

# **A Gender-Sensitive Carer-inclusive and Accommodating Organizations Standard: A Partnership Approach to Healthy, Productive Work for Employed Carers**

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## **1. Background**

The aging population in Canada has resulted in approximately 35% of the workforce simultaneously managing adult/elder care responsibilities. Recognizing that caring for the aged and other growing dependent populations will affect most workplaces, it is incumbent upon employers to implement gender sensitive carer-friendly workplace practices, as defined in the newly unveiled Canadian Standards Association's (CSA) B701-17 *Carer- Inclusive and Accommodating Organizations Standard*. This accessible guide can be used by employers, human resource professionals, labour organizations and employed carers. This Standard has the potential to impact a number of positive outcomes, such as the enhancement of work-life balance for employed carers, improved workforce retention for employers, and reduced health care costs.

## **2. Methods**

In partnership with academic researchers and a wide range of diverse, committed partners – representing government, non-government/non-profit, private business/service providers, and labour, the creation and mobilization of the CSA's *Carer-inclusive and Accommodating Organizations Standard* has taken a year to create, using a fixed CSA protocol. Incorporating knowledge about the gender specificity of labour force sectors and specific occupations has allowed the Standard to be created and written in a gender-sensitive manner. It operates as a ready resource for guidance in best accommodating employed carers, irrespective of gender.

## **3. Results**

The partnership approach has allowed the Standard to be written in a gender-sensitive manner, allowing it to equitably inform healthy, productive work for employed carers. This is reflected in the language of the Standard, as will be illustrated via components of the Standard. The gender-sensitive dissemination plan will also be outlined, as will the gender-sensitive approach to the next phase of the research program.

## **4. Conclusions**

Using a gender-sensitive lense has allowed the *Carer-inclusive and Accommodating Organizations Standard* to be an equitable resource for carer-employers across the labour market, irrespective of gender. Next steps include dissemination of the Standard across the country and scaling it up across the globe via application to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). Funding for this work was provided by the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, via a Partnership Grant.

