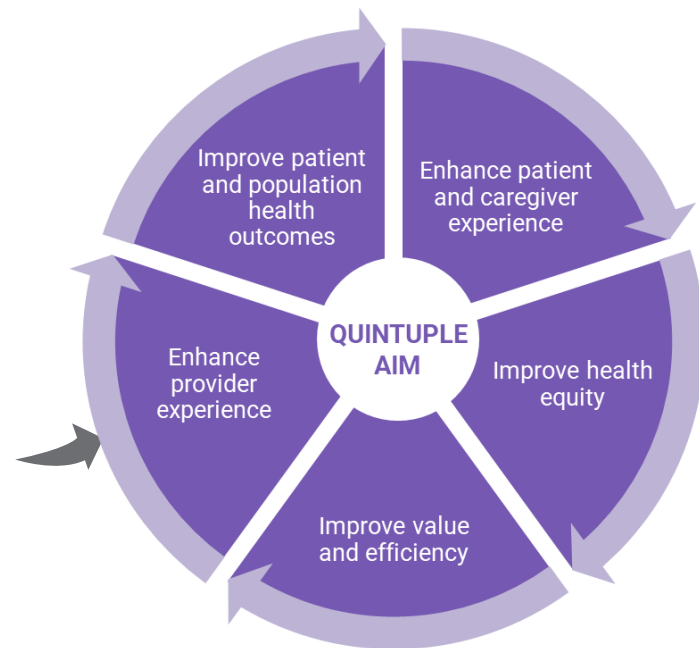
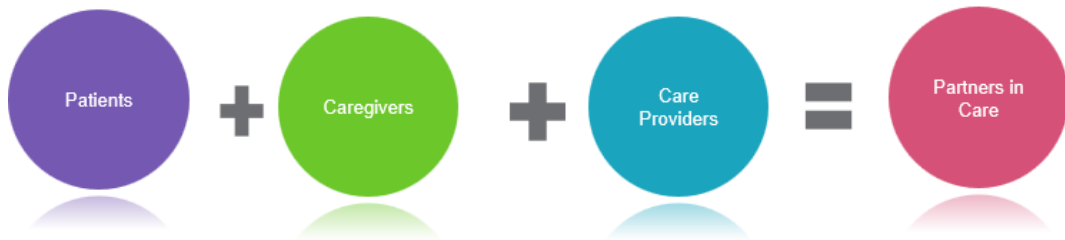
Caregiver burnout can lead to patients requiring ER visits and/or unnecessary hospital admissions^{3,4}

When caregivers aren't well, Patients aren't either

The Opportunity

Integrate caregivers across OHTs so that they are consistently empowered and included as essential partners in patient/client care

4 million caregivers across Ontario provide an estimated 75% of the care in the system



Benefits of Including Essential Care Partners In your OHT



Improved quality of care



Improved patient & resident outcomes



Improved health quality indicators



Improved working conditions for healthcare teams



Less pressure and reduced costs to the healthcare system

Essential Care Partner Support Hub

In partnership with Ontario Health, the Ontario Caregiver Organization has launched the [Essential Care Partner Support Hub](#) to support healthcare settings in implementing Essential Partners in Care programs and practices

We offer:

- Guidance and Coaching
- Leading Practices, resources, tools and templates
- Connection to settings and peers that have implemented
- Opportunities for learning and knowledge exchange



Improving the caregiver and patient experience in OHTs



IDENTIFY
the caregiver



INCLUDE
the caregiver as part
of the care team



SUPPORT
the caregiver



Learning Events
and education



Tools and
resources



Collaboration,
Guidance and
Support



Connect
Caregivers to
Support



Identify the caregiver

IDENTIFICATION

Essential care partner identification (Caregiver ID) is used to identify and formally recognize essential care partners.

CLIENT DESIGNATION

Clients/patients/residents are empowered and encouraged to designate their essential care partners(s).

DOCUMENTATION

Care partners are documented in patient files/records, including contact information and level of participation in care.

Solutions and Actions for OHTs

- Implement Caregiver ID across OHT settings
- Document Essential Care Partners in patient files/records

Resources

- ✓ [Essential Care Partner Program Implementation toolkit for OHTs](#)
- ✓ [Essential Care Partner Program – Key Practices for OHTs](#)



Solutions and Actions for OHTs

- ❑ Involve caregivers in early and pro-active assessment and transition planning
- ❑ Include caregivers in your integrated care pathways
- ❑ Offer education sessions to partners across your OHT

Resources

- ✓ [Essential Role of Caregivers in Improving Transitions and Addressing ALC](#)
- ✓ [Essential Care Partner Practices for Ontario Health Teams](#)
- ✓ [Guidance Document: Integrating and Engaging Caregivers to meet OHT Deliverables](#)

Include the caregiver as part of the care team

STAFF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Education and training is provided to all staff across the OHT including partner organizations, on the important role of care partners and practical ways to include and support them.

INTEGRATION

Essential care partner role is integrated into OHT models of care, including ALC strategies, care pathways, point of care workflows, client assessment, care planning and transition planning.

COMMUNICATION

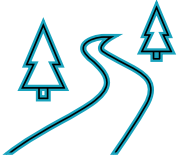
Essential care partner information and program is pro-actively communicated across OHT partners, communities, patients, families and essential care partners.



SPOTLIGHT ON ALGOMA OHT



Spotlight on Algoma OHT



- Caregivers defined as a priority population
- Sault Area Hospital Pilot implementation, 2021
- Spread and Scale to partners
- Phase 2 and beyond

Key Enabler:

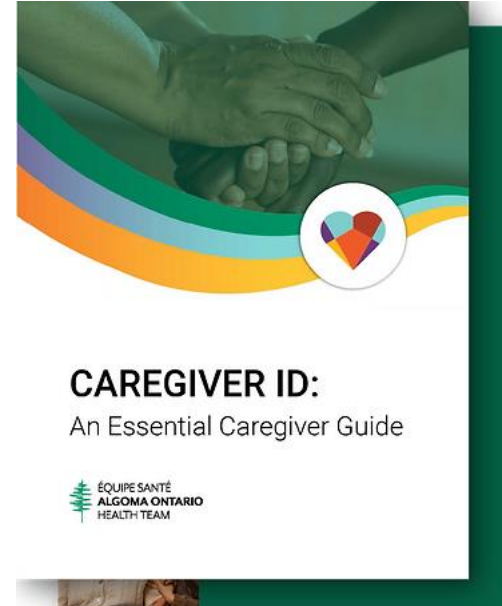
Patient, family and caregiver involvement



Spotlight on Algoma OHT – Outcomes



- Over **580 caregivers** have been formally recognized as part of the program at Sault Area Hospital
- Spread and scale to **Long-term care** and **Alzheimer's Society**
- Learnings from caregivers
 - Phase 2 – research study to better understand the needs of caregivers across the Algoma
 - Inform next stages of caregiver inclusion and support



Spotlight on Algoma OHT – Learnings and Opportunities

Research – 5 Themes

- Caregivers are invisible but a **vital backbone** of health and social care
- Caregivers are **navigating overwhelming demands**
- Family **fault lines** exposed
- Need for **personalized supports**
- Empowering caregivers through **training and support**

Opportunities

- Increase **awareness and recognition** of the role of caregivers
- Expand the **Caregiver ID Program**
- Offer **training** to **caregivers** and **providers**
- Build **support across the life span**



Solutions and Actions for OHTs

- Include OCO in your access/navigation models
- Refer caregivers to OCO
- Point to OCO on your OHT website

Resource

- ✓ [Including Caregivers in Access and Navigation Models](#)



Support the caregiver

LINK TO SUPPORT

Essential care partners are connected to caregiver and community supports and resources for their own well-being.

ESSENTIAL CARE PARTNER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Essential care partners are provided education and support to validate their role and empower them to participate in care.

ESSENTIAL CARE PARTNER ORIENTATION

There is a process for onboarding and [orienting](#) essential care partners.

The Ontario Caregiver Organization (OCO) Programs and Services



The Ontario Caregiver Helpline

1-833-416-2273 or
ontariocaregiver.ca

Free of charge phone
support 24/7 and
live chat
(Mon-Fri 7 a.m. - 9 p.m. ET)



1:1 Peer Support (online or by phone)

Connect with another
caregiver, share your
experiences, and
receive direct support



Online Support Groups

Connect with other
caregivers in a
supportive environment
to share your
challenges, successes,
and concerns



Monthly Webinars (live and recorded)

OCO hosts live
webinars presented
by subject matter
experts on a variety of
timely and important
topics



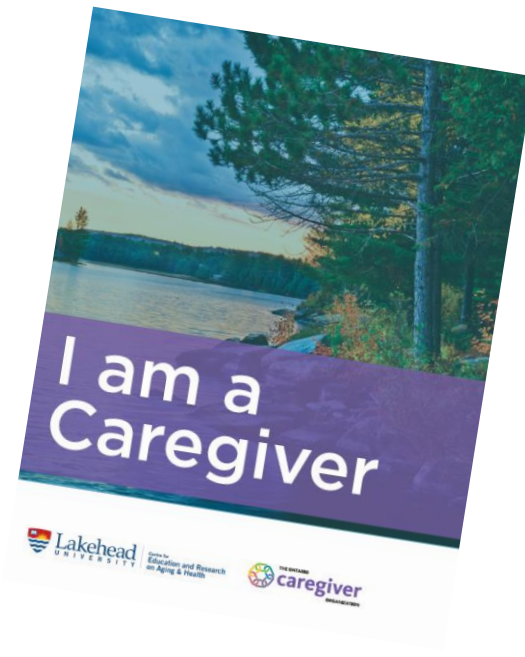
The SCALE Program

An 8-week [program](#)
targeting caregiver
mental health and well
being. Providing
education, tools and
small group or 1:1
counselling sessions to
caregivers



OCO In Your Community

- Presentations for caregiver and providers
- Collaborate on resources and programs for caregivers
- Establish referral pathways to caregiver supports
- Host caregiver events, such as education days or caregiver forums
- Participate in caregiver support committees
- Support the spread and scale of local caregiver supports



Learn more about [OCO in your Community](#)

Questions?



We want to hear from you. Type your questions in the chat box!



Chat

From Me to [Everyone](#):

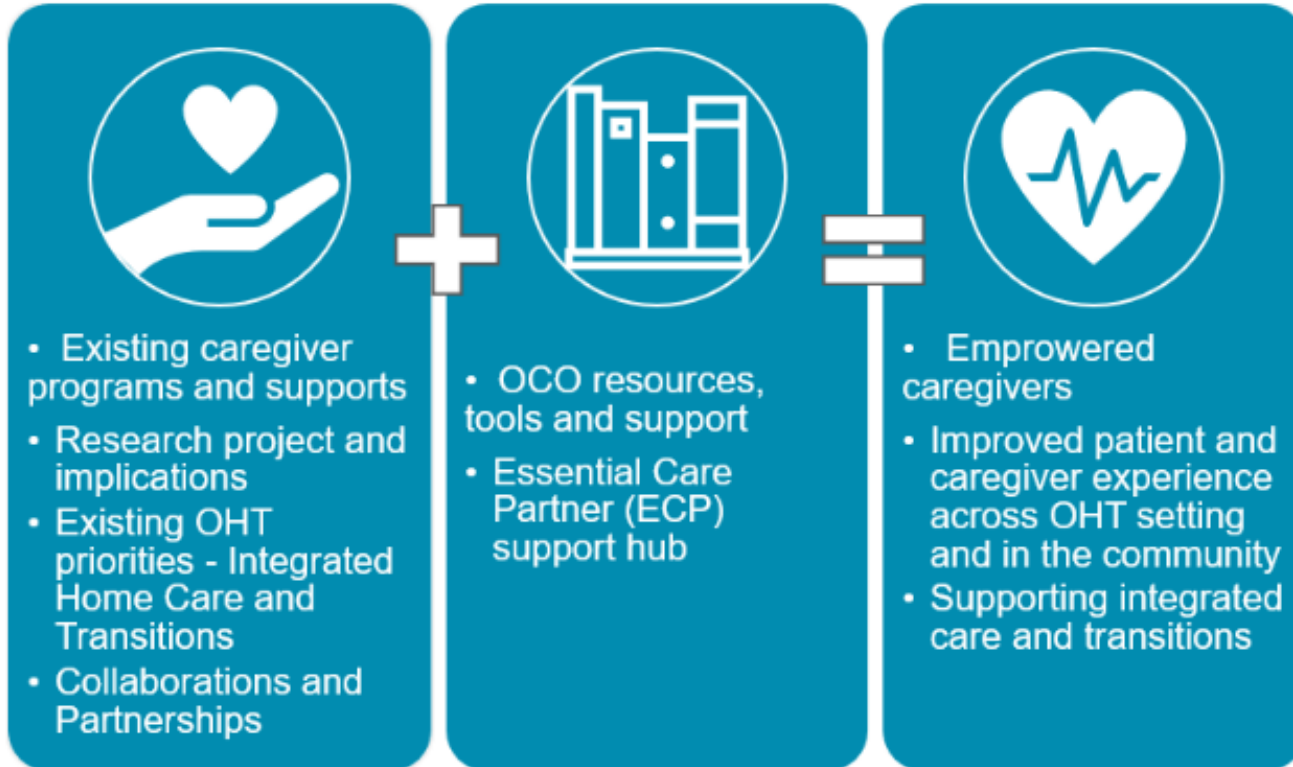


Please type your questions and comments in the chat-box.



Opportunity

Build on Existing Work, Collaborations & Partnerships



Key Takeaways & Resources for OHTs



Key Resources:

- [Essential Care Partner Programs – Implementation Toolkit for OHTs](#)
- [Essential Care Partner Program – Key Practices for OHTs](#)



Key Resources:

- [Essential Role of Caregivers in Improving Transitions and Addressing Alternate Level of Care \(ALC\)](#)
- [Essential Care Partner Practices for Ontario Health Teams](#)
- [Guidance Document: Integrating and Engaging Caregivers to meet OHT Deliverables](#)



Key Resource:

- [I Am A Caregiver toolkit](#)
- [Including Caregivers in Access and Navigation Models](#)

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